

Perinatal Mortality in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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The objective of the study was to estimate the perinatal mortality rate and to determine the antenatal and intrapartum risk factors associated with perinatal mortality in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A hospital-based, case-control study was carried out in a 40-week period in 1987–1988 in Jeddah at the Maternal and Child Health Hospital (MCH). The subjects comprised 323 perinatal deaths and 488 controls.

The perinatal mortality rate (PMR) for Jeddah showed a decline from 42.5 in Islamic Calendar Year 1393H (1973) and 49.5 in 1400H (1979–1980) to 31.4 per 1000 live and stillbirths in 1408H (1987–1988). The risk factors independently associated with perinatal death included low birth weight, complications during labour, ethnic origin and mother's age being 35 and over. In addition to lethal deformities, direct causes of perinatal death were related to low birthweight, mechanical causes, antepartum haemorrhage and neonatal infection. No antenatal care was received by 36.5% of both cases and controls.

The high mortality and the failure to attend for antenatal care suggest a need for closer surveillance of women throughout their pregnancies and for improvements in both obstetric services and neonatal management.

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