Publications

Prevent birth defects - Ensure quality of life and dignity

Birth defects prevention and control is a resounding approach to augment reduction of neonatal mortality and to accelerate progress towards the unfinished task of MDG4. A set of regional policy briefs on prevention of birth defect, to ensure quality of life and dignity, has been released by the Regional director during the inaugural ceremony of the SEAR TAG in December 2015.

Following are the policy briefs, on prevention and control of birth defect, included in this compilation:

- Addressing birth defects: Accelerating progress towards the unfinished task of MDG4
- Prevention and control of birth defects in South-East Asia: strategic framework, 2013-2017
- Elimination of congenital syphilis
- Fortifying staple food to prevent neural tube defects
- Preventing congenital rubella syndrome (CRS)

Prevention and surveillance of birth defects

Report of a Regional Programme Managers' Meeting on Prevention and Surveillance of Birth Defects, New Delhi, India, 14–16 April 2015
Birth Defects (BD) have been recognized as an emerging cause of under-five morbidity and mortality in the region. In order to produce National level real time data to guide national programmes on Newborn health and birth defects, a regional Newborn, Stillbirth and Birth defect surveillance electronic database, NBBD was developed and introduced among the member states in the WHO SEAR region.

A Regional Programme Managers’ Meeting on Prevention and Surveillance of BD was organized on 14–16 April 2015, in New Delhi, India, by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office to review implementation of national action plans, share experiences and challenges in BD surveillance, share progress on implementation of integrated approaches and discuss the follow-up steps. This report presents the proceedings of this regional network meeting. The report would be useful for national governments and other stakeholders to take forward the agenda of prevention and control of birth defects in the South-East Asia Region.

Regional Events

**NBBDD Mobile App Launched**

WHO-SEAR NBBDD mobile App has been officially launched by the Regional Director on 16 December 2015. It is a simple and user-friendly mobile application, transforming every feature provided for data entry from the NBBDD webpage to mobile devices. Moreover, it gives an offline data entry feature, so that data connection is not required all the time. Expanding the surveillance network to hospitals with limited resources; availability of computers, internet-connection and data entry personnel, was a constant struggle in the past. In order to overcome these challenges, it was proposed to develop a mobile application to link the surveillance network to the mobile devices.

**Download SEAR NBBDD App**

Experience data collection, right in your hand.

**Regional Technical Advisory Group Meeting on Women's and Children's Health**

New Delhi, India, 15 – 18 December 2015

The South-East Asia Regional Technical Advisory Group (SEAR-TAG) has been established by the Regional Director for providing technical guidance for accelerating reduction in newborn, child and maternal mortality in the Region. SEAR-TAG consists of 12 eminent technical experts from global and regional levels. The first meeting was held on 15-18 December 2015. The focus in this meeting was on addressing the issue high newborn mortality in the Region through the global approach of every newborn action plan that will have additional benefits of reduction in stillbirths and maternal mortality. Key thematic areas for deliberations in the meeting included: Expanding coverage of essential interventions and reaching the unreached, improving quality of care, engaging communities and improving
accountability towards health of women, newborns and children. A shared understanding has evolved to focus on universal access to good quality services around the time of childbirth and first few days after this since a large number of newborn and maternal deaths occur at this time. The SEAR-TAG meeting has resulted in recommendations for action at regional and country levels and areas of technical assistance from WHO and Partners have been identified.

Call to end preventable newborn, child and maternal mortality in South-East Asia Region

Regional H4+ Joint Statement for ending preventable newborn, child and maternal mortality was released by the Regional Directors of the six H4+ agencies: WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, UNAIDS and UN WOMEN in Dec 2015.

This regional collaborative mechanism will play an important role during the implementation of the UNSG’s Global Strategy for women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health during the SDG phase in Member States of South-East Asia Region. This would directly contribute to target 17 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development under the SDG-3. The Joint Statement pledges collective support to Member States to accelerate actions for universal access to good quality essential services prioritizing care for mothers and newborns focusing at the time of childbirth and first few days of life; urgently reaching the unreached by strengthening health system and community engagement.

Articles of Interest

- Maltreatment of Children Under Age 2 With Specific Birth Defects: A Population-Based Study
- Folic acid supplementation influences the distribution of neural tube defect subtypes: a registry-based study.
- Amount of Antenatal Care Days in a Context of Effective Regionalization of Very Preterm Deliveries.
- An Algorithm for Predicting Neonatal Mortality in Threatened Very Preterm Birth.

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