

Maternal and Children Health

Warm up:

Why is the health of infants and children of special concern for public health?



Importance of Infant and Child Health

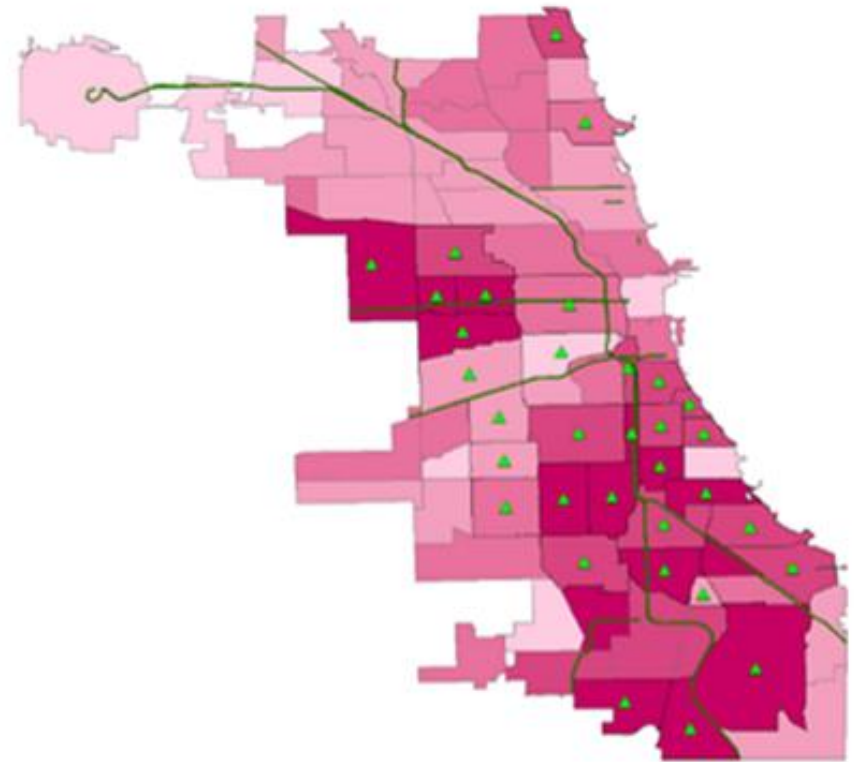
- Fetal and infant stages of development provide the foundations of good health throughout life.
- Children are the most vulnerable group in society.
- Infant mortality rate (IMR) is an indicator of the health status of a population.
 - The U.S. ranks 27th internationally.
- IMR is more than double for U.S. blacks than whites, indicative of a health disparity.

Social Factors in Infant Mortality

- Number one risk factor is poverty.
- Reasons why low SES increases risk:
 - Environmental hazards
 - Poor nutrition
 - Maternal risk behaviors
 - Smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs
 - Social factors
 - Young maternal age, violence, out of wedlock birth, stress, lack of social support
 - Lack of prenatal care

Community Areas in Chicago Baylor University

Figure 4. Low Birth Weight Rate and High Poverty Rate



erty, as well as the stress, such as violent crime in the neighborhood
e 3, 4, 5 & 6 display the relationship between low birth weight rate

Prenatal Care

- Prenatal care is the most public health-oriented kind of care the medical professional provides.
 - It provides women with information.
 - Problems are diagnosed early.
 - Poor women are often linked with social services.
- Most states try to remove financial barriers.
- State and federal governments collect prenatal care data.
- CDC recommends screening and treatment of all pregnant women for common infections.
- Outreach programs are needed for women who do not seek early prenatal care.

Causes of Infant Mortality in the U.S.

- Congenital anomalies are the leading cause overall.
- Prematurity and low birth weight:
 - Leading causes overall until recently
 - Still are the leading cause among blacks
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is a leading specific cause.

Preventing Birth Defects

- Genetic and newborn screening
- FDA regulation of teratogenic drugs
- Warnings against alcohol for pregnant women
- Reduction of prescribed pain medications during pregnancy
 - They increase the risk of congenital heart defects and neural tube defects in fetuses.
- Immunization of all children against rubella
- Dietary supplementation with folic acid

Preventing Low Birth Weight

- Causes of low birth weight are not well understood.
- Recent evidence suggests that gum disease is associated with preterm births.
 - Periodontal treatment may reduce risk.
- Recent increases in low birth weight have been partially due to multiple births because of reproductive technology.
- Some preventative measures are:
 - Prenatal care
 - Reduction of adolescent pregnancy

SIDS

- SIDS is common in infants of low birth weight and in infants of smokers or drug users.
- “Back to Sleep” campaign led to dramatic decline in SIDS.
- 130 infants per 100,000 died of SIDS in 1990—fell to 35 in 2017.
- SIDS is listed as cause of death only if no other explanation is found.

Family Planning and Adolescent Pregnancy

- Adolescent pregnancy has physical and social risks for mother and child.
 - Planned pregnancy leads to healthier outcomes.
- Affordable Care Act requires insurance companies to cover birth control at no cost, increasing access.
- U.S. adolescent pregnancy rates are the highest in the industrialized world.
- Comprehensive sex education is most effective.
 - Delays sexual initiation and increases safer sex practices when sexually active.

Discussion: Let's talk about abortion...

- Why do some people call the overturn of Roe & Wade is a “public health crisis”?

Kinds of Contraception

- Sterilization
 - Commonly used, but permanent
- Hormonal
 - Birth control pill, patch, ring, Depo-Provera shot, implant
- IUDs
- Barrier
 - Condom, diaphragm, cervical cap
 - Condoms reduce risk of STDs.
 - Often used inconsistently and unreliably
- “Morning-after pill”

Children's Health and Safety

- Immunizations are required for entry to school.
- A public health initiative was launched in 1993 to increase vaccination of younger children.
- Controversy exists over the HPV vaccine for girls to prevent cervical cancer.
- CDC tracks immunization rates.
- Health screenings are provided in schools to reach those who do not get well-baby care.
- Childhood asthma is growing.

Children's Health and Safety (cont.)

- Fluoridation of water prevents tooth decay.
- Day care centers are regulated.
- U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission regulates toys and children's furniture.
- Public health campaigns promote use of seatbelts, child safety seats, and bicycle helmets.
- Governments also provide diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitative services for children with special needs.

History of Child Health Programs

- New York City milk stations starting in 1893
- U.S. Children's Bureau beginning in 1912
- Congress first providing grants to states to develop healthcare services for mothers and children in 1921
- U.S. beginning to regulate child labor in 1930s
- Ongoing conflicts over the role of government in protecting children
- Infant mortality rate falling over the 20th century