

Improve maternal health



Target

Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015

Despite having lower maternal deaths than other regions, there are several countries in the ECA region where the maternal mortality MDG is unlikely to be achieved, including Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan.

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Maternal deaths in the ECA region are lower than other regions. The average maternal mortality ratio is 58 deaths per 100,000 in the ECA region, compared with 444 in East Asia and the Pacific, 567 in South Asia, and 916 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent modeled estimates of maternal mortality range from 3 per 100,000 in Slovakia to 210 in Kazakhstan.

Monitoring progress toward this MDG has proved to be problematic because maternal mortality is difficult to measure. Indicators used for monitoring progress toward the goal include the percentage of births assisted by a skilled attendant. While there is a strong correlation with maternal mortality, the indicator does not imply causation. Percentage of attended births is rather an indicator of access to care, which by itself reduces deaths. The maternal mortality ratio measures how safe it is to become pregnant and give birth in a geographic area or population. Despite being difficult to measure accurately and its limitations as an indicator in measuring progress, the

maternal mortality ratio was used in this assessment.

Two sources of maternal mortality data are shown in MDG table 5: WDI, which quotes modeled estimates developed by WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA; and TransMONEE data, which are used as a proxy for administrative data (see data sources for more detail).⁷ The former provide a “best estimate” of the quantum of the maternal mortality ratio for each country in 2000 whereas the latter, since it is a time series, enables one to predict whether or not the MDG is likely to be achieved.⁸

Trends in administrative data indicate that most of the EU8 and Southeastern European countries are expected to achieve the target of a 75 percent reduction in maternal mortality. Among the middle-income CIS countries only Kazakhstan, where the ratio has only recently returned to pretransition levels, is assessed as unlikely to achieve the MDG. None of the lower income countries looks likely to achieve the goal. The most recent data for

Georgia and Tajikistan indicate that the ratio is higher than the 1990 baseline values. It is important to note that spikes in the ratio—such as in the Kyrgyz Republic between 1996 and 1998—occur in lower population countries because, when the number of births is significantly less than 100,000, it becomes exaggerated when expressed per 100,000 live births.

As with child mortality, applying the required three-fourths reduction in maternal mortality to the 1990 baseline produces for many ECA countries a target lower than the current average for high income countries. While these countries are unlikely to meet this target, it is possible that their maternal mortality ratio will reach the level of many high income countries in Europe and thus be deemed to have achieved or to be likely to achieve the goal.

In the ECA region, as in other regions, most maternal deaths could be avoided if women had access to adequate care during pregnancy and childbirth. Unlike other regions, it has traditionally relied

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on abortion rather than contraception as a means of fertility control. Abortion rates in the ECA region are among the highest in the world, and women are at risk due to unsafe techniques, unsanitary facilities, and underskilled medical workers. During recent years there has been an effort to move toward contraception as the primary means of fertility control. Although there has been a measure of success—for example, abortion rates in Romania have decreased from 315 per 100 live births in 1990 to 118 in 2002—abortion rates still remain high compared with world averages. Furthermore, despite declines in abortion rates, maternal mortality has not fallen as expected.

Definitions

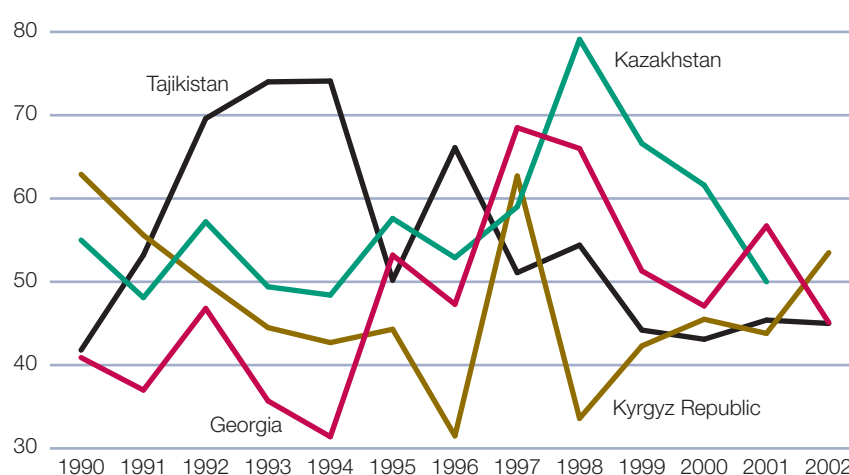
Maternal mortality ratio is the number of women per 100,000 who die during pregnancy or childbirth.

Data sources

There are two sources of maternal mortality ratio data. The WDI

There is little improvement in maternal mortality ratios in lower income CIS countries

Maternal mortality ratio



Source: UNICEF IRC 2004.

quotes modeled estimates for from AbouZahr and Wardlaw (2003). In this exercise, maternal mortality was estimated with a regression model using information on fertility, birth attendants, and GDP. The

TransMONEE data are largely provided by the central statistical offices participating in the MONEE project and are used as a proxy for official and administrative data in this publication.

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Country	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births/sources	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Albania	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55.0	..	..	..
	TMD	37.7	29.7	25.2	16.2	40.2	33.3	27.8	27.5	21.6	6.9	18.0	20.7	..	..
Armenia	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55.0	..	..	..
	TMD	40.1	23.1	14.2	27.1	29.3	34.7	20.8	38.7	25.4	32.9	52.5	21.8	9.3	..
Azerbaijan	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	94.0	..	..	..
	TMD	9.3	10.5	17.6	34.4	43.8	37.0	44.1	31.0	41.1	43.4	37.6	25.4	19.9	..
Belarus	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35.0	..	..	..
	TMD	21.8	31.1	21.1	20.4	19.0	13.8	21.9	25.7	28.1	20.4	21.3	14.2	18.0	..
Bosnia and Herzegovina	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31.0	..	..	..
	TMD	10.5	21.4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9.4	5.1	2.7	8.4	..
Bulgaria	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	32.0	..	..	..
	TMD	20.9	10.4	21.3	14.2	12.6	19.5	19.4	18.7	15.3	23.5	17.6	19.1	16.5	..
Croatia	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8.0	..	..	..
	TMD	1.8	7.7	4.3	10.3	10.3	12.0	1.9	10.8	6.4	11.1	6.9	2.4	10.0	..
Czech Republic	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9.0	..	..	..
	TMD	8.4	13.1	9.9	11.6	6.6	2.1	5.5	2.2	5.5	6.7	5.5	3.3	3.2	..
Estonia	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	63.0	..	..	..
	TMD	31.4	30.9	22.2	32.8	56.4	51.8	..	15.9	16.4	16.1	45.9	7.9	7.7	..
Georgia	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	32.0	..	..	..
	TMD	40.9	37.0	46.8	35.7	31.4	53.2	47.3	68.5	66.0	51.3	47.1	56.7	45.1	..
Hungary	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16.0	..	..	..
	TMD	20.7	12.6	9.9	18.8	10.4	15.2	11.4	20.9	6.2	4.2	10.2	5.2	8.3	..
Kazakhstan	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	210.0	..	..	..
	TMD	55.0	48.1	57.2	49.4	48.4	57.6	52.9	59.0	79.1	66.6	61.6	50.0	..	..
Kyrgyz Republic	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	110.0	..	..	..
	TMD	62.9	55.6	49.9	44.5	42.7	44.3	31.5	62.7	33.6	42.3	45.5	43.8	53.5	..
Latvia	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	42.0	..	..	..
	TMD	23.7	31.8	41.2	29.9	57.7	37.1	40.4	42.5	43.5	41.2	24.7	25.4	5.0	..
Lithuania	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13.0	..	..	..
	TMD	22.9	19.6	20.2	12.6	16.5	17.0	12.8	15.9	16.2	13.7	8.8	12.7	20.0	..
Macedonia, FYR	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	23.0	..	..	..
	TMD	11.3	11.5	9.0	6.2	11.9	21.8	..	3.4	3.4	7.3	13.6	14.8	..	..
Moldova	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	36.0	..	..	..
	TMD	44.1	26.4	37.3	33.2	17.7	12.4	40.5	48.3	36.3	28.6	27.1	43.9	33.6	..
Poland	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13.0	..	..	..
	TMD	12.8	12.8	9.9	11.7	11.0	9.9	4.9	5.8	4.8	5.5	7.9	3.5	5.4	..
Romania	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49.0	..	..	..
	TMD	83.6	66.5	60.3	53.2	60.4	47.8	41.1	41.4	40.5	41.8	32.8	34.0	22.3	..
Russian Federation	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	67.0	..	..	..
	TMD	47.4	52.4	50.8	51.6	52.3	53.3	48.9	50.2	44.0	44.2	39.7	36.5	33.6	..
Serbia and Montenegro	WDI 2005	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11.0	..	..	..
	TMD	11.0	13.1	8.5	17.7	13.1	12.1	7.3	13.7	9.3	5.7	5.6	6.9	2.3	..
Slovakia	WDI 2005	3.0
	TMD	6.3	14.0	1.3	12.3	6.0	8.1	5.0	5.1	8.7	10.7	1.8	15.6	7.9	..

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Slovenia	WDI 2005	17.0
	TMD	8.9	4.6	5.0	10.1	10.3	5.3	26.6	11.0	..	17.1
Tajikistan	WDI 2005	100.0
	TMD	41.8	53.2	69.6	74.0	74.1	50.2	66.1	51.1	54.4	44.2	43.1	45.4	45.0	..
Turkey	WDI 2005	70.0
	WHO HFA	180.0	55.0	130.0
Ukraine	WDI 2005	35.0
	TMD	32.4	29.8	31.3	32.8	31.3	32.3	30.4	25.1	27.2	25.2	24.7	23.9	21.8	..
Uzbekistan	WDI 2005	24.0
	TMD	34.1	33.3	30.1	24.1	17.3	18.9	12.0	10.5	9.6	14.7	34.5	33.5	26.9	..

Data source

WDI 2005 World Development Indicators 2005
TMD TransMONEE Database, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy
WHO HFA WHO Health For All Database