

CRVS data shows clear reduction in IMR due to health policy changes

COOK ISLANDS



- In 2014, staff from the National Statistics Office and Ministry of Health attended a data analysis and report writing course with BAG partners.
- The work focussed on analysing trends in birth, death, and cause of death data from the national CRVS system.
- Data showed a dramatic drop in the infant mortality rate (IMR) from 15.3 in the period of 1999 – 2003 to 3.6 in 2009-2013.
- The results clearly show the effect of policy changes to ensure mothers received antenatal care and that high risk births were transferred early to the hospital on the main island of Rarotonga.

Both infant and child mortality declined from the period 1999-2003 to 2009-2013

- **IMR** declined from **15.3** to **3.6** per 1,000 live births
- **U5M** declined from **21.1** to **5.7** per 1,000 live births

Next Steps:

The Cook Islands are currently discussing methods of capturing and sharing off-island events such as births and deaths with the New Zealand Registrar.

This data sharing will allow a more comprehensive picture of mortality in the Cook Islands.

The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is a small island country in the South Pacific with a resident population of 14,974 (2011). It comprises 15 small islands whose total land area is 240 square kilometres (92.7 sq mi) and a Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 2.2M square kilometres (690,000 sq mi) of ocean. While most of the population lives on the main island of Rarotonga, there are 12 inhabited islands in total, seven of which do not have routinely scheduled transport.

Targeted Health Programs

- Over the last 5 years, interventions targeting pregnant mothers have encouraged them to:
 - ▶ attend antenatal check-ups
 - ▶ receive counseling of proper antenatal care
 - ▶ eat well, exercise, stop smoking, and avoid alcohol.
- Additionally, policies were enacted to ensure transport costs were covered to reach the main hospital in Rarotonga for delivery. Policies also made it easier for mothers to attend clinics for antenatal and postnatal services. Home visits for post natal services are also provided by public health nurses.
- Free and easy accessibility to all types of contraception (Pills/Injectables implants/IUCD/condoms) has prevented unwanted pregnancy complications.
- Improvements in immunization programs enabling a higher percentage of coverage, along with more postnatal counseling programs, also decreased infant and child deaths.



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