

Island of Ireland Perinatal Mortality Report 2014 and 2015



This is the first report on perinatal mortality occurring across the Island of Ireland. Comparative data is included on perinatal deaths in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI) arising from **live births and stillbirths that occurred in the combined years 2014 and 2015 with a gestational age of 24 weeks or more**. Anonymised data from all maternity units was collated and analysed by the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre (NPEC) in the ROI and by the Northern Ireland Maternal and Child Health office (NIMACH) in NI.

1,136

PERINATAL DEATHS
(Stillbirths and Early Neonatal Deaths)

182,600

BIRTHS

STILLBIRTHS

753
(66.3%)

NEONATAL DEATHS

383
(33.7%)

Across the Island of Ireland, stillbirths and early neonatal deaths accounted for **753 (66.3%)** and **383 (33.7%)** of perinatal deaths respectively. A further **81** late neonatal deaths occurred.

PERINATAL MORTALITY RATE

6.2/1000 BIRTHS

Approximately 6 deaths per 1,000 births

The 2014 and 2015 perinatal mortality rate (PMR) for the ROI and NI were similar. The All-Ireland perinatal mortality rate was **6.2 deaths per 1,000 births**, adjusted to exclude perinatal deaths due to congenital anomaly, the rate was **3.85 per 1,000 births**.

The stillbirth rate for the ROI was **4.35 per 1,000 births** as compared to a rate of **3.50 per 1,000 births for NI**. In contrast the neonatal mortality rate in the ROI was lower, at 2.39 per 1,000 live births, compared to NI, at 3.00 per 1,000 live births. **The differences in both stillbirth and neonatal death rates between the ROI and NI was found to be statistically significant.**

Stillbirth Rate: Republic of Ireland

4.35/1000

Stillbirth Rate: Northern Ireland

3.50/1000

40%

FETAL GROWTH RESTRICTION AND PERINATAL DEATH

Approximately **40% of stillbirths** and **almost 40% of neonatal death cases** were classified as severely small for gestational age {SGA} (<3rd customised birthweight centile) and just over half of stillbirths and neonatal death were SGA (<10th customised birthweight centile).

PRIMARY CAUSE OF DEATH IN PERINATAL DEATHS

Major fetal congenital anomaly was the primary cause of perinatal death (stillbirth 24.3%; neonatal deaths 63.6%) in the ROI and in NI (Table 1).

Table 1: Major fetal congenital anomalies in stillbirths and neonatal deaths (gestational age at delivery ≥ 24 weeks) in the ROI, NI and All-Ireland in 2014 and 2015

STILLBIRTH

24.3%

NEONATAL DEATHS

63.6%

Major congenital anomaly Stillbirth N (%)			Major congenital anomaly Neonatal death N%		
ROI	NI	All Ireland	ROI	NI	All Ireland
N=146 (25%)	N=37(21.5%)	N= 183 (24.3%)	N=199 (62.8%)	N=96 (65.3%)	N= 295 (63.6%)

Recommendations

- Establish a process for biennial reporting on perinatal mortality for the Island of Ireland as a resource to support service improvement, audit and benchmarking.
- Improve awareness among professionals of the impact of fetal growth restriction on perinatal mortality. The generation of customised birth weight centile charts for every woman during pregnancy should be considered.
- A post mortem examination carried out by a specialist pathologist should be offered for all perinatal deaths.
- A detailed placental examination should preferably be performed by a specialist pathologist in all cases of perinatal death.
- The use of standardised terminology in presenting abnormal placental findings, in keeping with recommendations from an international consensus meeting of pathology would facilitate standardised interpretation and classification of placental conditions impacting on perinatal deaths. A positive initial step would be the development of a standardised reporting proforma for placental histology.

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Report available on both web sites