

Abstract

One of the Millennium Development Goals is the reduction of infant and child mortality by two-thirds by year 2015. To achieve this goal, efforts need be concentrated at identifying cost-effective strategies as many international agencies have advocated for more resources to be directed to health sector. One way of doing this is to identify the important factors that affect infant and child mortality. This study is necessary because, Infant and child mortality is one of the most important sensitive indicators of the social economic and health status of a community. This is because more than any other age group of a population, infants and children survival depends on the socioeconomic condition of their environment. This study addresses factors affecting infant and child mortality in Kenya. The main objective of the paper is to determine the effect of socioeconomic and demographic variables on infant and child mortality. Childhood mortality from the, KDHS 2008-09 data, was analyzed in two age periods: mortality from birth to the age of 12 months, referred to as “infant mortality” and mortality from the age of 12 months to the age of 60 months, referred to as “child mortality”. Data from Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS 2008-09) was collected by use of questionnaires, after carrying out a two-stage cluster sampling design. The Cox regression survival analysis was used to compute relative risk of the socioeconomic and demographic variables, on infant and child mortality. The study revealed that the socioeconomic and demographic factors affect both infant and child mortality. The relative risks were higher for infant’s mortality as compared to child’s mortality. The place of birth has the greatest impact on infant mortality. The study recommends policy makers and programme managers in the child health sector to formulate appropriate strategies to improve the situation, of children less than five years in Kenya, by creating awareness on these factors and improving on them.