



## World Health Day 2007

### History

- The United Nations created the World Health Organization (WHO) on April 7, 1948. Since 1950 World Health Day has been celebrated on April 7 of each year. World Health Days raise global awareness and bolster future activity in the particular area of concern.
- The focus of this year's World Health Day will focus on international health security. The aim of the Day is to urge governments, organizations and businesses to "Invest in health, build a safer future."
- Key topics for World Health Day 2007:
  - 1.Threats to health know no borders.
  - 2.Invest in health, build a safer future.
  - 3.Health leads to security; insecurity leads to poor health.
  - 4.Preparedness and quick response improve international health security.
  - 5.The World Health Organization is making the world more secure

### Maternal Health Around the World: Mortality

- In developed countries, the maternal mortality ratio averages around 27 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births; in developing countries the ratio is nearly 20 times higher, at 480 per 100 000, and may be as high as 1000 per 100 000 in some regions.
- The numbers of deaths each year from maternal causes are estimated to range from 507,000 to 585,000 – equating to the death of one woman every minute, every day. Of these deaths, 99% occur in low-income countries. Women in sub-Saharan Africa have a one in 16 lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy or during childbirth as compared to a one in 1,800 lifetime risk for women in developed countries. Death and disability from maternal causes account for nearly 20% of the total burden of disease for women of reproductive age in developing countries.
- According to UN estimates, nearly 95 percent of the deaths occurred in Asia (253,000) and sub-Saharan Africa (251,000). Four percent were in Latin America and the Caribbean, and less than 1 percent in more developed countries.
- Death and disability from maternal causes account for nearly 20 percent of the total disease for women of reproductive age in developing countries.



- Five direct complications account for more than 70 percent of maternal deaths: hemorrhage (25 percent) is the most common cause of maternal death; infection or sepsis (15 percent); unsafe abortions (13 percent); eclampsia (12 percent); and obstructed labor (8 percent).
- Every year, about 15 million babies are born to adolescent mothers. Young women are twice as likely to die from childbirth as women in their twenties, and women under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die.

## **Disability**

- Each year, about 3 million women suffer from short-term and lifetime disabilities stemming from complications in pregnancy or delivery. As many as 80,000 women per year develop fistula, a hole in the birth canal that permits leakage from the bladder or rectum to enter the vagina.
- According to UNICEF, 98% of women in industrialized nations and only 65% of women in developing countries are attended by skilled health personnel at least once during their pregnancy. Only 53% of women in developing countries are attended by a doctor or midwife during delivery. Only 30 percent of women in less developed countries receive any postnatal care to detect any problems, support breastfeeding, and receive family planning information or services.

## **Contraceptive Use and Reproductive Health**

- Modern contraceptive use has risen steadily and births per woman have declined in all but a handful of developing countries. Despite improvements in access to family planning services and contraceptive use, nearly 30 percent of the 205 million pregnancies that occur each year are unintended. Over 120 million women who wish to space or delay their next birth still do not have access to modern methods of contraception.
- Each year some 30 million women experience miscarriage and an additional 43 million terminate their pregnancies through elective abortions. According to the Global Health Council, nearly half of these abortions occur in unsafe and clandestine conditions where abortion is illegal or highly restricted.
- While over 90 percent of teenage women in most countries in Asia, North Africa and the Near East, and Latin American and the Caribbean knew at least one contraceptive method, in sub-Saharan Africa knowledge levels were generally lower. Teens that had not yet had sex were the least knowledgeable about contraception in every country except Nigeria.
- Although rates of adolescent childbearing are declining in many countries, 15 million women ages 15 to 19 give birth every year, 13 million in less developed countries.<sup>1,2</sup> Overall, 33



percent of women from less developed countries give birth before the age of 20—varying from eight percent in East Asia to 55 percent in West Africa.

## **Child Health Around the World: Mortality**

- An estimated 130 million babies are born worldwide each year, about 91 million in developing countries. About 4 million babies die in their first month of life, and of those, three-quarters die in their first week. The leading causes of neonatal death include severe infection, birth asphyxia, complications of prematurity, and tetanus.
- Roughly 10.6 million children die each year before the age of five. According to the World Health Organization, nearly 70 percent of these deaths are caused by preventable and treatable conditions: malnutrition, acute respiratory infections (principally pneumonia), diarrhea, measles, and malaria.
- Despite improvements in child health and an overall decrease of child mortality in the last few decades, the progress has been uneven between less developed and industrialized nations. While infant mortality rates in less developed countries dropped from 170 per 1,000 live births in 1960 to 102 in 2000, infant mortality rates in industrialized countries dropped nearly five-fold from 31 per 1,000 live births in 1960 to only 6 in 2000.
- Six countries account for half of all child deaths: India (2.4 million), Nigeria (834,000), China (784,000), Pakistan (565,000), the D.R. Congo (484,000), and Ethiopia (472,000). Ninety percent of all deaths occur in just 42 countries, 39 of these in sub-Saharan Africa, where mortality rates exceed 110 child deaths per 1,000 live births.
- About 37 percent of all child deaths occur during the neonatal period, or the first 28 days of life. The prenatal period encompassing birth and the first week of life is the most risky time of all. Twenty-two percent of all child deaths occur during this period, and 98 percent of these deaths take place in developing countries.

## **Immunization**

- About 30 million children, mostly in less developed countries, have no access to immunizations.
- A fourth of children in the world, 500 million, remain without immunization against measles, polio, pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis.
- Access to immunization varies greatly across the world: a child in a less developed country is ten times more likely to die of a vaccine-preventable disease than a child from an industrialized one.
- Polio is one of the few major diseases that is close to being eradicated, providing a unique public health opportunity to make a lasting contribution to humanity. Polio cases worldwide have decreased from 350,000 in 1988 to 1,255 cases in 2004 - a decline of more than 99%. The number of polio-endemic countries has declined from 125 countries



in 1988 to 6 countries in 2004. Nearly 5 million children are walking who would otherwise have been paralyzed by polio.

- 1.25 million childhood deaths have been averted by distributing Vitamin A during the immunization campaigns.
- The Hepatitis B vaccine was introduced throughout 158 WHO Member States by the end of 2005, up from 153 in 2004. Global coverage is estimated at 55 % and is as high as 86 % in the Americas. This contrasts with 27% in South-East Asian Region and 39% in the African Region.
- Five countries – China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan – each have more than 1 million unvaccinated children accounting for 16.3 million (more than 60%) of the world's 27 million unvaccinated children.
- In 2003 alone, immunization averted more than 2 million deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. An additional 600 000 hepatitis B-related deaths that would have otherwise have occurred in adulthood were also prevented. Historically, immunization is one of the greatest public health success stories ever: smallpox was eradicated in 1980, the global incidence of polio has been reduced by 99% and in just five years (1999-2003) global measles deaths have decreased by 39%, with a 46% reduction in Africa.

## **HIV/AIDS:**

### Number of people living with HIV in 2006

Total 39.5 million (34.1–47.1 million)  
Adults 37.2 million (32.1–44.5 million)  
Women 17.7 million (15.1–20.9 million)  
Children under 15 years 2.3 million (1.7–3.5 million)

### People newly infected with HIV in 2006

Total 4.3 million (3.6–6.6 million)  
Adults 3.8 million (3.2–5.7 million)  
Children under 15 years 530 000 (410 000–660 000)

### AIDS deaths in 2006

Total 2.9 million (2.5–3.5 million)  
Adults 2.6 million (2.2–3.0 million)  
Children under 15 years 380 000 (290 000–500 000)

- Two thirds (63%) of all adults and children with HIV globally live in sub-Saharan Africa, with its epicenter in southern Africa (see pages 10-23). One third (32%) of all people with HIV globally live in southern Africa and 34% of all deaths due to AIDS in 2006 occurred there.
- Globally, and in every region, more adult women (15 years or older) than ever before are now living with HIV. The 17.7 million [15.1 million–20.9 million] women living with HIV in 2006 represented an increase of over one million compared with 2004.



- Positive trends in young people's sexual behaviors—increased use of condoms, delay of sexual debut, and fewer sexual partners—have taken place over the past decade in many countries with generalized epidemics. Declines in HIV prevalence among young people between 2000 and 2005 are evident in Botswana, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.
- An estimated 930 000 [790 000–1.1 million] adults and children died of AIDS in southern Africa in 2005—one-third of all AIDS deaths globally.

## **Maternal and Child Health in the United States**

- Overall, there were 495 maternal deaths resulting from complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or up to 42 days postpartum in 2003. The maternal mortality rate among non-Hispanic Black women (31.2 per 100,000 live births) is about four times the rate among non-Hispanic White women (8.1 per 100,000 live births). This disparity has widened since 2000.
- Children with family incomes below the Federal poverty level (FPL) were more likely than children with family incomes of 200 percent of FPL or above to have public insurance (66.8 versus 12.6 percent) or be uninsured (19.5 versus 6.7 percent). Only 12.4 percent of children with family incomes below the FPL had employment-based coverage, compared to 78.6 percent with family incomes of 200 percent of FPL or above.
- In 2003, 84.1 percent of children were in excellent or very good health, according to parent reports. Males were slightly less likely to be in excellent or very good health than females (83.5 versus 84.7 percent). The percent of children in excellent or very good health decreases with increased age: 86.0 percent of children under age 5 were in excellent or very good health, compared to 83.8 percent of 6- to 11-year-olds and 82.6 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds.
- At the end of 2003, 9,419 cases of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in children younger than 13 had been reported in the United States since the beginning of the epidemic. Pediatric AIDS cases represented just over one percent of all cases ever reported.
- Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented among pediatric AIDS cases. As of 2003, the number of pediatric AIDS cases ever reported among non-Hispanic White children was less than one-third the number among non-Hispanic Black children, and 25 percent less than that among Hispanic children.
- In 2003, 19,108 infants died before reaching 28 days of age, representing a neonatal mortality rate of 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. This rate is unchanged from the previous



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year. Neonatal mortality is generally related to short gestation and low birth weight, congenital malformations, and conditions occurring in the prenatal period.

This Fact Sheet was updated in March 2007 by Larry Wilcher at the Population Resource Center. It is based on information from a number of sources, including USAID, Global Health Council, World Health Organization, UNFIP, and Maternal and Child Health Bureau. For additional information contact the Population Resource Center at (202) 467-5030, 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20006.