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National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782

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Overall Infant Mortality Rate in U.S. Largely Unchanged Rates Among Black Women More than Twice that of White Women

For Immediate Release: May 2, 2007

Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2004 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. NVSR Volume 55, Number 14. xx pp. (PHS) 2007-1120 [PDF](#)

Trends in Preterm-Related Infant Mortality by Race and Ethnicity: United States, 1999-2004. Health E-Stat.

The infant mortality rate in the United States in 2004 was 6.78 infant (under 1 year of age) deaths per 1,000 live births, not significantly different from the rate of 6.84 in 2003, according to a new report released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The report, "Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2004 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set," also finds continued racial/ethnic disparities in infant mortality rates.

Non-Hispanic black women had the highest infant mortality rate in the United States in 2004 – 13.60 per 1,000 live births compared to 5.66 per 1,000 births among non-Hispanic white women. Women of Cuban ethnicity in the United States had the lowest infant mortality rate of 4.55 per 1,000 live births.

Other infant mortality rates in the United States broken down by race and Hispanic origin include American Indian (8.45), Puerto Rican (7.82), Mexican (5.47), Asian/Pacific Islander (4.67) and Central/South American (4.65).

The overall infant mortality rate has declined by 10 percent since 1995, when the rate was 7.57 per 1,000 live births. However, the

rate has not declined much since 2000 when it was 6.89.

Three years of data (2002-2004) were combined to get specific estimates of infant mortality rates by state, race and Hispanic origin. For the three-year period there were significant differences in infant mortality rates by state, ranging from a rate of 10.32 in Mississippi to 4.68 in Vermont. For infants of non-Hispanic black mothers, rates ranged from 17.57 in Wisconsin to 8.75 in Minnesota. For infants of non-Hispanic white mothers, the infant mortality rate ranged from 7.67 in West Virginia to 3.80 in New Jersey.

For multiple births, the infant mortality rate was 30.46, more than five times the rate of 5.94 for single births. The report also finds that infants born at 34-36 weeks gestation had infant mortality rates three times higher than for those born at 37-41 weeks gestation.

A second, related report, "Trends in Preterm-Related Infant Mortality by Race/Ethnicity: United States, 1999-2004," finds that in 2004, 36.5 percent of all infant deaths in the United States were due to preterm-related causes, up from 35.4 percent of all infant deaths in 1999. Preterm death can be caused by any number of conditions including multiple pregnancy, extremely low birthweight, respiratory distress, and others.

Other findings from the second report:

- Nearly half (46 percent) of infant deaths to non-Hispanic black women and 41 percent of infant deaths to Puerto Rican women were due to preterm-related causes of death. The percentage was somewhat lower for other race/ethnic groups.
- Preterm-related infant mortality rates were more than three times higher for non-Hispanic black (6.29) than for non-Hispanic white (1.82) mothers. The preterm-related infant mortality rate for Puerto Rican (3.19) mothers was 75 percent higher than for non-Hispanic white mothers. Preterm-related infant mortality rates for American Indian (1.89), Mexican (1.76), and Asian or Pacific Islander (1.65) women were not significantly different from the rate for non-Hispanic white women.
- In 2004, the preterm-related infant mortality rate for non-Hispanic black mothers was actually higher than the infant mortality rate for all causes for non-Hispanic white, Mexican, and Asian or Pacific Islander women.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Health Statistics
Hyattsville, MD
20782

1-800-232-4636

Table 1. Deaths, age-adjusted death rates, and life expectancy at birth, by race and sex, and infant deaths and mortality rates, by race: United States, 2003 and 2004

Measure and sex	All races/ ^{1,2}		White/ ²		Black/ ²	
	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003
All deaths	2,397,615	2,448,288	2,056,643	2,103,714	287,315	291,300
Age-adjusted death rate/ ³	800.8	832.7	786.3	817.0	1,027.3	1,065.9
Male	955.7	994.3	936.9	973.9	1,269.4	1,319.1
Female	679.2	706.2	666.9	693.1	855.3	885.6
Life expectancy at birth/ ⁴	77.8	77.5	78.3	78.0	73.1	72.7
Male	75.2	74.8	75.7	75.3	69.5	69.0
Female	80.4	80.1	80.8	80.5	76.3	76.1
All maternal deaths	540	495	300	280	214	183
Maternal mortality rate/ ⁵	13.1	12.1	9.3	8.7	27.0	30.5
All infant deaths	27,936	28,025	18,231	18,440	8,494	8,402
Infant mortality rate/ ⁶	6.79	6.85	5.66	5.72	13.79	14.01

¹Includes races other than white and black.

²Race categories are consistent with the 1977 Office of Management and Budget standards. California, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming reported multiple-race data in 2004. The multiple-race data for these states were bridged to the single-race categories of the 1977 Office of Management and Budget standards for comparability with the other states; see "Technical Notes."

³Age-adjusted death rates are per 100,000 U.S. standard population, based on the year 2000 standard.

⁴Life expectancy at birth stated in years.

⁵Maternal mortality rates are deaths assigned to categories A34, O00-O95, O98-O99 per 100,000 live births in specified group; see "Technical Notes."

⁶Infant mortality rates are deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births in specified group.

Table 3. Number of infant, neonatal, and postneonatal deaths and mortality rates, by sex: United States, 2003-04

[Rates are infant (under 1 year), neonatal (under 28 days), and postneonatal (28 days–11 months) deaths per 1,000 live births in specified group]

Race and sex	2004		2003		Percent change from 2003 to 2004
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
	Infant				
Total	27,936	6.79	28,025	6.85	-0.9
Male	15,718	7.47	15,902	7.60	-1.7
Female	12,218	6.09	12,123	6.07	0.3
	Neonatal				
Total	18,593	4.52	18,893	4.62	-2.2
Male	10,390	4.94	10,636	5.08	-2.8
Female	8,203	4.09	8,257	4.14	-1.2
	Postneonatal				
Total	9,343	2.27	9,132	2.23	1.9
Male	5,328	2.53	5,266	2.52	0.5
Female	4,015	2.00	3,866	1.94	3.1

Table 4. Number of infant deaths, percentage of total infant deaths, and infant mortality rates for 2004, and percentage change in infant mortality rates from 2003 to 2004 for the 10 leading causes of infant death in 2004: United States

[Rates are infant deaths per 100,000 live births]

Rank/ ¹	Cause of death (based on the <i>International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, 1992</i>)	Number	Percent of total deaths	Rate	Percent change/ ² from 2003 to 2004
...	All causes	27,936	100.0	679.4	-0.8
1	Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities (Q00-Q99)	5,622	20.1	136.7	-0.5
2	Disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight, not elsewhere classified (P07)	4,642	16.6	112.9	-4.8
3	Sudden infant death syndrome (R95)	2,246	8.0	54.6	3.2
4	Newborn affected by maternal complications of pregnancy (P01)	1,715	6.1	41.7	-0.2
5	Accidents (unintentional injuries) (V01-X59)	1,052	3.8	25.6	10.8
6	Newborn affected by complications of placenta, cord and membranes (P02)	1,042	3.7	25.3	-5.9
7	Respiratory distress of newborn (P22)	875	3.1	21.3	4.9
8	Bacterial sepsis of newborn (P36)	827	3.0	20.1	6.3
9	Neonatal hemorrhage (P50-P52,P54)	616	2.2	15.0	-5.7
10	Diseases of the circulatory system (I00-I99)	593	2.1	14.4	-0.7
...	All other causes (residual)	8,706	31.2	211.7	...

... Category not applicable.

¹Rank based on number of deaths; see "Technical Notes."

²Percentage change based on a comparison of the 2004 infant mortality rate with the 2003 infant mortality rate.