

U.S. Maternity Deaths Have Not Declined

In a story from the "Chiropractic News Service" it was noted that federal health officials reported the rate at which American women die from pregnancy and childbirth complications hasn't changed in 15 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC) maternal deaths occurred at a rate of seven or eight per 100,000 live births every year from 1982 to 1996. The CDC also said half of all such deaths are preventable.

Similar to infant mortality, maternal deaths are used as a measure of a country's overall health. In some developing nations, maternal death rates are as high as 1,700 per 100,000 births. In other countries, such as Norway and Switzerland, maternal deaths occur at about half the U.S. rate.

Researchers said such deaths are rare enough that many doctors may not notice the problem. The CDC identified maternal deaths by looking at death certificates. However, some researchers said such deaths are under reported and the actual rates could be three times higher.

More than half of maternal deaths are caused by bleeding, infection, pregnancy-induced high blood pressure and tubal pregnancies, complications that can be prevented or treated with early diagnosis, the CDC said.

The CDC also reported that differences in maternal deaths between black and white women indicate room for improvement. It found that maternal deaths of black women ranged from 18 to 22 per 100,000 births, compared with five to six deaths per 100,000 births for white women.