

Iowa High Model United Nation
Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee
Health care and Impact on Infant Mortality
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Background

The quality of maternal health care has a tremendous impact on survival rates of infants. According to the Encyclopedia of Death and Dying, infant mortality is defined as the death of children who are under the age of one (Gee). Infant mortality can be broken down into two categories: neonatal and postneonatal. Neonatal is defined as infants just born to 28 days after birth. Postneonatal infants are considered 29 days after birth until one year of age (Gee).

Within the discussion of maternal health care, it is necessary to consider services that help with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illnesses (DH). Although countries have differing infant mortality rates, the quality of maternal health care influences the level of infant mortality.

In 2007, the United States (U.S.) and Canada had an infant mortality rate of seven babies per one thousand live births (Gee). The U.S and Canada have strong health care services that focus on teaching and caring for pregnant woman and infants. These countries also promote vaccines against infections prior to and following birth for both infants and mothers (HHS). There is also a strong promotion of corrective surgery for birth defects and preventative medicines for neonatal babies.

As a continent, Africa had an infant mortality rate of eighty-eight babies per one thousand live births in 2007 (Gee). There are many reasons African countries have such an alarmingly high infant mortality rate. First of all, many African nations do not have acceptable postneonatal care. Many citizens live in poverty and do not have the means to purchase vaccines. Many citizens also do not have the access to technology to prevent some of the infant deaths (Maroney).

In 2007, Asian countries had an average infant mortality rate of fifty-six babies per one thousand live births (Gee). One reason of this is that even though teenage pregnancy is going down somewhat there are still a lot of them. Studies have shown that infant mortality was much higher in mothers who are twenty years old or younger (Westly). Also, the babies in Asia do not have good nutrition and that can kill a baby too. The women in Asia do not get care during pregnancy or do not listen to what care they do get. Many women do not breast feed their babies like what they are told to do. AIDS is another cause of infant mortality, because AIDS is spreading in this area and being transferred to the infant. Lastly, because many people are poor in Asia they can not afford to get the immunizations that the baby needs (Westly).

What Has Been Done/Past U.N. Actions

The United Nations have been doing a lot to try to stop the infant mortality rate around the world. To reduce infant mortality is one of goals to meet by 2015. One thing that the United Nations is trying to do is have vaccines given to infants that will cure or

prevent and they want every child to be immunized by 2010 and they are having programs to help this (U.N).

They also want to have programs that help with family planning (U.N). They want to get teenage pregnancy down. These programs will help the women decide if they want to have children or not.

The United Nation also wants to stop diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria that kill infants (U.N). They want to have HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment services. They want to stop malaria by making sure they have nets and find medicine that can cure it.

Possible Solutions

There are many possible solutions to the infant mortality. There needs to be some food health programs to help the children that don't have the food they need. If children do not have the food they need then they can die from malnutrition. There needs to be people going over and bringing food to less developed countries. Farmers in less developed countries need to be taught how to produce food.

Another solution to this problem is to have more family planning programs. People need to learn about their options if they want to have children. They need to be taught about protection and about birth control.

There is also has to be good services to women who are pregnant and their babies. The women need to be tested for things like HIV and other STDS that might affect the baby. The babies all over the world need to be vaccinated for the preventable and deadly diseases that occur.

Questions to Consider

1. How do we improve health care for pregnant women and babies in less developed countries?
2. What services should we provide to help stop infant mortality?
3. Why does the U.S and Canada have such low infant mortality?
4. What things can be done to stop malnutrition in infants?
5. How do we educate people about HIV and other diseases that cause infant mortality?

Consulted/Recommended Sources

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