



International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research Monthly Newsletter

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What's Going on Regarding Birth Defects

- **CDC concludes Zika causes microcephaly and other birth defects**
Access to the Media Statement: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/s0413-zika-microcephaly.html>
Access to the article published in NEJM: <http://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMs1604338>
- **FDA's Approval of Corn Masa Flour Fortification Could Prevent Birth Defects for Many Children:** on April 14, 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that they will permit fortification of corn masa flour with folic acid to help prevent certain birth defects, effective immediately. The announcement reflected a decision to accept a Citizens' Petition filed in 2012 by the March of Dimes, American Academy of Pediatrics, Spina Bifida Association, National Council of La Raza, Royal DSM and Gruma Corporation. The FDA's announcement calling for the **voluntary** fortification of corn masa flour will have a major beneficial impact on reducing neural tube defects (NTD) in particular, among the Hispanic population. Corn masa flour is used to make products such as corn tortillas, a staple product in the diets of many Hispanics, such as Mexican Americans. Mexican-American women have lower folic acid intake than non-Hispanic white women and are less likely than non-Hispanic white women to take vitamin supplements containing folic acid. Hispanic women also tend to be at higher risk for having a baby affected by a NTD. The fortification of corn masa flour with folic acid could increase intake by: 3.9 percent for non-Hispanic white women; 21 percent for Mexican-American women; 42.9 percent for Mexican-American women who reported only consuming enriched cereal grain products such as bread, pasta and corn grits, and who report speaking primarily Spanish. More info at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/index.html>
- **Pierpaolo Mastroiacovo**, ICBDSDR Centre Director, and **Boris Groisman**, from the National Network of Congenital Anomalies of Argentina (RENAC), attended an **international consultation** held at Pune University, India, from March 17 to 19, 2016, entitled "**Birth Defects in India : Identifying service and research needs**". The consultation was organized by the Savitribai Phule Pune University Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, and supported by the University Grants Commission-University with Potential for Excellence (UGC-UPE) Holistic Area "Translation Research in the Health of Women and Children" and University Grants Commission Indo Norwegian Cooperation Programme, INCP.
- Congratulations to the **Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (DBDDD) Surveillance Working Group** at the CDC National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) for the selection as the winner of the **2015 Honor Award for Excellence in Surveillance and Health Monitoring– International**. The Award was for exemplary leadership and support to the development and utilization of the NCBDDD Birth Defect Surveillance Toolkit, and came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).
- It is now 30 years from the accident occurred at the **Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant**, in Ukraine, with terrible consequences for workers and the population. Since then, **OMNI-Net Ukraine team** and its Director Dr. W. Wertelecki, have made remarkable efforts to evaluate such consequences in the field of birth defects. ICBDSDR wants to thank and recognize all of them for their contributions.
- The **Teratology Society Annual Meeting** will be held on 25-29 June 2016 in San Antonio, Texas. Please visit <http://www.teratology.org/meetings/2016/> for further information. Late Breaking Abstracts deadline: June 4, 2016.

News from the ICBDSDR Centre and Executive Committee

- **Welcome** in the Clearinghouse working group to:
 - ✓ **Angie Puerto Niño**, who replaced Karen Sarmiento at the **Bogotá Congenital Malformations Surveillance Program**. The Clearinghouse thanks Karen for her collaboration during the years as a staff member at the Bogotá Program.
 - ✓ **Indira Ethel Salazar** and **Mercedes Tijerina**, new members of the staff of the Newborn Program in the Health Services, **Mexico Nuevo León**.
- **43rd ICBDSDR Annual Meeting:** to be held in Magdeburg, Germany, from 18 to 21 September 2016. The Call for Abstracts and relevant information on meeting venue, registration and hotel reservation are available at www.icbdsr.org. Deadline for abstract submission: **May 15, 2016**. A **registration form** was recently disseminated, in order to help us to organize logistics and social events. Please fill in the registration form and send it back to centre@icbdsr.org by June 30, 2016.
- **ICBDSDR Mortality Study:** half of participating programs provided their data by the given deadline (March 15). The missing programs are kindly requested to send data ASAP at centre@icbdsr.org -or inform us about their deadline..
- **Alessandra Lisi Award, 2016:** This award honors Alessandra Lisi, a young researcher at ICBDSDR Centre from 2002 to her untimely death in 2006. Info at <http://icbdsr.org/page.asp?p=21608>. **Deadline** for application: **April 30, 2016**
- **Distinguished Service Award, 2016:** This award honors an individual who has provided distinguished service to the International Clearinghouse. Info at <http://www.icbdsr.org/page.asp?n=dsa>. **Deadline** for nominations: **May 31, 2016**