

Editorial

Neonatal Seizures in Iraq

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In this Issue of the Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine, Al-Momen et al. (2018) reported the causes and prognosis of neonatal seizures in Iraq. The mortality by neonatal seizures was approximately 33% in Iraq. They proposed the effective strategies for prevention of neonatal seizures; proper medical care and management for mothers and neonates before, during and after delivery to prevent neonatal infections, perinatal asphyxia, low birth weight, prematurity, metabolic abnormalities, and other risk factors of neonatal seizures. To the best of our knowledge, this is a first report on the health problems of the newborn in Iraq that is published by the Iraqi doctors in our Journal, the Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine.

The Lancet journals have been reporting serious health crisis in Iraq since 2003. The report entitled 'Iraq's growing health crisis' by Webster (2014) introduced the comment on Iraq by Debarati Guha-Sapir at the Université catholique de Louvain in Brussels. Guha-Sapir said that the 2003 US-led occupation of Iraq resulted in the destruction of an estimated 12% of hospitals and public health laboratories, and pushed nearly two thirds of qualified medical personnel to emigrate (Webster 2014). Moreover, the 2003 war triggered political destabilization across the Middle East, fostering conditions for ISIS to flourish from Mosul in the northern of Iraq to Orlando in USA (Horton 2016). After the military operation by the Iraqi government on Mosul, the prevalence of severe malnourishment among

infants aged 1-5 months was 25-26% in camps displaced from Mosul, which was assessed using mid-upper arm circumference or using weight-for-age Z-score in 2017 (Haidar et al. 2017). Although the study by Al-Momen et al. (2018) was done in major neonatology centers in Baghdad, malnourishment in mothers and neonates, as well as poor infection control, may be an important background for the high mortality by neonatal seizures in Iraq.

The authors are, however, positively and earnestly trying to solve the health problems of the newborn and provide the information to pave the way to improve the poor prognosis of neonatal seizures in Iraq. We, the Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine, hope the publication of the article by Al-Momen et al. (2018) contributes to overcoming the serious health crisis in Iraq.

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