



U.S. Has the Second Highest Newborn Mortality Rate Among Industrialized Nations

According to a new report from Save the Children,¹ every year an estimated 4 million newborns around the world die within the first month of life. The first day and week of life are the riskiest times; up to 50% (2 million) of newborn deaths take place within the first day, and approximately 75% (3 million) take place within the first week.² Industrialized nations have significantly lower newborn mortality rates than developing nations. In industrial nations, rates span between 1.8 and 6 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to rates spanning between 12 and 65 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births in developing nations. The U.S. newborn mortality rate is 5 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births, ranking lower than only Latvia (6 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births). The high rate in the U.S. is thought to be related to a number of factors, including a lack of school education and literacy in some regions. Additionally, the newborn mortality rate for every minority group in the U.S. is higher than the national average rate. For reasons that are unclear, non-Hispanic blacks in the U.S. have a much higher newborn mortality rate than any other race group (9.3 deaths per 1,000 live births).

Newborn Mortality Rates in Industrialized Nations, 2005

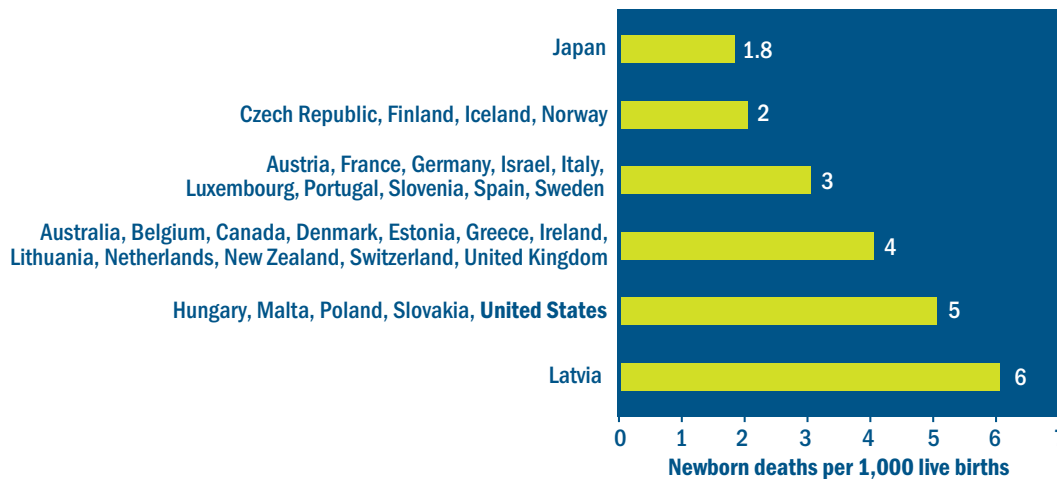


Chart Source: World Health Organization, The World Health Report (WHO: Geneva: 2005), as cited in Save the Children's *Saving the Lives of Mothers and Newborns*, 2006.

Text Source: Save the Children. (2006). State of the World's Mothers 2006. *Saving the Lives of Mothers and Newborns*. Retrieved May 31, 2006, from http://www.savethechildren.org/publications/SOWM_2006_final.pdf.

1 This year's (2006) annual report from Save the Children on the State of the World's Mothers focuses on the survival and health of newborns and mothers around the world.

2 Common causes of death include infections (sepsis/pneumonia, 26%; tetanus, 7%; and diarrhea, 3%), complications of prematurity (27%), birth asphyxia and injuries (23%), congenital anomalies (7%), and other causes (7%). The causes of death are considerably different in developing nations than in industrialized nations. In developing nations, approximately half of newborn deaths are caused by infection; in industrialized countries, the most common causes of death include those related to premature birth or low birth weight.

Prepared by TASC, Inc. TASC is an independent, not-for-profit agency that provides clinical case management and other services to men, women and adolescents with a variety of social and health-related needs. TASC serves approximately 30,000 clients in Illinois each year. For more information visit www.tasc.org.

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