Determinants of infant mortality in rural and urban Kenya

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Abstract:

This paper aimed at investigating the influence of socioeconomic, demographic and household environmental factors on infant mortality in urban and rural areas of Kenya. Descriptive and logistic regression analyses were carried out on 2008/09 Kenya demographic and health survey child datasets in order to help in filling the gap on the factors that explain child survival in Kenya's urban and rural areas respectively. Descriptive statistics show that majority (77 percent) of infant deaths were recorded in rural areas probably depicting the health inequalities that exist between urban and rural areas. Results of bivariate analysis show that sex of the birth, ever breastfed, region and source of drinking water were significantly related to infant mortality in rural areas while level of education, maternal age, birth order and ever breastfed factors were significantly related to infant mortality in urban areas. Multivariate analytical results show that region, sex of the birth, ever breastfed and source of drinking water were significantly related to rural infant mortality with ever breastfed and maternal age factors being significant explainers of urban infant mortality. There is need to advocate for compulsory exclusive breastfeeding for the first six month of a child's life given the finding that children who are not breastfed are twice as likely to die as those who were ever breastfed both in rural and urban Kenya.