



# WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

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## Overview of Global Population Issues

*World Population Day is commemorated each year on 11<sup>th</sup> July. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations population Fund [UNFPA] focus on commitment and action to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. The theme of this year's World Population Day is Men as Partners in Maternal Health. In this article, we mainly discuss the overview of Global Population issues*

UNFPA promotes the human right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. In many parts of the world, extreme poverty subject women and men to a lack of real choices, opportunities and the basic services needed to improve their situations. Women often suffer disproportionately, due to violence, discrimination and the burden of poor reproductive health, which is the leading cause of death and disability for women in their reproductive years.

Every minute, one woman dies needlessly during pregnancy and child birth because she did not receive adequate care and prompt treatment. Every minute, the loss of a mother shatters a family and threatens the well-being of surviving children. And for every woman who dies, 20 or more women experience serious complications. These range from chronic infections to disabling injuries such as obstetric fistula. Maternal death and disability rates mirror the huge discrepancies that exist between the haves and the have-nots both within and between countries.

By effective implementation of interventions for safe motherhood, we can save the lives of half a million women and seven million infants, and prevent millions of women from suffering from infections, injury and disability each year.

Working for the survival of mothers is human rights imperative. It also has enormous socio-economic ramifications – and is a crucial international development priority. Both the International Conference on Population and Development and Millennium Development Goals call for a 75 per cent reduction in maternal mortality between 1990 and 2015. This three-pronged strategy is the key to the accomplishment of the goal:

All women have access to contraception to avoid unintended pregnancies

All pregnant women have access to skilled care at the time of birth

All those with complications have timely access to quality emergency obstetric care

In countries such as China, Cuba, Egypt, Honduras, Jamaica, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tunisia, significant declines in maternal mortality have occurred as more women have gained access to family planning and skilled birth attendance with backup emergency obstetric care. Many of these countries have halved their maternal deaths in the space of a decade. Cadres of professionally trained midwives have been critical to these successes. Severe shortages of trained health providers with midwifery skills are holding back progress in many countries.

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Sexually transmitted infections continue to take an enormous toll on health, particularly on women's reproductive health. In fact, next to complications of pregnancy and childbirth, they are the leading cause of health problems for women of reproductive age. They can cause pregnancy-related complications, including spontaneous abortions, premature birth, stillbirth and congenital infections. They can also lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and cervical cancer. Every year, at least half a million infants are born with congenital syphilis. In addition, maternal syphilis causes another half million stillbirths and miscarriages annually. Most cases of infertility are attributable to STIs.

Worldwide, the disease burden of STIs in women is more than five times that of men. The presence of one or more STIs increases the risk of becoming infected with HIV by two to nine times. Women's greater susceptibility to these infections is based on both biological and social realities. Women's health can also be affected by reproductive health tract infections that are not sexually transmitted, including vaginosis and candida.

Sexually active young people are especially vulnerable to STIs. Each day, some 500,000 young people, mostly young women, are infected with an STI (excluding HIV). Those who become sexually active at an early age are more likely to change sexual partners and risk greater exposure. Most know very little about these infections and many are reluctant to seek services. Only 17 per cent of sexually active young people use contraceptives. Many are unaware that condoms offer dual protection from unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Even if they want to use condoms, they may not have ready access to them, or may be unable to negotiate their use.

Perhaps nowhere is the need for reproductive health services more urgent than in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Every day, 14,000 people are newly infected, and half are young people under the age of 25. Many know little about the disease and how the virus is transmitted. Young women are especially vulnerable and are more likely to be infected than young men. Reproductive health services that empower women and young people with life-saving information and skills will help prevent HIV from spreading and reduce further suffering and social and economic disruption.

We must also step up efforts for family planning, which has a direct impact on maternal health. When couples can choose the number, timing and spacing of their children, they are better able to ensure there are enough resources for each family member to prosper and thrive. Worldwide, families are having half as many children today as they did in the 1960s, but fertility remains high in the poorest countries. At least 200 million women still do not have access to a range of effective and affordable family planning services, and demand for these services is expected to increase by 40 per cent in the next 15 years. Meanwhile, funding for family planning has

been declining in recent years.

World leaders have committed themselves to improving maternal health and advancing gender equality. And men can make a tremendous contribution by using their power for positive change. Men have power in wide-ranging situations from personal and family decisions to policy and programme decisions taken at all levels of Government. In countries where these services are widely available, more mothers and babies are surviving.

Experience shows that men's involvement and participation can make all the difference. By discouraging early marriage, promoting girls' education, fostering equitable relationships, and supporting women's reproductive health and rights, progress is made.

Having children is a partnership. It is one in which women face greater risks, both because of physiological differences and gender inequities. Women have a right to health, but protecting that right often depends on a partner's support.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has chosen

Men as Partners in Maternal Health as the theme of World Population Day. There is a simple reason, as UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid said recently "Men are equal partners in making the new life that the women will deliver."

This emphasis on men's involvement in maternal health comes at the midpoint of the 15-year period set for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is now clear that the target of reducing maternal deaths by 75 per cent by 2015 will not be met without the concerted efforts of all involved. Men – as partners, fathers, husbands, brothers, policy makers and community and religious leaders – have a critical role to play in safeguarding the maternal health of women.

On World Population Day, it is time for all men—as fathers, brothers, husbands, community and religious leaders, and government officials—to become partners in maternal health. Let us go forward with the message: No woman should die giving life. And let us do all we can to promote the right of every woman to enjoy a life of health, dignity and equal opportunity.

**Sources:**

United Nations Population Fund: Improving Reproductive Health [<http://www.unfpa.org/rh/index.htm>]

United Nations Population Fund: Population Issues Overview [<http://www.unfpa.org/issues>]

**This article was prepared by Dr. Samitha Ginige, Consultant Epidemiologist, Epidemiology Unit.**

Table 1: Vaccine-preventable Diseases &amp; AFP

30<sup>th</sup> June– 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (27<sup>th</sup> Week)

| Disease                 | No. of Cases by Province |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | Number of cases during current week in 2007 | Number of cases during same week in 2006 | Total number of cases to date in 2007 | Total number of cases to date in 2006 | Difference between the number of cases to date between 2007 & 2006 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                         | W                        | C  | S  | NE | NW | NC | U  | Sab |   |  |                                       |                                       |  |
| Acute Flaccid Paralysis | 01<br>CB=1               | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 01  | 04                                       | 49                                    | 70                                    | -30.0%   |
| Diphtheria              | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 00                                    | 00                                    | 00.0%  |
| Measles                 | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 02                                       | 41                                    | 19                                    | +115.8%  |
| Tetanus                 | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 01                                       | 18                                    | 32                                    | -43.7%   |
| Whooping Cough          | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 02                                       | 22                                    | 55                                    | -60.0%   |
| Tuberculosis            | 178                      | 02 | 14 | 31 | 39 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 266   | 113                                      | 5244                                  | 5333                                  | -1.7%  |

Table 2: Diseases under Special Surveillance

30<sup>th</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (27<sup>th</sup> Week)

| Disease      | No. of Cases by Province |    |    |    |            |            |            |            | Number of cases during current week in 2007 | Number of cases during same week in 2006 | Total number of cases to date in 2007 | Total number of cases to date in 2006 | Difference between the number of cases to date between 2007 & 2006 |
|--------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|------------|------------|------------|------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|              | W                        | C  | S  | NE | NW         | NC         | U          | Sab        |   |  |                                       |                                       |  |
| DF/DHF*      | 47                       | 02 | 07 | 02 | 21         | 19         | 02         | 10         | 110   | 181                                      | 2511                                  | 5078                                  | -50.5%   |
| Encephalitis | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 01<br>KR=1 | 01<br>AP=1 | 01<br>BD=1 | 01<br>KG=1 | 04  | 02                                       | 123                                   | 77                                    | +59.7%   |
| Human Rabies | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00         | 00         | 01<br>MO=1 | 01<br>RP=1 | 02  | 01                                       | 34                                    | 34                                    | 00.0%  |

Table 3: Newly Introduced Notifiable Diseases

30<sup>th</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (27<sup>th</sup> Week)

| Disease    | No. of Cases by Province   |                    |                    |            |                    |            |            |                    | Number of cases during current week in 2007 | Total number of cases to date in 2007 | *DF / DHF refers to Dengue Fever / Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever.<br>NA= Not Available.<br>Sources:<br>Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases:<br>Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Human Rabies, Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever, Japanese Encephalitis, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps.<br>Special Surveillance:<br>Acute Flaccid Paralysis.<br>National Control Program for Tuberculosis and Chest Diseases:<br>Tuberculosis.<br>Details by districts are given in Table 5. |
|------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
|            | W                          | C                  | S                  | NE         | NW                 | NC         | U          | Sab                |   |                                       |   |
| Chickenpox | 29                         | 03                 | 11                 | 01         | 02                 | 01         | 03         | 05                 | 55  | 1919                                  |   |
| Meningitis | 03<br>CB=1<br>GM=1<br>KL=1 | 02<br>KD=1<br>ML=1 | 02<br>GL=1<br>MT=1 | 01<br>VA=1 | 04<br>KR=3<br>PU=1 | 01<br>PO=1 | 02<br>BD=2 | 03<br>RP=2<br>KG=1 | 18  | 167                                   |   |
| Mumps      | 11                         | 00                 | 03                 | 04         | 11                 | 01         | 03         | 06                 | 39  | 799                                   |   |

Provinces:

W=Western, C=Central, S=Southern, NE=North &amp; East, NC=North Central, NW=North Western, U=Uva, Sab=Sabaragamuwa.

DPDHS Divisions:

CB=Colombo, GM=Gampaha, KL=Kalutara, KD=Kandy, ML=Matale, NE=Nuwara Eliya, GL=Galle, HB=Hambantota, MT=Matara, JF=Jaffna, KN=Killinochchi, MN=Mannar, VA=Vavuniya, MU=Mullaitivu, BT=Batticaloa, AM=Ampara, TR=Trincomalee, KM=Kalmunai, KR=Kurunegala, PU=Puttalam, AP=Anuradhapura, PO=Polonnaruwa, BD=Badulla, MO=Moneragala, RP=Ratnapura, KG=Kegalle.

Table 4: Laboratory Surveillance of Dengue Fever 30<sup>th</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (27<sup>th</sup> Week)

| Samples                      | Number tested | Number positive * | Serotypes      |                |                |                |          |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
|                              |               |                   | D <sub>1</sub> | D <sub>2</sub> | D <sub>3</sub> | D <sub>4</sub> | Negative |
| Number for current week      | 11            | 01                | 00             | 01             | 00             | 00             | 00       |
| Total number to date in 2007 | 325           | 21                | 00             | 09             | 05             | 00             | 06       |

Source: Genetech Molecular Diagnostics &amp; School of Gene Technology, Colombo.

\* Not all positives are subjected to serotyping.

**Table 5: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health**  
30<sup>th</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (27<sup>th</sup> Week)

| DPDHS Division   | Dengue Fever / DHF* |             | Dysentery  |             | Encephalitis |            | Enteric Fever |            | Food Poisoning |            | Leptospirosis |            | Typhus Fever |            | Viral Hepatitis |             | Returns Received Timely** |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
|                  | A                   | B           | A          | B           | A            | B          | A             | B          | A              | B          | A             | B          | A            | B          | A               | B           |                           |
| Colombo          | 31                  | 679         | 10         | 216         | 00           | 07         | 00            | 40         | 02             | 45         | 01            | 69         | 00           | 01         | 09              | 63          | 100                       |
| Gampaha          | 06                  | 273         | 06         | 212         | 00           | 15         | 00            | 41         | 00             | 28         | 04            | 137        | 01           | 10         | 05              | 69          | 86                        |
| Kalutara         | 10                  | 174         | 16         | 301         | 00           | 01         | 00            | 31         | 01             | 19         | 02            | 68         | 00           | 01         | 05              | 39          | 100                       |
| Kandy            | 02                  | 238         | 05         | 159         | 00           | 03         | 00            | 39         | 00             | 07         | 01            | 45         | 00           | 42         | 31              | 1363        | 73                        |
| Matale           | 00                  | 59          | 02         | 119         | 00           | 06         | 00            | 09         | 03             | 06         | 00            | 28         | 00           | 03         | 02              | 87          | 75                        |
| Nuwara Eliya     | 00                  | 26          | 07         | 165         | 00           | 02         | 00            | 77         | 00             | 366        | 00            | 08         | 01           | 28         | 18              | 284         | 86                        |
| Galle            | 01                  | 54          | 00         | 83          | 00           | 07         | 04            | 12         | 00             | 04         | 00            | 31         | 00           | 18         | 00              | 14          | 88                        |
| Hambantota       | 01                  | 30          | 09         | 52          | 00           | 05         | 01            | 18         | 00             | 15         | 00            | 31         | 01           | 32         | 00              | 09          | 91                        |
| Matara           | 05                  | 90          | 01         | 166         | 00           | 08         | 01            | 25         | 00             | 10         | 01            | 110        | 03           | 133        | 00              | 20          | 88                        |
| Jaffna           | 00                  | 22          | 00         | 75          | 00           | 02         | 00            | 299        | 00             | 05         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 81         | 00              | 14          | 00                        |
| Kilinochchi      | 00                  | 01          | 00         | 00          | 00           | 00         | 00            | 03         | 00             | 00         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 02         | 00              | 02          | 00                        |
| Mannar           | 00                  | 07          | 00         | 11          | 00           | 00         | 00            | 43         | 00             | 00         | 00            | 01         | 00           | 00         | 00              | 05          | 25                        |
| Vavuniya         | 01                  | 12          | 01         | 32          | 00           | 04         | 00            | 11         | 00             | 15         | 00            | 02         | 00           | 00         | 00              | 05          | 100                       |
| Mullaitivu       | 00                  | 00          | 00         | 09          | 00           | 06         | 00            | 14         | 00             | 00         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 00         | 00              | 04          | 20                        |
| Batticaloa       | 00                  | 61          | 52         | 389         | 00           | 08         | 00            | 14         | 00             | 10         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 22         | 38              | 480         | 73                        |
| Ampara           | 00                  | 03          | 00         | 59          | 00           | 00         | 00            | 03         | 00             | 00         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 00         | 00              | 15          | 43                        |
| Trincomalee      | 01                  | 44          | 10         | 150         | 00           | 03         | 01            | 15         | 00             | 23         | 00            | 05         | 01           | 06         | 08              | 80          | 56                        |
| Kurunegala       | 21                  | 242         | 07         | 259         | 01           | 03         | 02            | 42         | 00             | 17         | 00            | 16         | 01           | 28         | 03              | 34          | 89                        |
| Puttalam         | 00                  | 75          | 02         | 65          | 00           | 10         | 03            | 48         | 00             | 03         | 00            | 15         | 00           | 04         | 01              | 61          | 100                       |
| Anuradhapura     | 19                  | 91          | 01         | 56          | 01           | 08         | 00            | 17         | 00             | 13         | 00            | 17         | 00           | 18         | 01              | 30          | 79                        |
| Polonnaruwa      | 00                  | 41          | 02         | 54          | 00           | 02         | 01            | 07         | 00             | 03         | 00            | 19         | 00           | 00         | 01              | 15          | 86                        |
| Badulla          | 02                  | 21          | 06         | 337         | 01           | 02         | 04            | 62         | 00             | 08         | 03            | 32         | 06           | 96         | 03              | 162         | 93                        |
| Monaragala       | 00                  | 11          | 14         | 200         | 00           | 02         | 01            | 35         | 00             | 10         | 01            | 34         | 00           | 35         | 01              | 22          | 100                       |
| Ratnapura        | 06                  | 131         | 11         | 348         | 00           | 11         | 00            | 39         | 00             | 08         | 00            | 34         | 00           | 13         | 05              | 55          | 81                        |
| Kegalle          | 04                  | 123         | 04         | 165         | 01           | 07         | 00            | 30         | 00             | 04         | 01            | 61         | 00           | 16         | 09              | 87          | 64                        |
| Kalmunai         | 00                  | 03          | 02         | 99          | 00           | 01         | 00            | 07         | 00             | 00         | 00            | 00         | 00           | 02         | 00              | 85          | 77                        |
| <b>SRI LANKA</b> | <b>110</b>          | <b>2511</b> | <b>168</b> | <b>3781</b> | <b>04</b>    | <b>123</b> | <b>18</b>     | <b>981</b> | <b>06</b>      | <b>619</b> | <b>14</b>     | <b>763</b> | <b>14</b>    | <b>591</b> | <b>140</b>      | <b>3104</b> | <b>78</b>                 |

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (WRCD).

\*Dengue Fever / DHF refers to Dengue Fever / Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever.

\*\*Timely refers to returns received on or before 14 July 2007. Total number of reporting units = 290. Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 227

A = Cases reported during the current week. B = Cumulative cases for the year.

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