



2016 Report

The Iowa Registry for Congenital and Inherited Disorders (IRCID) continues to be a national leader in surveillance of congenital and inherited disorders and serves as a model program for other states. The IRCID conducts active surveillance to identify information about congenital and inherited disorders that occur in Iowa and to Iowa residents. The IRCID has collected information for over 55,000 children with various birth defects. This information is used by health care providers and educators to provide treatment and support services. It is also used by researchers to study risk factors for birth defects and to evaluate treatments for birth defects.

The IRCID also conducts surveillance for Duchenne/Becker muscular dystrophy and has identified 140 children with this neuromuscular disease. More recently, we have expanded our surveillance of muscular dystrophies to include seven additional muscular dystrophies – Congenital, Distal, Emery-Dreifuss, Fascioscapulohumeral, Limb-Girdle, Myotonic, and Oculopharyngeal. Additionally, the IRCID has collaborated with the Metropolitan Atlanta Congenital Defects Program to develop approaches to conduct active surveillance for stillbirths and also newborn screening disorders. Most recently, the IRCID has partnered with the CDC to conduct rapid, active statewide surveillance of microcephaly and other birth defects that may be related to Zika virus exposure among pregnant women.

The surveillance and research efforts of the IRCID and its partners provide a valuable resource for the state of Iowa. While taking care to preserve the privacy of families affected by these disorders, the IRCID provides important information to state policy makers and public health professionals. We are pleased to perform this important work on behalf of the citizens of Iowa.

Surveillance for Birth Defects

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognize three types of surveillance approaches, each rated differently for completeness of patient ascertainment:

- Vital Records: Use of birth and fetal death certificates provided by the state's Department of Health (Rating: Poor)
- Passive Reporting: Use of medical reports submitted by staff from hospitals, clinics, or other facilities (Rating: Fair to Good)
- Active Reporting: Use of trained personnel who systematically review records in hospitals, clinics, or other facilities (Rating: Excellent)

The term "defect" refers to abnormal development related to body structure, body function, and metabolism, or an error in body chemistry. Typically, a defect is present at birth (congenital), but a recognizable defect may be diagnosed during pregnancy (prenatal) or following birth (postnatal).

The IRCID has traditionally focused on structural birth defects, which typically involve a body part that is missing or malformed. Examples include heart defects, spina bifida, and cleft lip and palate. Since 2003, the IRCID adopted the recommendations of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to focus largely on a core set of birth defects (see Table 1). Prior to this change, the IRCID included many 'minor' conditions, so this change represents a reduction in the number of conditions that it monitors.

Table 1 Prevalence (per 10,000 live births) for birth defects in Iowa, 2009-2013 deliveries.

Birth Defect	Total	Prevalence*
Brain/Spinal Cord		
Anencephalus	52	2
Encephalocele	17	0.9
Holoprosencephaly	33	1.7
Microcephalus	154	7.9
Spina bifida without anencephalus	80	4.1
Eye		
Anophthalmia/microphthalmia	33	1.7
Congenital cataract	74	3.8
Ear		
Anotia/microtia	42	2.2
Heart		
Aortic valve stenosis	54	2.8
Atrial septal defect	605	31.2
Atrioventricular septal defect	121	6.2
Coarctation of aorta	109	5.6
Common truncus	7	0.4
Double outlet right ventricle	46	2.4
Ebstein's anomaly	15	0.8
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	55	2.8
Interrupted aortic arch	10	0.5
Pulmonary valve atresia and stenosis	258	13.3
Single ventricle	12	0.6
Tetralogy of Fallot	74	3.8
Total anomalous pulmonary venous return	18	0.9
Transposition of great arteries	58	3.0
Tricuspid valve atresia and stenosis	42	2.2
Ventricular septal defect	1053	54.3
Oral/Facial		
Choanal atresia	28	1.4
Cleft lip only	71	3.7
Cleft lip with cleft palate	111	5.7
Cleft palate without cleft lip	139	7.2

Table 1 (continued from previous page)

Birth Defect	Total	Prevalence*
Gastro-Intestinal		
Biliary atresia	9	0.5
Esophageal atresia/tracheoesophageal fistula	57	2.9
Hirschsprung's disease (congenital megacolon)	33	1.7
Pyloric stenosis	412	21.2
Rectal and large intestinal atresia/stenosis	87	4.5
Small intestinal atresia and stenosis	69	3.6
Genital/Urinary		
Bladder exstrophy	7	0.4
Cloacal exstrophy	< 5	--
Congenital posterior urethral valves	23	1.2
[†] Hypospadias	577	[‡] 58.3
Renal agenesis/hypoplasia	108	5.6
Muscle/Skeletal		
Clubfoot	320	16.5
Craniosynostosis	139	7.2
Diaphragmatic hernia	55	2.8
Gastroschisis	120	6.2
Limb deficiencies (reduction defects)	117	6.0
Omphalocele	48	2.5
Syndromes/Chromosomes		
Down syndrome (Trisomy 21)	235	12.0
Edwards syndrome (Trisomy 18)	69	3.5
Patau syndrome (Trisomy 13)	30	1.5
Turner syndrome [^]	49	[^] 5.2

*Prevalence per 10,000 live births.

[†]Includes first, second, and third degree hypospadias.

[‡]Prevalence per 10,000 male live births.

[^]Prevalence per 10,000 female live births.

Birth Defect Research

Approximately 1 in 33 newborns is affected by a major birth defect, making such conditions disturbingly common. These conditions come with personal and monetary costs, both for the families of these children and for society. Nearly 20% of all infant deaths are caused by birth defects. Hospitalizations associated with such conditions are longer than hospitalizations for other conditions. More than \$8 billion is required to provide lifetime care for the children born with birth defects each year.

Because the causes of up to 70% of birth defects are unknown, research is a critical part of any strategy to prevent these conditions. As such, in 1996 the United States Congress directed the CDC to establish regional “centers of excellence” in birth defect research and prevention. Further, interest in fostering collaboration among state birth defect programs led to the formation of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network in 1998.

National Birth Defects Prevention Network

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) is a nationwide association of birth defect programs and individuals. The IRCID is an active member of the NBDPN and participates in many of its projects. For example, the NBDPN provides a set of guidelines to help birth defect registries around the country organize their work in a consistent manner. The NBDPN also provides educational materials to birth defect abstractors, as well as informational resources to promote Birth Defects Prevention Month each January. Another goal of the NBDPN is to encourage scientific collaboration among birth defect programs. The IRCID is currently participating in NBDPN projects for congenital diaphragmatic hernia, gastroschisis, microcephaly, and pyloric stenosis.

Iowa Center of Excellence for Birth Defects Research and Prevention

The Iowa Center of Excellence for Birth Defects Research and Prevention was one of eight charter centers established by the CDC to study genetic and environmental (broadly defined) risk factors for birth defects. Iowa Center investigators participated in local (state-wide) projects as well as the National Birth Defects Prevention Study (NBDPS). The NBDPS was a population-based study that investigated genetic and environmental risk factors for over 30 major birth defects. As a partner with the Iowa Center, the IRCID identified children with NBDPS-eligible birth defects and secured permission from mothers to share information with researchers. Women with a pregnancy affected by one or more of the defects and women with an unaffected pregnancy were interviewed about their health, diet, and lifestyle during their pregnancies. Biological specimens were also requested from each family to study genetic factors that may contribute to these birth defects. Over 43,000 interviews were completed nationwide, and biological specimens have been collected from more than 25,000 families.

Over 300 research projects are currently underway nation-wide as part of the NBDPS. Some of these projects examine risk factors, such as maternal nutrition. Others examine gene and environment interaction effects. Still others examine maternal behavior during pregnancy.

The research performed by Iowa investigators has the potential to positively affect the lives of Iowans. Current studies by Iowa investigators are focused on the relationships between birth defects and agricultural chemicals, cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, medications, and compounds in drinking water, as well as genetic risk factors and their interactions with these exposures.

2016 Iowa Center Publication Using ICRID Data (Names listed in bold designate Iowa investigators)

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Surveillance for Microcephaly and Other Birth Defects Related to Zika Virus Exposure

Congenital microcephaly (MC) is a serious birth defect characterized by an abnormally small head size in affected infants compared to infants of the same sex and gestational age. A recent, dramatic increase in MC in infants in Brazil has been linked to pregnant women infected with Zika virus. This virus is transmitted most commonly through the bite of infected mosquitoes. Unlike its often mild presentation in infected adults, Zika virus exposure poses a serious risk to an unborn fetus. With the potentially devastating effects of fetal exposure to Zika virus, more timely surveillance is needed for monitoring birth defects that may be related to Zika virus exposure among pregnant women. To advance statewide surveillance of MC and other birth defects that may be related to Zika virus exposure among pregnancy women, the IRCID created a rapid response team comprised of experienced surveillance professionals. In Iowa, our team is partnering with the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology at the Iowa Department of Public Health and the State Hygienic Laboratory of Iowa. Along with rapid surveillance, our team will connect affected infants and families to health and social services, examine health and developmental outcomes of infants born to women with a positive or inconclusive Zika virus test result during pregnancy, and participate in centralized national projects led by the CDC for effective translation of our surveillance data into public health action.

Surveillance for Muscular Dystrophy

Muscular dystrophies (MDs) are a group of genetic progressive muscle diseases affecting an estimated 33 per 100,000 individuals and characterized by worsening muscle weakness. Historically, types of MDs were diagnosed by known changes in muscle and clinical presentation; more recently, diagnosis is determined largely by genetic analysis. Ages at symptom onset of MDs can range from birth through late adulthood. In children, Duchenne is the most common childhood MD, followed by the congenital MDs. In adults, myotonic dystrophy is the most common MD, followed by facioscapulohumeral MD.

Muscular Dystrophy Surveillance Tracking and Research Network (MD STARnet)

The MD STARnet is a surveillance program currently active in six states. The goals of the MD STARnet are to define and describe the MD population in the United States, define and describe healthcare needs and outcomes for individuals living with MD, and collect information to guide MD care, treatment, and

policy. On behalf of the MD STARnet, the IRCID is conducting surveillance of lowans diagnosed with one of nine MDs (Table 2). This surveillance consists of identification and ongoing medical chart review.

Table 2. Number of patients identified with a muscular dystrophy among Iowa residents, 2004-2016

Phase of Surveillance/Muscular Dystrophy	Number of Patients
Phase I*	
Duchenne or Becker	140
Phase II†	
Becker	52
Congenital	24
Distal	5
Duchenne	105
Emery-Dreifuss	12
Fascioscapulohumeral	81
Limb-Girdle	66
Myotonic	253
Oculopharyngeal	17

*Patient born on or after January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2011.

†Patient with MD diagnosis and health encounter from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2011.

Muscular Dystrophy Research

2016 MD STARnet Publications Using IRCID Data (Names listed in bold designate Iowa investigators)

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