Infant Mortality:
A health disparity

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Number of infant deaths in US:

21,467

(CDC, 2018)
INFANT MORTALITY

**Definition:** The death of an infant before his or her first birthday.
Why Focus on Infant Mortality?

• Measure of population health and health care
• Recognized as crude indicator of:
  • Community Health Status
  • Poverty and SES in a community
  • Availability and quality of health services and medical technology
• Wide acceptance of measure
• Easily calculated
• Common use in needs assessments and evaluation
Leading Causes of Infant Death

1. Preterm birth/Low birth weight
2. Congenital malformations
3. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
4. Maternal complications
5. Injuries
The good...
The bad...
The ugly...

Infant Mortality Rate and the U.S.' Two Worlds

Number of infants dying before age 1, per 1,000 births

- China: 14.79
- Malaysia: 13.69
- Mexico: 12.58
- Black America: 11.5
- Fiji: 10.2
- Thailand: 9.86
- Costa Rica: 8.7
- Russia: 7.08
- United States: 6.17
- White America: 5.2
- Cuba: 4.7
- Switzerland: 3.73
- Japan: 2.13

Lindsey Cook for USN&WR; Source: CIA, CDC
WHAT IS A HEALTH DISPARITY?

Health disparities refer to differences between groups of people, these differences can affect how frequently:

- a disease affects a group
- how many people get sick
- how often the disease cause death
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births, by maternal race/ethnicity, 2017

Source: CDC NCHS Period Linked Birth-Infant Death Data Files
Infant Mortality Rates by State
What causes this disparity?

- Socioeconomic status
- Education
- Health care access
  - Inadequacy of prenatal care
  - Lack of treatment for chronic diseases which can complicate pregnancies
Summary

• Infant mortality is widely used as a measure of population health and the quality of health care.

• Results show the U.S. experiences a higher infant mortality rate than most comparable countries.

• There are significant racial disparities in infant mortality rates in the United States.