**BACKGROUND**

Congenital anomalies can be defined as structural or functional anomalies that occur during pregnancy and can be identified prenatally, at birth or later in life.

In Portugal, since 1997 the National Registry of Congenital Anomalies (RENAC), a population-based registry, is a strategic instrument in surveillance and improve knowledge in this field.

The aim of this study is to investigate whether maternal age is associated with congenital anomalies in the baby.

**METHODS**

A descriptive and retrospective study for the period 2000-2010, was carried out using the data from RENAC. Prevalence rates were calculated using the number of cases reported in newborns, stillbirths of at least 20 weeks gestation and in induced abortions related to congenital malformations. The statistical significance of the association was studied using the chi-square test with a 5% significance level.

**Conclusions**

- Clinical and public health interventions are needed to give special attention to young mothers and reduce risk factors of non-chromosomal anomalies.
- Given the increase in maternal age and its association to some subgroups of CA specific primary prevention programs should be developed.
- A surveillance system as RENAC is a strategic instrument in surveillance and improve knowledge in CA namely regarding information on risk factors.