



International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research Monthly Newsletter

February 2021

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UPDATE ON 2020 ICBDSR ANNUAL MEETING

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 47th ICBDSR Annual Meeting has been postponed to **October 10-13, 2021**. The meeting venue remains the Relais Bellaria Hotel & Congressi in Bologna (Italy). Updates on the annual meeting will be posted on the [ICBDSR website](https://www.icbdsr.org/).

NEWS AND UPDATE ON COVID-19

COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation:

- Get the full database of COVID-19 resources from WHO: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- Get the latest public health information from CDC: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>.
- Get the latest research from NIH: <https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>.
- Find SARS-CoV-2 literature, sequence, and clinical content: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sars-cov-2/>.

ICBD corner: News and comments from the *International Centre on Birth Defects (ICBD)*

1. **Prevention and Care: ICBD / ICBDSR partnering with WHO, CDC, March of Dimes, and many others in an interactive Webinar for World Birth Defect Day**

- When:** 3 March 2021, 2 to 3:30 pm Central European time (CET) or 8 am Eastern US Time
- Theme:** Saving lives of babies with birth defects and improving their quality of life
- Topics:** surveillance, prevention, newborn screening, surgical initiatives, grass root activism, integration with other programs for children and adults (final agenda to be distributed on ICBDSR listserv and social media).
- Medium:** video conferencing (Zoom) with possibility to comment and ask questions (link to come)

We hope you will find it of interest in your work and in your community

2. **Protecting women and children from COVID-19: timely viewpoint and commentary.**

Commentary: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774422> by Denise Jamieson and Sonja Rasmussen.

Investigation: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2774428> by Andrea Edlow and coinvestigators.

Two timely publications underscore what is known and what is not known about vertical transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus and related antibodies from mother to fetus. Transplacental passage of both virus and anti-virus antibodies are low – good news supporting the rarity of vertical transmission of the virus, but the low rate of antibody passage may put the newborn at risk of infection. The commentary expands on this information and indicates ways to move forward research and clinical care and prevention

3. **Epistemic security: the greatest security threat of the post-truth age.**

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210209-the-greatest-security-threat-of-the-post-truth-age>

This topic may seem far from our core professional interests, but arguably, as health professionals dealing with rumors, vaccine hesitancy, and false information (to make just a few examples), we need to be engaged in the ongoing struggle for truth dissemination ('episteme' = knowledge). This BBC news segment

summarizes a cogent paper by Elizabeth Seger, recently published in the UK's Alan Turing Institute. The paper discusses both the challenges to epistemic security and practical countermeasures.

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects: a selection from the recent literature, and recommendations from readers

All readers are kindly invited to contribute to this section of the Newsletter, sending their suggestions to centre@icbdsr.org by the 1st Friday of the month

A Selection from the Recent Literature

Infections

Benavides-Lara A, la Paz Barboza-Arguello M, González-Elizondo M, Hernández-deMezerville M, Brenes-Chacón H, Ramírez-Rojas M, Ramírez-Hernández C, Arjona-Ortegón N, Godfred-Cato S, Valencia D, Moore CA, Soriano-Fallas A. [Zika Virus-Associated Birth Defects, Costa Rica, 2016-2018](#). Emerg Infect Dis. 2021 Feb;27(2):360–71. doi: 10.3201/eid2702.202047. PMID: 33496653; PMCID: PMC7853552.

Aguilar Ticona JP, Nery N Jr, Ladines-Lim JB, Gambrah C, Sacramento G, de Paula Freitas B, Bouzon J, Oliveira-Filho J, Borja A, Adhikarla H, Montoya M, Chin A, Wunder EA Jr, Ballalai V, Vieira C, Belfort R, P Almeida AR, Reis MG, Harris E, Ko AI, Costa F. [Developmental outcomes in children exposed to Zika virus in utero from a Brazilian urban slum cohort study](#). PLoS Negl Trop Dis. 2021 Feb 5;15(2):e0009162. doi: 10.1371/journal.pntd.0009162. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33544730.

Rico A, Dollard SC, Valencia D, Corchuelo S, Tong VT, Laiton-Donato K, Amin MM, Benavides M, Wong P, Newton S, Daza M, Cates J, Gonzalez M, Zambrano LD, Mercado MM, Ailes EC, Rodriguez HM, Gilboa SM, Acosta J, Ricaldi J, Pelaez D, Honein MA, Ospina ML, Lanzieri TM. [Epidemiology of cytomegalovirus Infection among mothers and infants in Colombia](#). J Med Virol. 2021 Jan 21. doi: 10.1002/jmv.26815. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33475162.

Clusters

Gnansia E, Michon L, Amar E, Estève J. [Evidence for a cluster of rare birth defects in the Ain department \(France\)](#). Birth Defects Res. 2021 Feb 9. doi: 10.1002/bdr2.1876. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33565281.

Outcomes

Han B, Tang Y, Qu X, Deng C, Wang X, Li J. [Comparison of the 1-year survival rate in infants with congenital heart disease diagnosed by prenatal and postnatal ultrasound: A retrospective study](#). Medicine (Baltimore). 2021 Jan 29;100(4):e23325. doi: 10.1097/MD.00000000000023325. PMID: 33530157; PMCID: PMC7850709.

Risk factors, Protective Factors

Liu J, Li Z, Ye R, Ren A, Liu J. [Folic acid supplementation and risk for foetal abdominal wall defects in China: Results from a large population-based intervention cohort study](#). Br J Nutr. 2021 Jan 26:1-20. doi: 10.1017/S0007114521000337. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33494841.

Liu J, Li Z, Ye R, Ren A, Liu J. [Folic acid supplementation and risk of congenital hydrocephalus in China](#). Public Health Nutr. 2021 Jan 26:1-20. doi: 10.1017/S136898002100029X. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33494847.

Luke B, Brown MB, Wantman E, Forestieri NE, Browne ML, Fisher SC, Yazdy MM, Ethen MK, Canfield MA, Nichols HB, Oehninger S, Doody KJ, Sutcliffe AG, Williams C, Eisenberg ML, Baker VL, Sacha CR, Lupo PJ. [Risks of nonchromosomal birth defects, small-for-gestational age birthweight, and prematurity with in vitro fertilization: effect of number of embryos transferred and plurality at conception versus at birth](#). J Assist Reprod Genet. 2021 Feb 5. doi: 10.1007/s10815-021-02095-3. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33547526.

Salinas-Vilca A, Cuevas L; ECEMC Peripheral Group, Bermejo-Sánchez E, Galán I. [Smoking during pregnancy: changes and associated risk factors in Spain, 1980-2016](#). J Public Health (Oxf). 2021 Feb 1:fdaa277. doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdaa277. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33522592.

News from ICBDSR Executive Committee and ICBDSR Members

The **World Health Organization** Executive Board at its 148th session, decided to maintain the ICBDSR in official relations with WHO. In making the decision, the Executive Board commended the continuing dedication of ICBDSR in supporting the work of WHO.

The **ICBDSR Program Directors** approved by vote to retain the current Executive Committee's members in their elected positions, until the next Annual Business Meeting:

- ✓ Paul A. Romitti, Chair
- ✓ Boris Groisman, Vice-Chair
- ✓ Anke Rissmann, Secretary

Online Self-Paced Course on Birth Defect Surveillance and Prevention

The online course remains available for interested professionals. The course has been developed by the International Centre on Birth Defects (ICBD 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. It is available in English and Spanish. To date, **476 trainees** from **61 countries** have joined the online course. Additional information is available at <http://www.icbdsr.org/online-self-paced-course-on-birth-defect-surveillance-and-prevention/>.

The registration form is available at www.icbdsr.org/course-registration. Once registered, you will receive an email with guidance on how to register in the course platform www.icbdsrtraining.org and how to self-enroll in the self-paced course in either English or Spanish.



World Birth Defects Day – WBDD, March 3

ICBDSR has joined March of Dimes, CDC and other organizations as a partner for the upcoming **World Birth Defects Day Twitter Chat**. The chat will occur on **March 3, 2021 at 11 am EST** using the main handles *@MarchofDimes* and *@nacersano*.

Primary Hashtag: *#WorldBDDay*, Secondary Hashtags: *#ManyBirthDefects1Voice* *#Best4YouBest4Baby* *#DíaMundialDefectosCongénitos*

**World Birth Defects Day
Twitter Chat**

*Chat in English and Spanish

**WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 3
AT 11 A.M. EST**

#WorldBDDay



Join World Birth Defects Day as **WBDD Partner Organization**, by completing the online application form on the WBDD website <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/application-form/>.

Follow @worldbdday on Twitter <https://twitter.com/WorldBDDay> and Instagram worldbdday <https://www.instagram.com/worldbdday/>

Join WBDD page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WBDDay/>
Visit WBDD website <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/>

Meetings and Conferences

3rd World Congress on Maternal Fetal and Neonatal Medicine, "from periconception to early infancy" – March 25-27, 2021, Venice, Italy. <https://www.mcascientificevents.eu/worldmfnm/>

Public Health Unit of Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) 7th Annual International Conference on Public Health, June 21-24, 2021, Athens, Greece. <https://www.atiner.gr/publichealth/call>

Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention 61st Annual Meeting, Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, Pittsburgh, PA, USA. June 26–30, 2021. <https://www.birthdefectsresearch.org/meetings/2021/>

World Congress of Epidemiology WCE 2020 on "Methodological Innovations in Epidemiology", has been postponed to September 3-6, 2021, Melbourne, Australia. <https://wce2020.org/>

EUROCAT Registry Leader Meeting and 15th European Symposium on Congenital Anomalies Considering the development of the pandemic in Europe, the EUROCAT Scientific Symposium scheduled to take place on July 2, 2020 in Valencia, Spain, has been postponed until further notice.