

# Seasonality of infant mortality in Kibera slums Nairobi Kenya: a case study of Soweto and Katwikera villages

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## Abstract:

This study set out with the problem of little being known about infant mortality situation within Kibera slums in which KEMRI/CDC DSS site is located. The study had three main objectives: To estimate infant mortality rate, to examine trends in infant mortality between 2006 and 2008 and to find out whether there are seasonal variations in infant mortality by months of the year in Kibera slums. The study used data from the Household Morbidity Surveillance (HMS) data conducted by KEMRI/CDC in Kibera slums, Nairobi. Since 2006, CDC/ KEMRI have been collecting HMS data on all study participants of the Demographic Surveillance Systems (DSS). The main methods of data analysis were direct method of estimation, basic frequencies and cross tabulations. Direct method of estimation provided infant mortality estimates for 2006 and 2007. Frequencies and cross tabulations were used to show trends and differentials in illness peak and seasonality of infant deaths based on calendar months. Key findings revealed that the level of infant mortality in Kibera slums in Nairobi was 17 deaths per 1000 births in 2006 and 20 deaths per 1000 births in 2007. The results also revealed seasonality of infant mortality in which seasonality of deaths varied with morbidity conditions and most infant deaths occurred during the cold months of June, July and August. The commonest causes of death are pneumonia, Gastro and Respiratory symptoms. There were fewer deaths in the months of January and February. These estimates are lower than the 91 deaths per 1000 births based on APHRC infant mortality estimates of 2002 and that of Nairobi as a whole which stood at 77 deaths per 1000 births according to 2003 KDHS. These results are a pointer to poor child survival prospects in the study area. The study therefore recommended further research on factors determining increasing infant mortality rate over time. For policy purposes, the study recommended government's increased campaigns and awareness on prevention of seasonal infant diseases in slum areas of urban settings.