

European countries show still higher mortality of infants than the principal Australian States: England and Wales, 162 (under one year) to every 1,000 births; France, 152; Italy, 167; Hungary, 214. Sweden (98) and Norway (91) are notable exceptions.

The principal causes of mortality in children under one year for New Zealand are given, with the number of deaths for five years from such causes. Premature birth stands first in order of importance, marasmus or debility coming next.*

New Zealand.—Deaths under One Year.—Principal Causes.

Principal Causes of Deaths of Infants.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Miasmatic diseases	85	41	92	191	36
Diarrhoeal diseases	152	95	176	122	152
Premature birth	276	264	303	301	291
Convulsions	106	91	82	103	95
Bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy	140	207	235	241	149
Enteritis	134	116	154	167	231
Marasmus, &c.	231	260	294	270	273

A table is added to show that higher mortality obtains in the large towns than in New Zealand as a whole and two States of Australia.

Year.	Wellington and Suburbs.			Sydney and Suburbs.			Melbourne and Suburbs.		
	Total Births.	Deaths of Infants under 1 Year.	Proportion of Deaths of Infants under 1 Year to 1,000 Births.	Total Births.	Deaths of Infants under 1 Year.	Proportion of Deaths of Infants under 1 Year to 1,000 Births.	Total Births.	Deaths of Infants under 1 Year.	Proportion of Deaths of Infants under 1 Year to 1,000 Births.
1899	1,187	140	117·9	12,239	1,473	120·4	12,435	1,552	124·8
1900	1,243	91	73·2	12,127	1,322	109·0	12,067	1,364	113·0
1901	1,326	133	100·3	12,601	1,517	120·4	12,375	1,356	124·1
1902	1,321	172	130·2	13,002	1,457	112·1	12,498	1,590	127·2
1903	1,520	141	92·8	12,749	1,483	116·3	12,012	1,493	124·3
Means of five years	1,319	135	102·9	12,544	1,450	115·6	12,277	1,507	122·7

* The report of the Royal Commission on the decline of the birth-rate in New South Wales (1904), besides giving statistics of infantile mortality, describes the conditions that operate in producing such mortality. Recommendations are also made, and the subject of feeding and care of infants dealt with.

The causes which operate in producing infantile mortality, both among legitimates and illegitimates in New South Wales, are enumerated as under:—

1. Premature birth; defective viability consequent upon imperfections in the process of development; disease acquired before birth; injured and impaired viability arising before or in process of birth.
2. Defective care of the new-born by ignorant or careless midwives.
3. Ill health of mothers, and consequent inability to provide the natural nutrition of infants and requisite nursing.
4. A want of knowledge of the proper modes of rearing infants (exemplified under seven heads).
5. Injurious quality of proprietary and other artificial foods, often recklessly advertised.
6. Injurious quality of milk under the conditions in which it is commonly supplied and used.
7. Injurious effects of chemical preservatives in milk, and in preparations of milk used as infant-food.
8. Insufficient public maternity-hospital accommodation for the parturient women among the poorer classes.
9. Insufficient public-hospital accommodation for the treatment of sick infants.
10. The prevalence of epidemic preventable diseases in infants.
11. The undue incidence of "summer diarrhoea," or acute gastro-intestinal catarrh.

The causes tending to produce mortality in the illegitimate infants were found to be (in New South Wales):—

12. Maternal indifference, and the social and economic disabilities of the mothers.
13. Defective management of institutions and places where illegitimate infants are received.
14. Secret adoption of children for gain.
15. Separation of infants from their mothers.
16. Infanticide and foeticide of viable infants.