



International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research Monthly Newsletter

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What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

Authors of a paper recently published in the BMJ Open hypothesized that Folic Acid (FA) may have a disproportionate effect that alters the sex-specific prevalence of Neural Tube Defects (NTDs). Data from two time points, before (2003-2004) and after (2011-2016) the start of the supplementation program, were obtained from a population-based birth defect surveillance program among five counties in northern China. All live births (28 or more complete gestational weeks), all stillbirths of at least 20 weeks gestational age and pregnancy terminations at any gestational age following the prenatal diagnosis of NTDs were included. A total of 25 249 and 83 996 births before and after the program were included respectively. The results showed that the prevalence of NTDs decreased in both sexes after the implementation of a massive FA supplementation program. While female predominance was observed in open NTDs and total NTDs, they also had a greater rate of decrease in NTDs after the supplementation program.

Sex differences in the prevalence of neural tube defects and preventive effects of folic acid (FA) supplementation among five counties in northern China: results from a population-based birth defect surveillance programme. BMJ Open. 2018 Nov 8;8(11):e022565. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-022565.

Free full text available at <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/8/11/e022565.full.pdf>

A systematic review and meta-analysis published in Birth Defects Research indicates that maternal hypertensive disorders are positively associated with hypospadias in offspring. Authors concluded that further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms involved, and to ultimately develop public health strategies geared toward prevention of hypospadias.

Maternal hypertension and hypospadias in offspring: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Birth Defects Res. 2018 Nov 8. doi: 10.1002/bdr2.1415. [Epub ahead of print]

Abstract available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30411533>

The **Folate Task Team** will launch an interactive webinar with renowned global experts in nutrition, birth defects, food fortification, and advocacy. The interactive webinar will be held on Dec 4, 2018 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada). Learn about a transformative global effort to greatly reduce the risk of neural tube defects through improved nutrition. Register at <http://bit.ly/folatewebinar> and share this invitation with your network of those who may be interested.

Folate Task Team is a global nutrition Task Team for the control of folate deficiency and folic acid responsive neural tube defects. The work of the folate task team is being supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Further information at <https://www.nutritionintl.org/what-we-do/nteam/folate-task-team/>



World Birth Defects Day - WBDD

To date, 121 organizations worldwide have enrolled to participate in the 2019 WBDD. The full list of organizations is available at <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/partners/>. Organizations who have not yet filled the application form for the 2019 WBDD Partnership are kindly requested to fill out the form at <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/application-form/> to be included among those participating in the 2019 WBDD.

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News from the ICBDSDR Centre, Executive Committee, and ICBDSDR Members

Online Self-paced Course on Birth Defect Surveillance and Prevention

The online course is still available for interested professionals. The course has been developed by the International Centre on Birth Defects (ICBD – ICBDSDR Centre), and supported in part by funding from the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through Agreement 2016-2017 with the Task Force for Global Health. The course is designed for clinicians, epidemiologists, public health professionals, and anyone interested in understanding birth defects and improving their prevention and care. The course includes videos, quizzes, a discussion forum, and publications/resources. The course is available in English and Spanish. Further information at <http://www.icbdsr.org/online-self-paced-course-on-birth-defect-surveillance-and-prevention/> and the registration form is available at www.icbdsr.org/course-registration. Once registered, you will receive access credentials and can begin the self-paced course at your own convenience.

Meetings and Conferences

The Neonate 2018 – 2nd International Symposium for Asia. November 23-25, 2018, Shanghai, China. <https://www.mcascentificevents.eu/the-neonate/>

Partners' Forum 2018. December 12-13, 2018, New Delhi, India. The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (PMNCH) will bring together 1,200 partners dedicated to the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement and to the achievement of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (Global Strategy). Many more partners will participate online through the Virtual Forum (Webinar Series and Live Streaming) <http://www.partnersforum2018.com/>

Congenital CMV – From Pregnancy to Infancy: Let's Face It. February 21-22, 2019, Florence, Italy. <https://www.mcascentificevents.eu/cmiv/>

2nd International Congress on Advanced Treatments in Rare Diseases (RARE2019). March 4-5, 2019, Vienna, Austria. <http://www.rare2019.com/>

2nd World Congress on Maternal Fetal Neonatal Medicine. April 4-6, 2019, London, United Kingdom. <https://www.mcascentificevents.eu/worldmfnm/>

ECPCA - European Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association. June 12-15, 2019, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Theme of the 2019 congress is "*Future perspectives in research & therapy*". Abstracts submission is now open. <http://ecpca.eu/>

59th Annual Meeting of the Teratology Society, June 22–26, 2019, San Diego, California, US. The theme for the meeting is "Sea Changes in Birth Defects Research and Prevention". The program offers an exciting variety of scientific sessions on topics including:

- Perinatal Choline Supplementation and Risk of Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Environmental Exposures from Placenta to Birth: Effects on Immunity
- Ocean-Borne Risks to Pregnant Women and Their Babies
- Birth Defects Outcomes Across the Lifespan: Perspectives from Health Services Research
- Differences in Sex Development
- Integration of Human and Animal Data to Inform Medication Use in Pregnant Women: From Drug Labeling to Clinical Trials
- Establishing Scientific Confidence in Alternate Approaches
- Determining Causality in Teratology
- Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: Causes, Disparities, and Solutions
- Thyroid Hormone Assessments: Implications for Developmental and Reproductive Toxicology
- Leveraging Zebrafish to Unravel Mechanisms of Developmental Toxicity

Three workshops will be offered: Current Topics and Updates for Pregnancy Registries, Multidisciplinary Research Needs, and Irresponsible Conduct of Research: What Happens When Things Go Wrong.

Full information is available at <http://www.teratology.org/meetings/2017/>

3rd Congress of Joint European Neonatal Societies. September 17-21, 2019, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
<https://www.mcascentificevents.eu/jens/>

13th Asia Pacific Conference on Human Genetics, November 7-9, 2019, Makati Shangri-la Manila (Philippines). The theme of the Conference is “Advancing Translational Medicine and Collaborations in Genomics.” This conference will bring together an outstanding community of faculty, scientists, researchers, and students from the Asia Pacific region and different parts of the world. Everyone is invited to submit abstracts by **March 7, 2019** www.apchg2019.org

SAVE THE DATE - 46th ICBDSR Annual Meeting

The 2019 ICBDSR Annual Meeting will take place in Bratislava (Slovak Republic), from September 8-11, 2019. The meeting will be hosted by the Slovak Medical University in Bratislava, Faculty of Public Health.

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