



PUBLIC HEALTH

Principal causes of mortality among children younger than 15 years of age. Mexico, 2012

Principales causas de mortalidad entre los menores de quince años. México, 2012

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In recent decades, discussion about mortality in the first years of life was synonymous with deaths due to communicable causes, usually of infectious origin. Currently, the epidemiological transition with the ubiquitous change in the profile of causes of death not only affects the older population. It has permeated into all age groups including children and adolescents who are gradually affected by causes of death that are classified as violent and accidental or non-transmissible diseases.

In this issue of *Boletín Medico de Hospital Infantil de México*, we take the opportunity to comment on information concerning death statistics corresponding to the year 2012 and released by INEGI (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*) and the Ministry of Health as the latest definitive mortality figures. For the calculation of the corresponding rates, the latest projections of CONAPO (*Consejo Nacional de Población*) have been used with the exception of the rates of children <1 year of age for whom the denominator is births obtained by the statistics of births according to SINAC.*

* The figures adjusted from the SINAC (System of Births) 2012 have been taken into consideration as established by the General Department of Health Information.

Table 1 shows in the form of a matrix the ten leading causes of mortality in the population of children <15 years of age presented according to 5-year age groups. It also shows the relative place that the cause occupies and the number of corresponding deaths, as well as the value of the rate per 100,000 population of the corresponding age.

It is important to analyze, in the first instance, the structure by age for each group. As expected, and in accordance with the pattern universally observed, the highest mortality occurred during the first year of life. It increased to ~29 thousand deaths (rate 12.7 deaths/100,000 births), which represents 71% of the deaths of the group of <15 years of age. Almost half of these deaths (infant deaths) occurred due to certain conditions originating in the perinatal period (14,391), which placed them as the first cause of death. As a second cause of death, other non-infectious causes followed: congenital malformations, deformities and chromosomal abnormalities, which explained 23.3% of deaths. In other words, the two leading causes of death explained 73% of infant deaths. This, by the way, implies a serious problem for infant mortality reduction programs. They are precisely the most difficult causes to combat because they have to do with problems both of the mother and the child. Within this age group, other non-infectious

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