

Houston Birth Defects Assessment 2000-2016: Summary

Background

In response to a community concern, the Houston Health Department requested an evaluation of birth defects occurrence for an area of interest by the Union Pacific Railroad facility where ground water was found to be contaminated with creosote.

What We Did

We selected a list of specific birth defects to look for. This list included defects that:

- Cover multiple parts of the body
- Are more common
- Are more serious
- Are obvious at birth

We looked at how commonly birth defects from this list were found in the area of interest compared to all of Harris County from the years 2000 to 2016.

We also looked at how commonly babies were born with **any** birth defect in the area of interest compared to all of Harris county over the same time.

What We Found

One birth defect, (Gastroschisis – a problem with the belly wall that leaves the intestines exposed), was twice as common in the area of interest when compared to Harris County. However, we know that young mothers are much more likely to have babies with Gastroschisis. When we took this into account, this difference went away.

All other categories that we looked at showed no differences.

Resources and More Information

Texas Birth Defects Registry:

<https://dshs.texas.gov/birthdefects/>

For questions, comments:

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