



INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE US: FAILING MOTHERS AND BABIES

THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE MEASURES THE NUMBER OF INFANT DEATHS PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS.¹

THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE MEASURES THE INSTANCES OF MATERNAL DEATHS PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS.²

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2015

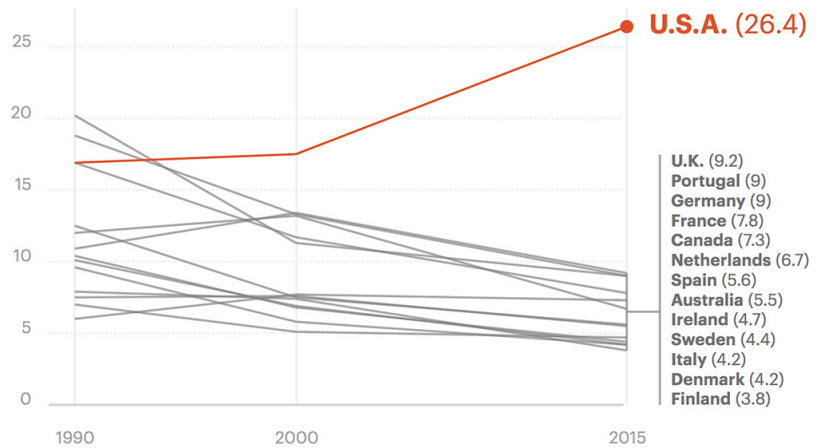


FIGURE 1. Maternal Mortality Rates between 1990 and 2015. Source: Chart originally published online: <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/12/528098789/u-s-has-the-worst-rate-of-maternal-deaths-in-the-developed-world>. Data for this chart: GBD 2015 Maternal Mortality Collaboration. (2016) "Global, regional, and national levels of maternal mortality, 1990–2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015," *The Lancet*. Volume 388, pp.1775-812. Accessed online: [http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31470-2.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(16)31470-2.pdf).

MATERNAL MORTALITY

- » **The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any industrialized country** —26.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015.
- » In other industrialized countries, the maternal mortality rate has been steadily decreasing, while in the US it is alarmingly increasing (See Figure 1).
- » Between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate in the US increased by 56%, compared to Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia where maternal mortality declined by 60%.
- » In-Sub-Saharan Africa maternal mortality rates have also been declining.
- » This rate is significantly higher for African American women (See Figure 2).

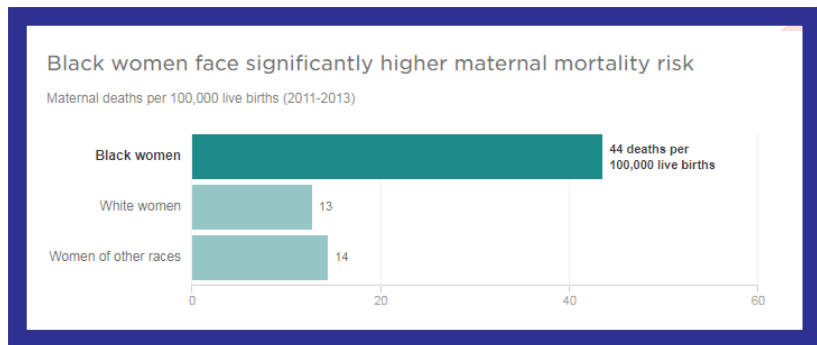


FIGURE 2. Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (2011-2013) in Black women compared to White women and women of other races. Source: Martin N (2017) Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth. Shalon Irving's Story Explains Why. National Public Radio. Accessed online: <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why>.

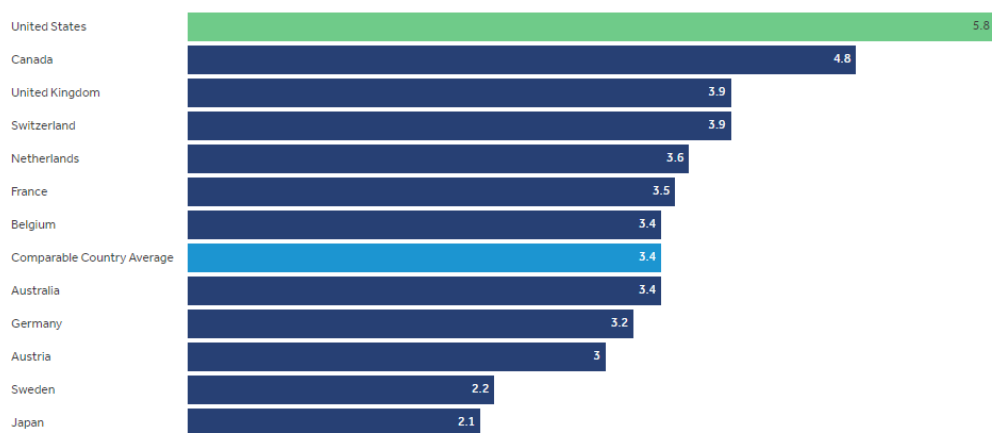
- » One study found that 46% of African American women's pregnancy related deaths were potentially preventable, compared to 33% of white women.³
- » Low-income women and women in rural areas are more likely to die during pregnancy.⁴

INFANT MORTALITY

- » **The infant mortality rate in the US—5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014—is unacceptable.** Although the infant mortality rate has been decreasing over recent years, the US still lags behind most developed countries (see Figure 3).
- » The infant mortality rate in the US is only marginally higher than lower-middle-income countries such as Ukraine and Sri Lanka.
- » **Infant mortality and maternal mortality disproportionately affect low-income families.** For example, in Washington, D.C. the infant mortality rate in Ward 8, where half of all children live in poverty, is 10 times higher than the infant mortality rate in Ward 3, the wealthiest ward of the city.⁵

Infant mortality is higher in the U.S. than in comparable countries

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births, 2014



Comparable countries are defined as those with above median GDP and above median GDP per capita in at least one of the past 10 years. Canada data estimated from 2012.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of data from OECD (2017). "OECD Health Data: Health status: Health status indicators". OECD Health Statistics database. (Accessed on July 5, 2017) • Get the data • PNG

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FIGURE 3. Infant mortality per 1,000 live births in 2014 in OECD countries. Source: Sawyer B, Gonzales S (2017) How does infant mortality in the US compare to other countries? Peterson-Kaiser Health System Tracker. Accessed online: <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/infant-mortality-u-s-compare-countries/#item-start>.

WIC, serving almost two million low-income pregnant and postpartum women and nearly two million infants each month, has an indispensable role to play in helping mothers recognize key risk factors associated with maternal and infant mortality.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) Reproductive Health: Infant Mortality. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pmss.html>

³ Berg CJ, Harper MA, Atkinson SM, Bell EA, Brown HL, Hage ML, Mitra AG, Moise KJ Jr, Callaghan WM (2005) Preventability of pregnancy-related deaths: results of a state-wide review. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*: Vol.106 Issue 6, pp. 1228-34. Accessed online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16319245>.

⁴ MacDorman MF, Declercq E, Thoma ME (2017) Trends in maternal mortality by sociodemographic characteristics and cause of death in 27 states and the District of Columbia. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*: Vol.129, pp. 811-818.

⁵ Save the Children (2015) State of the World's Mothers 2015. Accessed online: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SOWM_2015.PDF.