

World Health Day 2006

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. (<http://www.who.int/about/en/>)
- The focus of this year's World Health Day will focus on the shortage of health care workers. (http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2006/tm_speech/en/index.html)

Maternal Health Around the World:

Mortality

- Every year some twenty million women worldwide suffer pregnancy-related complications and over half a million die. That equates to one death from maternal causes per minute each day. (http://www.globalhealth.org/view_top.php3?id=225)
- In developing countries, one woman in 61 may die of pregnancy-related complications over her lifetime compared to one in 2800 in industrialized 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.
- Women have the greatest risk of maternal death in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, where one in six will die from complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Other high maternal mortality countries include: India, Malawi, Angola, Niger, the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, Mali and Somalia.
- Death and disability from maternal causes account for nearly 20 percent of the total disease for women of reproductive age in developing countries. (http://www.globalhealth.org/view_top.php3?id=225)
- 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.
(http://www.globalhealth.org/view_top.php3?id=225)

- 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. (http://www.globalhealth.org/view_top.php3?id=225)

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.
- The Global Health Council estimates that almost 700,000 women died from complications related to unintended pregnancies from 1995 to 2000. The majority of those, more than 400,000, died from unsafe abortions.

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.
- Two-thirds of infant deaths occur in ten countries: India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Congo, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Tanzania.

Infant deaths in industrialized countries account for 1 percent of the total number of infant deaths worldwide.

- Malnutrition is an underlying factor in the majority of childhood illnesses and substantially increases childhood mortality. Deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals increase the risk of death from diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, and measles by about 20%.
- Millions of children in less developed countries do not have access to clean water, increasing the risks of contracting food- and water-borne diarrhea infections such as cholera.

Immunization

(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs288/en/print.html>)

- In 2002, an estimated 2.1 million people around the world, 1.4 million were children under the age of 5, died of diseases preventable by vaccines. (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs288/en/print.html>)
- About 30 million children, mostly in less developed countries, have no access to immunizations.
- A fourth of children in the world 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.

HIV/AIDS:

(http://www.unaids.org/epi/2005/doc/EPIupdate2005_pdf_en/Epi05_05_en.pdf)

- At the end of 2005, there were 40.3 million people living with HIV/AIDS, of whom 17.5 million were women and 2.3 million were children under the age of 15.

(http://www.unaids.org/epi/2005/doc/EPIupdate2005_pdf_en/Epi05_02_en.pdf)

- Worldwide, nearly three million adults and half a million children under the age of 15 die from AIDS or associated causes each year. (<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/hivchildren.htm>)
- In 2003, about 4.9 million people were newly infected with HIV, including 700,000 children under the age of 15.

(<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm> - source UNAIDS/WHO)

(<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/hivchildren.htm>)

- Nearly 96 percent of people with HIV/AIDS live in less developed countries; approximately 64 percent of reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Caribbean

region has the second highest rate of HIV infections.
(<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/hivchildren.htm>)

(http://www.unaids.org/epi/2005/doc/EPIupdate2005_pdf_en/Epi05_02_en.pdf)
(<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm> - **source** UNAIDS/WHO)

- At the end of 2003, only an estimated 7 percent of people infected with HIV/AIDS in less developed countries received antiretroviral treatment.
- Almost all HIV-infected children acquire the virus through mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) before or during birth or through breast feeding. In developing countries, estimates range from one-third to one-half of infections result from breast feeding.

(<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm> - **source** UNAIDS/WHO)

- Currently, there are more than 15 million children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS, 12 million of whom are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Maternal and Child Health in the United States

- The percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care has risen from 76 percent in 1990 to 84 percent in 2002.
- In 2005, infant mortality in the United States was 6.5 per 1,000 live births. (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0004393.html>)
- Low birthweight (less than 2,500 grams) increases the risk of mortality. In 2002 the incidence of low birthweight increased to 7.8 from 7.0 in 1990.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality persist. Black children have the highest incidence of infant and neonatal mortality -13.9 and 9.3 per live births, respectively; followed by 8.6 and 4.6 for Native American children; 5.8 and 3.9 for non-Hispanic white children; 5.6 and 3.8 for Hispanic children; and 4.8 and 3.4 for Asian children.
- Infant mortality correlates to the mother's level of education. In 2001 the mortality rate of infants whose mothers had less than 12 years of education was 49 percent higher than for infants of mothers with 13 or more years of education.
- Pediatric AIDS in the United States is steadily declining. In 2003 150 new AIDS cases were reported in children under 13, down from more than 700 cases in 1990.
- In 2002, 78 percent of children in the United States received necessary immunizations for diseases like polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, hepatitis B, etc. Children living below the poverty level were less likely to receive the necessary vaccines, 72 percent, than children living above poverty, 79 percent.
- In 2004, approximately nine million children 6 years of age and older were considered obese. For children 6 to 11, this is triple the rate from 30 years ago. Preschool children 2 to 5 years old and adolescents ages 12 to 19 have doubled their obesity rates in the past 30 years Obesity is a significant risk

factor for several chronic diseases such as diabetes.
(<http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/22/606/FINALfactsandfigures2.pdf>)

- In 2003, over 11 percent of children under 18 had no health insurance coverage. Children with low family incomes are more likely to lack coverage than children with higher-income families. (look up De Navas-Walt, B. Proctor, RJ Mills, "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance coverage in the U.S. in 2003, August 2004)
- In 2002, 12 percent of children under 18 had no health care visits to a doctor or a clinic within the past year. Hispanic and black children were more likely to not have had a visit, 19 and 14 percent respectively, compared to their white counterparts, 10 percent.

This Fact Sheet was updated in March 2006 by Juliane Baron at the Population Resource Center. It is based on information from a number of sources, including the Center for Disease Control, Global Health Council, World Health Organization, Population Reference Bureau, and UNICEF. For additional information contact the Population Resource Center at (202) 467-5030, 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20006.