



International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research Monthly Newsletter

July 2021

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UPDATE ON ICBDSR ANNUAL MEETING

The 47th ICBDSR Annual Meeting will be held as **virtual meeting in 2021** through the [Cvent](#) platform. We will return to an in-person meeting in 2022, hosted by Italy IMER Registry in Bologna. The virtual meeting will be held on **Monday, October 11th, 2021**. The meeting will run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. US Eastern Time EST (GMT -5). A detailed time zone schedule will be provided at a later time, according to local Daylight Savings Time. From 9-10 a.m. EST, we will conduct the ICBDSR Annual Business Meeting for Program representatives, and from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. EST, we will conduct an abbreviated annual meeting for all members and guests. Updates on the virtual annual meeting will be posted on the [ICBDSR website](#).

NEWS AND UPDATE ON COVID-19

WHO Coronavirus (Covid 19) Dashboard

World Health Organization Coronavirus disease situation dashboard presents official daily counts of COVID-19 cases and deaths worldwide: <https://covid19.who.int/>

EPI-WIN: WHO Information Network for Epidemics

EPI-WIN is part of the WHO Health Emergency Programme's risk communication efforts and was established following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. EPI-WIN seeks to give everyone access to timely, accurate, and easy-to-understand advice and information from trusted sources on public health events and outbreaks. News and updates at <https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication>.

- ✓ Get epidemiological updates 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 National Institute of Health: <https://covid19.nih.gov/>.
- ✓ Find SARS-CoV-2 literature, sequence, and clinical content from the National Library of Medicine: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sars-cov-2/>.

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



1. You may be familiar with The Quick Reference Handbook, developed by WHO, CDC, and ICBDSR, provides diagnostic tips and checklists to help quickly and reliably identify and report several major external and internal anomalies. The QRH (as it is commonly abbreviated) has been designed for ease of use globally, for training as well as field activities. Be sure to check it out and give us your feedback. The PDF version is here:

(<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240015418>)

We are currently developing an app (for IOS and Android) – now in advanced beta testing -- for use of the QRH on mobile devices.



2. 30 years ago (Saturday 20 July 1991, to be exact), the Lancet published the results of the MRC vitamin study, which showed clearly (and through a randomized clinical trial) that folic acid could prevent spina bifida and anencephaly. Translating this science into practice has been

successful, but slow and incomplete (see also the paper by Morris et al. below) – in fact, it has been estimated that three quarter of preventable cases still occur every year because of inaction on the part of the many countries. On a positive note, New Zealand announced it will implement fortification – watch this video for a thoughtful and informative press release

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaJF2s543PU>

Finally, consider taking this anniversary as an incentive to move the needle on primary prevention, by promoting mandatory fortification (in addition to diet and supplementation) to achieve sustained folate sufficiency among all peoples everywhere. Stay tuned for more ways to support these efforts. Saving even one life from death and disability is a goal worth fighting for.

Lorenzo Botto, ICBD Director

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

FolicacidPH Webinar 2021

VYLH-Philippines is a network of proactive, service-oriented, empowering, and visionary leaders equipped with knowledge and skills in mobilizing the youth towards a healthy Philippines. “*Start Right with B9: Fostering Good Nutrition through Folic Acid supplementation in the First 1000 Days of Life*”. FolicacidPH is annually held in line with the observance of Nutrition Month, National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week, and the founding anniversary of VYLH-Philippines.

Watch the webinar on demand: through the VYLH-Philippines Facebook page:

<https://https://facebook.com/vylhph/videos/323269976164186>

Read more at: <https://https://sites.google.com/site/vylhphilippines/our-activities/social-media-campaigns/folicacidph>



World Birth Defects Day – WBDD, March 3rd

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/>.

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

Causes: Risk factors, Protective Factors

COVID-19

Tinker SC, Cogswell ME, Peacock G, Ryerson AB. [Important Considerations for COVID-19 Vaccination of Children With Developmental Disabilities](#). *Pediatrics*. 2021 Jul 16:e2021053190. doi: 10.1542/peds.2021-053190. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34272340.

Banaei M, Ghasemi V, Saei Ghare Naz M, Kiani Z, Rashidi-Fakari F, Banaei S, Mohammad Souri B, Rokni M. [Obstetrics and Neonatal Outcomes in Pregnant Women with COVID-19: A Systematic Review](#). Iran J Public Health. 2020 Oct;49(Suppl 1):38-47. doi: 10.18502/ijph.v49iS1.3668. PMID: 34268204; PMCID: PMC8266025.

Basu JK, Chauke L; Cert Maternal and Fetal Medicine, Magoro T. [Clinical Features and Outcomes of COVID-19 Infection among Pregnant Women in South Africa](#). Int J MCH AIDS. 2021;10(2):1-9. doi: 10.21106/ijma.479. Epub 2021 Jun 28. PMID: 34262795; PMCID: PMC8264468.

Gallo LA, Gallo TF, Borg DJ, Moritz KM, Clifton VL, Kumar S. [A decline in planned, but not spontaneous, preterm birth rates in a large Australian tertiary maternity centre during COVID-19 mitigation measures](#). Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol. 2021 Jul 12. doi: 10.1111/ajo.13406. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34254286.

Diabetes and other maternal exposures / factors

Chebrolu P, Kurbude R, Thakur M, Shah N, Jain R. [Gestational diabetes in rural central India: low prevalence but absence of typical risk factors](#). Heliyon. 2021 Jun 28;7(7):e07431. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07431. PMID: 34286121; PMCID: PMC8273204.

Shimada K, Toriyabe K, Kitamura A, Morikawa F, Minematsu T, Ikejiri M, Suga S, Toyoda H, Amano K, Kitano M, Usui S, Masuda S, Ikeda T. [Primary cytomegalovirus infection during pregnancy and congenital infection: a population-based, mother-child, prospective cohort study](#). J Perinatol. 2021 Jul 20. doi: 10.1038/s41372-021-01157-9. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34285356.

Lee KS, Choi YJ, Cho J, Lee H, Lee H, Park SJ, Park JS, Hong YC. [Environmental and Genetic Risk Factors of Congenital Anomalies: an Umbrella Review of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses](#). J Korean Med Sci. 2021 Jul 19;36(28):e183. doi: 10.3346/jkms.2021.36.e183. PMID: 34282604.

Ralston ER, Smith P, Chilcot J, Silverio SA, Bramham K. [Perceptions of risk in pregnancy with chronic disease: A systematic review and thematic synthesis](#). PLoS One. 2021 Jul 19;16(7):e0254956. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0254956. PMID: 34280227.

Occurrence: prevalence, descriptive epidemiology

Morris JK, Addor MC, Ballardini E, Barisic I, Barrachina-Bonet L, Braz P, Caverro-Carbonell C, Den Hond E, Garne E, Gatt M, Haeusler M, Khoshnood B, Lelong N, Kinsner-Ovaskainen A, Kiuru-Kuhlefelt S, Klungsoyr K, Latos-Bielenska A, Limb E, O'Mahony MT, Perthus I, Pierini A, Rankin J, Rissmann A, Rouget F, Sayers G, Sipek A Jr, Stevens S, Tucker D, Verellen-Dumoulin C, de Walle HEK, Wellesley D, Wertelecki W, Bermejo-Sanchez E. [Prevention of Neural Tube Defects in Europe: A Public Health Failure](#). Front Pediatr. 2021 Jun 24;9:647038. doi: 10.3389/fped.2021.647038. PMID: 34249803; PMCID: PMC8264257.

Greco MT, Russo AG. [Identifying chromosomal anomalies using current health database: the Registry of Congenital Anomalies of Milan \(Lombardy Region, Northern Italy\)](#). Epidemiol Prev. 2021 May-Jun;45(3):196-204. English. doi: 10.19191/EP21.3.P196.065. PMID: 34212701.

Benjamin RH, Scheuerle AE, Scott DA, Navarro Sanchez ML, Langlois PH, Canfield MA, Northrup H, Schaaf CP, Ray JW, McLean SD, Chen H, Swartz MD, Lupo PJ, Agopian AJ. [Birth defect co-occurrence patterns in the Texas Birth Defects Registry](#). Pediatr Res. 2021 Jun 30. doi: 10.1038/s41390-021-01629-w. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34193968.

Santoro M, Coi A, Barišić I, Pierini A, Addor MC, Baldacci S, Ballardini E, Boban L, Braz P, Caverro-Carbonell C, de Walle HEK, Draper ES, Gatt M, Haeusler M, Klungsoyr K, Kurinczuk JJ, Materna-Kiryluk A, Lanzoni M, Lelong N, Luyt K, Mokoroa O, Mullaney C, Nelen V, O'Mahony MT, Perthus I, Randrianaivo H, Rankin J, Rissmann A, Rouget F, Schaub B, Tucker D, Wellesley D, Zymak-Zakutnia N, Garne E. [Epidemiology of Pierre-Robin](#)

[sequence in Europe: A population-based EUROCAT study](#). Paediatr Perinat Epidemiol. 2021 Jun 16. doi: 10.1111/ppe.12776. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34132407.

Pakkasjärvi N, Syvänen J, Tauriainen A, Hyvärinen A, Sankilampi U, Leinonen MK, Gissler M, Helenius I, Raitio A. [Prune belly syndrome in Finland - A population-based study on current epidemiology and hospital admissions](#). J Pediatr Urol. 2021 Jun 26:S1477-5131(21)00321-1. doi: 10.1016/j.jpuro.2021.06.019. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34261584.

Outcomes: survival, morbidity, quality of life

Morris JK, Garne E, Loane M, Barisic I, Densem J, Latos-Bieleńska A, Neville A, Pierini A, Rankin J, Rissmann A, de Walle H, Tan J, Given JE, Claridge H; EUROlinkCAT Consortium. [EUROlinkCAT protocol for a European population-based data linkage study investigating the survival, morbidity and education of children with congenital anomalies](#). BMJ Open. 2021 Jun 28;11(6):e047859. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-047859. PMID: 34183346; PMCID: PMC8240574.

Zhang W, Xu HY, Zhang YC, Liu KB. [Delayed diagnosis of critical congenital heart defects predicting risk factors and survival rate in newborns in Beijing: a retrospective study](#). J Int Med Res. 2021 Jul;49(7):3000605211028028. doi: 10.1177/03000605211028028. PMID: 34264137.

Recommendations from readers

No recommendation this month

News from ICBSR Executive Committee and ICBSR Members

Alberta Congenital Anomalies Surveillance System: thirteenth report, data for 1997-2018. Full report available at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page15520.aspx>

New Zealand announced that folic acid will be added to bread to reduce conditions such as Spina Bifida. *"Introducing mandatory fortification is a safe way to ensure women of childbearing age are supported to increase their Folic Acid consumption"* Further information [here](#)

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 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, more than **500 trainees** from **65 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.

Meetings and Conferences

World Congress of Epidemiology WCE 2020 scheduled to be held in Melbourne during September 2020, will be held as a virtual event on September 3-6, 2021. The Conference will focus on "Methodological Innovations in Epidemiology" which reflects the innovative progress in Epidemiology and Public Health <https://wce2020.org/>

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