

Central nervous system (CNS) malformations including [neural tube defects](#) (NTDs) are the second most common type of birth defects world-wide, and are major causes of childhood disability and mortality.

Estevez-Ordonez et al. report the first analysis of prevalence in Western Honduras of CNS malformations including NTDs over six consecutive years.

Data from all patients with congenital CNS malformations and total live births between 2010 and 2015 were obtained through institution and regional registries from all three public referral hospitals in Western Honduras, representing 67 municipalities. Cases were identified using the ICD-10 CNS malformation codes. Birth prevalence was calculated as cases per 10,000 live births.

Overall, 275 cases of CNS malformations were identified from 123,903 live births (54% Females, 58% NTDs). Overall 6- year birth prevalence of CNS malformations ranged from 13.9 and 31.1. Spina bifida variants and anencephaly represented 80% and 19% of reported NTDs, respectively. Total 6-year prevalence of NTDs in Western Honduras ranged from 7.0 to 17.4 over years studied. Six municipalities demonstrated average prevalence over 30 (maximum 49.0).

This is the first study reporting disease-burden of CNS malformations in Western Honduras. The nationwide birth-prevalence of NTDs in rural Honduras may have decreased since the implementation of prenatal health policies started in 2005. However, they identified regions with unexpectedly elevated prevalence, indicating high regional prevalence that could be targeted for improved preventative efforts, ultimately decreasing the burden of these conditions ¹⁾.

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Estevez-Ordonez D, Dewan MC, Feldman MJ, Montalvan-Sanchez EE, Montalvan-Sanchez DM, Rodriguez-Murillo AA, Urrutia-Argueta SA, Cherry CB, Morgan DR, Alvarez-Rodriguez R, Bonfield CM. Congenital Malformations of the Central Nervous System in Rural Western Honduras: A 6-Year Report on Trends. World Neurosurg. 2017 Jul 29. pii: S1878-8750(17)31231-7. doi: 10.1016/j.wneu.2017.07.131. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 28765025.

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