

# Infant mortality in Nigeria increased during COVID-19

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Some attention has been focused on secondary health effects from COVID-19, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The challenges of giving birth during this pandemic, especially in these

countries, has little empirical evidence.

A new study, released ahead of print by *Health Affairs*, presents new evidence from Nigeria, which, notably, has been found to annually account for 10 percent of all [neonatal deaths](#) and 12 percent of all stillbirths in the world. The authors examined data from 288 Nigerian primary health facilities, comparing mortality for children born between April and November 2020 and those born between December 2019 and March 2020. According to the study, there was a 1.1-percentage-point (22 percent) increase and a 0.72-percentage-point (23 percent) increase, respectively, in stillbirths and newborn deaths in Nigeria during the pandemic.

"If these findings generalize to other low- and [middle-income countries](#), they may indicate that the hard-won gains in [child survival](#) made during the past two decades are at risk of being reversed amid the ongoing pandemic," the authors conclude. "Counts of COVID-19 deaths may thus represent only the tip of the spear. This has major policy implications, especially as the pandemic remains ongoing."

**More information:** Edward N. Okeke et al, In Nigeria, Stillbirths And Newborn Deaths Increased During The COVID-19 Pandemic, *Health Affairs* (2021). [DOI: 10.1377/hlthaff.2021.00659](https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.00659)

Provided by Health Affairs

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