

Table 17 - Demographic Yearbook 2000

Table 17 presents maternal deaths and maternal mortality rates for as many years as possible between 1991 and 2000.

Description of variables: Maternal deaths are defined for the purposes of the Demographic Yearbook as those caused by deliveries and complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium. These deaths are those classified as causes derived from the International Classification of Diseases, in the tenth revision.²³

For further information on the definition of maternal mortality from the ninth and tenth revisions, see section 4.3 of the Technical Notes.

Statistics on maternal death presented in this table have been limited to countries or areas which meet all of the following three criteria: first, that cause-of-death statistics are either classified by or convertible to the ninth or tenth lists mentioned above; secondly, that at least a total of 1 000 deaths (for all causes combined) occurred in a given year; and thirdly, that within this distribution the total number of deaths classified as due to ill-defined causes as shown in the table in section 4.3 does not exceed 25 per cent of deaths from all causes.

Rate computation: Maternal mortality rates are the annual number of maternal deaths per 100 000 live births (as shown in table 9) in the same year.

As noted above, rates (as well as frequencies) presented in this table have been limited to those countries or areas having a total of at least 1 000 deaths from all causes in a given year and have also been limited to those not having more than 25 per cent of all deaths classified as due to ill-defined causes. Moreover, rates based on 30 or fewer maternal deaths shown in this table are identified by the symbol (♦).

Reliability of data: Data from civil registers of deaths which are reported as incomplete (less than 90 per cent completeness) or of unknown completeness are considered unreliable and are set in italics rather than in roman type. Rates calculated using these data are also set in italics. Table 18 and the technical notes for that table provide more detailed information on the completeness of death registration. For more information about the quality of vital statistics data in general, and the information available on the basis of the completeness estimates in particular, see section 4.2 of the Technical Notes.

In general the quality code for deaths shown in table 18 is used to determine whether data on deaths in other tables appear in roman or italic type. However, some data on deaths by cause are shown in italics in this table when it is known that the quality, in terms of completeness, differs greatly from the completeness of the registration of the total number of deaths. In cases when the quality code in table 18 does not correspond with the typeface used in this table, relevant information regarding the completeness of cause-of-death statistics is given in a footnote.

Limitations: Statistics on maternal deaths are subject to the same qualifications that have been set forth for vital statistics in general and death statistics in particular as discussed in section 4 of the Technical Notes.

The reliability of the data, an indication of which is described above, is an important factor in considering the limitations. In addition, some deaths are tabulated by date of registration and not by date of occurrence; these have been indicated by a (+). Whenever the lag between the date of occurrence and the date of registration is prolonged and a large proportion of the death registrations are, therefore, delayed, death statistics for any given year may be seriously affected.

In addition, maternal-death statistics are subject to all the qualifications relating to cause-of-death statistics. These have been set forth in section 4 of the Technical Notes.

Maternal mortality rates are subject to the limitations of the data on live births with which they have been calculated. These have been set forth in the technical notes for table 9.

The calculation of the maternal mortality rates based on the total number of live births approximates the risk of dying from complications of pregnancy, childbirth or puerperium. Ideally this rate should be based on the number of women exposed to the risk of pregnancy, in other words, the number of women conceiving. Since it is impossible to know how many women have conceived, the total number of live births is used in calculating this rate.

Coverage: Maternal deaths are shown for 75 countries or areas and maternal mortality rates are shown for 73 countries or areas.

Earlier data: Maternal deaths and maternal mortality rates have been shown in previous issues of the Demographic Yearbook. For information on specific years covered, the reader should consult the Index.

Previous issues of the Demographic Yearbook have shown maternal deaths and maternal death rates. In issues prior to 1975, these rates were calculated using the female population rather than live births. Therefore maternal mortality rates published since 1975 are not comparable to the earlier maternal death rates.