

THE PREVALENCE OF CONGENITAL MALFORMATIONS IN ALBANIA – RESULTS FROM CONGENITAL MALFORMATIONS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM IN 2011

Dorina Toçi¹, Ervin Toçi¹, Eduard Kakarriqi^{1,2}, Enver Roshi^{1,2}.

¹ Institute of Public Health, Tirana, Albania

² Faculty of Medicine, Tirana University, Tirana, Albania

Abstract

Background: Since 2009, the Institute of Public Health started to establish the congenital malformation surveillance system in order to highlight the detailed structure of congenital malformations (CMs) in Albania and to identify potential genetic, environmental, nutritional and other factors linked with (CMs). The information on CMs now can be classified according to various diagnoses and national and regional analyses by the type of system affected and socio-demographic characteristics are possible.

Methods: Information on CMs during 2011 was extracted from the database of congenital malformations surveillance system. In this study are included CMs cases diagnosed during pregnancy and the first days of birth. The data regarding the number of total live births were extracted from the Ministry of Health database. CMs are described by the type of body system affected, by region and by different socio-demographic factors.

Results: In 2011 the rate of CMs in Albania was 15.2/1000 live births. The most common CMs were those affecting the cardio-vascular system, muscular-skeletal system, central nervous system and the gastro-intestinal system. Among cardio-vascular CMs the most frequent one was the inter-ventricular septal defect. Approximately 60% of the cases were of rural residence. In 55% of cases the mothers had 8 years of education or less and around 70% were unemployed. One-third of CM cases had a birth weight of less than 2500 grams. The frequency of CMs was highest among 20-30 years old mothers.

Conclusions: The structure of CMs in Albania is similar to that found in European countries. The most common CMs were those affecting the cardio-vascular system. More research is needed to establish the risk factors of CMs in this South Eastern European country.

Keywords: *Congenital malformations, prevalence, epidemiology, Albania.*