

Risk Factors and Causes of Death in Young Children After Discharge From an Urban Diarrhoea Treatment Centre

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Objective: Assess mortality patterns, causes of death, and risk factors in infants and young children discharged from a diarrhoea treatment centre.

Methods: Five hundred children aged 1 to 24 months were followed up at home 6 and 12 weeks after discharge from the ICDDR,B's urban diarrhoea treatment centre in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The main outcome measure in this cohort was death. The causes of death were ascertained by a verbal autopsy.

Results: The homes of 427 (85%) children could be located 6 weeks after discharge; the rest had changed addresses and could not be traced. Of the children whose homes were located, 61% were boys; 77% were of less than 1 year; and 61% had siblings present. The median (range) of family members present was 5 (2-13). The median (range) monthly family income was Tk 3,000 or US\$ 75.00 (Tk 600-30,000). Of the 427 children, 30 (7%) had died within 6 weeks of discharge; 2 more children died between 6 and 12 weeks of discharge. Of the children who died, the mean survival time after discharge was 10.9 days. Age, malnutrition, and lack of immunization were the main risk factors associated with death. The main underlying causes of death were respiratory diseases and watery diarrhoea. Malnutrition was the main associated cause.

Conclusions: Hospitalized children, especially malnourished infants, should be advised to return for a follow-up visit within a week of discharge. Hospitals should also provide preventive measures like immunizations, nutrition education, and dietary management in diarrhoea.

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Pregnancy Outcome and Child Survival Among Divorced Women in Matlab, Bangladesh

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Objective: Assess relationship of the quality of women's family life with pregnancy outcome and survival of children.

Methods: Data for this study came from the ICDDR,B's Demographic Surveillance System which records all vital events in Matlab, a rural area of Bangladesh. A total of 13,561 first marriages among Muslims that took place during 1975-1987 was followed up till the end of 1989. A logit regression analysis was used for studying the relationship between divorce and pregnancy outcome (live-birth, still-birth, miscarriage, and abortion). A hazard analysis was used for studying the impact of divorce on the survival of first child.

Results: The odds of having a miscarriage, abortion, or still-birth were 2.2 times higher among women who were divorced than those who were not when the effects of other variables were controlled. The net odds of death among children of divorced mothers during the neonatal and post-neonatal periods, and during childhood were, respectively 3.3, 4.6 and 2.7 times higher than those of mothers who were not divorced.

Conclusions: Divorce is a marker of poor quality of family life. The poor pregnancy outcomes seen among divorced women indicate the extent of oppression that women in this society undergo before divorce. Divorce also puts children in a highly vulnerable condition. Thus divorced women and their children belong to one of the most disadvantaged groups in this society. Attempts to alleviate the problems of women should place special emphasis on the well-being of divorced women and their children.

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