11 September 2013 – The Ministry of Health of Iraq released today a summary report on a study conducted in 18 districts in Iraq to assess the prevalence of congenital birth defects in the country.

In recent years there have been several anecdotal reports of geographical regions with an unusually high prevalence of congenital birth defects in Iraq. Most of the reports did not meet the norms for an objective study of birth defects, and a review of the published literature could find no clear evidence to support their findings. Because of continuing uncertainty the Ministry of Health of Iraq undertook a systematic collection of information on the prevalence of congenital birth defects in Iraq.

The Ministry designed a household survey to be conducted in the 18 selected districts in order to assess:

- the magnitude, trend and type of congenital birth defect
- the association of congenital birth defects with a limited number of risk factors
- the impact on carers for those with congenital birth defects.

This preliminary report focuses primarily on addressing the magnitude, geographical differentials and the trend of congenital birth defects. The second and third objectives, as well as identification of the type of congenital birth defect, will be addressed to the extent possible in the final full report, which will be made available when full analysis is completed by the Ministry of Health.

The launching ceremony was attended by the Senior Deputy Minister of Health, local media, United Nations partners, development partners and civil society organizations. The ceremony was followed by a question and answer session with the media.
Related links

Congenital birth defects summary report [pdf 342kb]

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