

Fetal and Perinatal Mortality, United States 2003.

MacDorman MF, Hoyert DL, Martin JA, Munson ML, Hamilton BE.
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Objectives: This report presents 2003 fetal and perinatal mortality data by a variety of characteristics, including maternal age, marital status, race, Hispanic origin, and state of residence; and by infant birthweight, gestational age, plurality, and sex. Trends in fetal and perinatal mortality are also examined.

Methods: Descriptive tabulations of data are presented and interpreted.

Results: The U.S. fetal mortality rate in 2003 was 6.23 fetal deaths of 20 weeks of gestation or more per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths. Fetal and perinatal mortality rates have declined slowly but steadily from 1990 to 2003. Fetal mortality rates for 28 weeks of gestation or more have declined substantially, whereas those for 20-27 weeks of gestation have not declined. Fetal mortality rates are higher for a number of groups including non-Hispanic black women, teenagers, women aged 35 years and over, unmarried women, and multiple deliveries. Over one-half (51 percent) of fetal deaths of 20 weeks of gestation or more occurred between 20 and 27 weeks of gestation.

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