

Perinatal Mortality National Clinical Audit

Key Findings - Annual Report 2024



Perinatal mortality
rate (PMR)

5.01

per 1,000 total births

Excluding deaths following
termination of pregnancy



Corrected Perinatal
Mortality Rate

3.55

per 1,000 total births

Corrected for major congenital
anomalies



Stillbirth
rate

3.04

per 1,000 total births

Excluding deaths following
termination of pregnancy



Early neonatal death
rate

1.98

per 1,000 live births

Excluding deaths following
termination of pregnancy



Compared with 2023, the early neonatal death rate increased significantly. Other mortality outcomes also increased, but these changes were not statistically significant



When adjusted for in-utero transfers, no maternity unit was identified as a statistical outlier.

Maternal Characteristics



Maternal age and parity were not statistically significantly associated with perinatal mortality in 2024.



Some minority ethnic groups appeared to be overrepresented among perinatal deaths

Infant Characteristics



Birthweight centiles

- Low customised birthweight centiles were strongly associated with perinatal deaths.
- 39.2% of perinatal deaths with calculable centiles were below the 10th centile.
- 30.6% were below the 3rd centile.



Multiple births

- Multiple births were associated with increased risk.
- 14.3% of all perinatal deaths occurred in multiple births.
- Multiple births represented 3.2% of all births.

Autopsy uptake



- Autopsy uptake remained higher in stillbirths than in early neonatal deaths.

Stillbirths: 68.5%
Early neonatal deaths: 32.3%

Stillbirths



- Stillbirths accounted for 60.7% (N = 162) of perinatal deaths in 2024.
- Specific placental conditions (43.8%) were the most common cause of stillbirth, followed by major congenital anomaly (16.0%).
- Intrapartum stillbirths accounted for 2.5% of stillbirths with a rate of 0.075 per 1,000 total births.

Early neonatal deaths



- Early neonatal deaths accounted for 39.3% of perinatal deaths in 2024.
- Major congenital anomaly was the most common cause of early neonatal death, accounting for 49.5% of cases, followed by respiratory disorders and neurological disorders.
- Sixty percent of early neonatal deaths occurred within 24 hours of delivery.

Perinatal deaths associated with intrapartum events

- Three perinatal deaths met the audit criteria in 2024.
- All three cases were term early neonatal deaths.
- All were subject to coronial review.

Late neonatal deaths

- 23 late neonatal deaths were reported in 2024.
- Most occurred during the second week of life.

Early neonatal deaths <500g and <24 weeks

- 40 early neonatal deaths were reported in this group.
- The majority occurred among babies born before 22 weeks' gestation.
- The assigned neonatal cause of death was most often pre-viability, followed by severe pulmonary immaturity.



**New legal definition
of stillbirth**

From 16 September 2024, the legal definition of stillbirth in Ireland was amended to lower the birthweight and gestational age thresholds.

From 16 September to 31 December 2024, a further 2 stillbirths and 4 stillbirths following termination of pregnancy met the new legal definition of stillbirth but did not meet the previous NPEC reporting criteria.