

Global incidence of neonatal preterm birth decreasing overall

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Although the incidence of preterm birth decreased globally from 1990 to

2019, increases have been observed in high sociodemographic index (SDI) regions, according to a study published online May 31 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Guiying Cao, Ph.D., from the School of Public Health at Peking University in Beijing, and colleagues used data from the 2019 Global Burden of Disease study to examine trends in incidence and mortality of neonatal [preterm birth](#) at the global, regional, and national levels to quantify its burden from 1990 to 2019.

The researchers found that the incident cases of neonatal [preterm](#) birth decreased by 5.26 percent globally, from 16.06 million in 1990 to 15.22 million in 2019, and deaths decreased by 47.71 percent, from 1.27 to 0.66 million. During this [period](#), the overall age-standardized incidence rate (ASIR) and age-standardized mortality rate (ASMR) decreased (estimated annual percentage changes [EAPCs], -0.19 and -2.09 , respectively). From 1990 to 2019, there was an increase by a mean of 0.25 percent in the ASIR of neonatal preterm birth in high SDI regions. During the same period, the ASMR of neonatal preterm birth increased by 2.09 percent in Southern Sub-Saharan Africa. There was a positive correlation observed between EAPC of ASIR and SDI or universal health coverage index in 2019, while a negative correlation between EAPC in ASMR and SDI or universal health coverage in 2019 was seen at national levels.

"Preterm [birth](#) remains a crucial issue in children, both in high- and low-resource countries," the authors write. "Thus, efforts to reduce both the incidence and mortality of preterm births are essential worldwide."

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