



International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research Monthly Newsletter

October 2021

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ICBDSR ANNUAL MEETING

The **47th ICBDSR Annual Meeting** has been held as a virtual meeting on October 11th, 2021.

Thanks to our speakers for delivering their presentation and for sharing their wide experience with the audience.

We had more than 90 attendees worldwide: medical doctors, epidemiologists, researchers, parents, health workers. The main theme of the meeting was the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on selected maternal and child health issues, including birth defects. An additional session on ICBDSR collaborative projects has been also scheduled.

Details about the meeting program and speakers are available on the event website: [2021 ICBDSR Annual Meeting](#).

The scientific session has been recorded for those who could not attend the live streaming. Video available at <http://www.icbdsr.org/2021-icbdsr-scientific-meeting/>

The speakers' presentations are available in PDF format upon request at centre@icbdsr.org

The **48th ICBDSR Annual Meeting** will be held in the fall of 2022 in Bologna, Italy. Final dates and information on attendance will be disseminated at a later time.

Venues of future Annual Meetings:

2023: Malta

2024: Prague (Czech Republic)

The **2021 Distinguished Service Award** for longstanding excellence, service and leadership in the ICBDSR, was presented to Mark A. Canfield, Ph.D., Director of the Birth Defects Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch at Texas Department of State Health Services.

UPDATE ON COVID-19

WHO Coronavirus (Covid 19) Dashboard

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

American Academy of Pediatrics - Children and COVID-19: State-Level Data Report

State-level reports are the best publicly available and timely data on child COVID-19 cases in the United States. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association are collaborating to collect and share all publicly available data from states on child COVID-19 cases. Here a summary of findings (data available as of **October 7, 2021**): <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/>

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Covid 19 Dataset: data on the daily number of new reported COVID-19 cases and deaths by EU/EEA country is available to download. ECDC continues to publish weekly updates on the number of cases and deaths reported in the EU/EEA and worldwide every Thursday <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/data>

Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)

Southeast Asia Covid-19 Tracker by country, that includes information on National Responses, International Assistance, and CSIS Analysis. Data available at:

<https://www.csis.org/programs/southeast-asia-program/projects/southeast-asia-covid-19-tracker>

WHO Technical Consultation

The WHO is inviting relevant stakeholders - in particular laboratories, biorepositories, research entities, as well as health authorities from both the public and private sectors, to a technical consultation titled 'Researcher's needs and contributions to the future pandemic system' which will focus on inputs on how to handle research results, including recognition of contributions and other research-related aspects within the WHO BioHub System.

In order to receive a personalized Zoom link to join this thematic technical consultation session, participants are asked to register at the following link:

https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xoxR7vGSV6pSE0TthIXIQ

To facilitate discussions, a background document will be publicly posted in the coming timeframe on the WHO BioHub System's webpage at: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-biohub>

Should you require additional information please do not hesitate to send your inquiry at biohub@who.int

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

Following up on last month announcements about folic acid fortification, you might enjoy the Editorial by Dr. Haggarty in the Sept 22 issues of the Lancet. Of the many interesting comments in the editorial, one was particularly notable:

" There has been a significant decrease in the geometric mean red blood cell folate concentration among women of childbearing age in the UK of 5% per year between 2008–09 and 2016–17".

I've heard over the years several comments suggesting that in many countries the diet is good and fine, and there is no concern about folate levels. This may not be the case. In fact, there is only one way to find out – a well done, well stratified, well powered blood folate surveillance study. Not only will this reveal the true status in a population – it will also provide (based on the known relation between blood folate levels and neural tube defect risk) an estimate of the ongoing occurrence of neural tube defects and the potential for prevention.

Please send us an email if you cannot access this editorial – we will be happy to share it with you.

Lorenzo Botto, ICBD Director

What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

The World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day 2021

October 25th is the World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day (WSBHD21). The aim of the World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day is to raise awareness and understanding about Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, and to advocate and promote the rights of persons with these conditions.

More info at <https://www.worldspinabifidahydrocephalusday.com/>

The WSBHD21's **main event** is organized under the theme *"Unlock Your Right To Health"* in order to highlight the importance to advocate for the rights of individuals with SBH, discuss and share different aspects that need to be improved and implemented such as the promotion and protection of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), multidisciplinary care, prevention, inclusion, need for networking, opportunity of twinning and community building. Join the webinar [here](#)

Human Teratogens: A Live Virtual Course

The **Human Teratogens Course**, organized by the **Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention (BDRP)** is held on November 2–4, 2021, 10:00am–3:30pm Eastern (US). The course provides balanced and comprehensive information on the current knowledge and controversies in the field of teratology and counseling for pregnancy exposures. The faculty, teratology and toxicology experts, present lectures that cover basic principles of teratology, embryology, and epidemiology as well as detailed information regarding maternal conditions and environmental exposures which may pose teratogenic effect in pregnancy and lactation. The course provides up-to-date information on common exposures and hot topics, such as COVID-19 and vaccines, which providers are likely to encounter in their practice. The target audience for this course includes obstetricians, maternal fetal medicine specialists, teratogen information specialists, genetic counselors, pharmacists, and allied health professionals. Normally taking place every two years in Tampa, Florida, this year the international course will take place in a live virtual setting. Full details and registration are available on the [course website](#)



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

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Recommendations from readers

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News from ICBDSR Executive Committee and ICBDSR Members

ICBDSR Annual Business Meeting

The ICBDSR Annual Business meeting, restricted to ICBDSR full members, was held virtually on October 11th, 2021. 36 Programs' representatives out of 45 members programs attended the meeting. The agenda included administrative and financial issues, and the election of the Executive Committee members.

The elected Officers for 2021-2022 are:

Chair: Boris Groisman (Argentina – RENAC)

Vice Chair: Anke Reißmann (Germany – Saxony-Anhalt)

Secretary: Mary Ann Thomas (Canada Alberta – ACASS)

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

Structural Birth Defects Trainee Symposium(Virtual symposium), November 2, 2021 10am-6pm ET
https://www.sdbonline.org/12th_structural_birth_defects_conference

Global Experts Meeting on Pediatrics & Neonatology:"Recent advancements and emerging technologies for Pediatrics", 25-27 April 2022, Las Vegas, USA <https://frontiersmeetings.com/conferences/pediatrics/>

16th Congress of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health, 25-28 May 2022, Ghent, Belgium - Challenging times, are we ready? Novel approaches to sexual and reproductive health.
<https://escrh.eu/event/16th-esc-congress/>

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