

Neural Tube Defects in Malaysia: Data from the Malaysian National Neonatal Registry.

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Abstract

SUMMARY:

This study aimed to determine the prevalence and early outcome of neural tube defects (NTDs) in Malaysia. This prospective study included all neonates with NTDs (spina bifida, anencephaly, encephalocele) born in 2009 in 32 Malaysian hospitals in the Malaysian National Neonatal Network. The prevalence of NTDs was 0.42 per 1000 live births, being highest among the indigenous people of Sarawak (1.09 per 1000 live births) and lowest among Malaysians of Chinese descent (0.09 per 1000 live births). The most common type of NTDs was anencephaly (0.19 per 1000 live births), followed by spina bifida (0.11 per 1000 live births) and encephalocele (0.07 per 1000 live births). Majority of the infants with anencephaly (94.5%, n = 51), 45.8% (n = 11) with encephalocele and 9.5% (n = 4) with spina bifida died. The median duration of hospital stay was 4 (range: 0-161) days.

CONCLUSION:

NTDs were common in Malaysia. Mortality was high. Long-term monitoring of NTD prevalence following folic fortification of food is recommended.