

The Italian child mortality: a statistical analysis from the 18th to the 21st century

In 2011, 2,084 under-five year old children died in Italy. In 1887, the number of deaths was 399,505.

In this period (1887-2011), the corresponding mortality rate considerably dropped from 347 deaths per 1,000 live births to 4.

Today, the Italian mortality rate is one of the lowest in the world, better than in the U.S.A, but higher than in Sweden (7.3 and 3.0 per 1,000 live births, respectively).

In 2010, the African countries showed a high under-five mortality rate, similar to the Italian one in the Thirties, while the Asian states had a rate comparable to the Italian one in the Fifties (Figure 1).

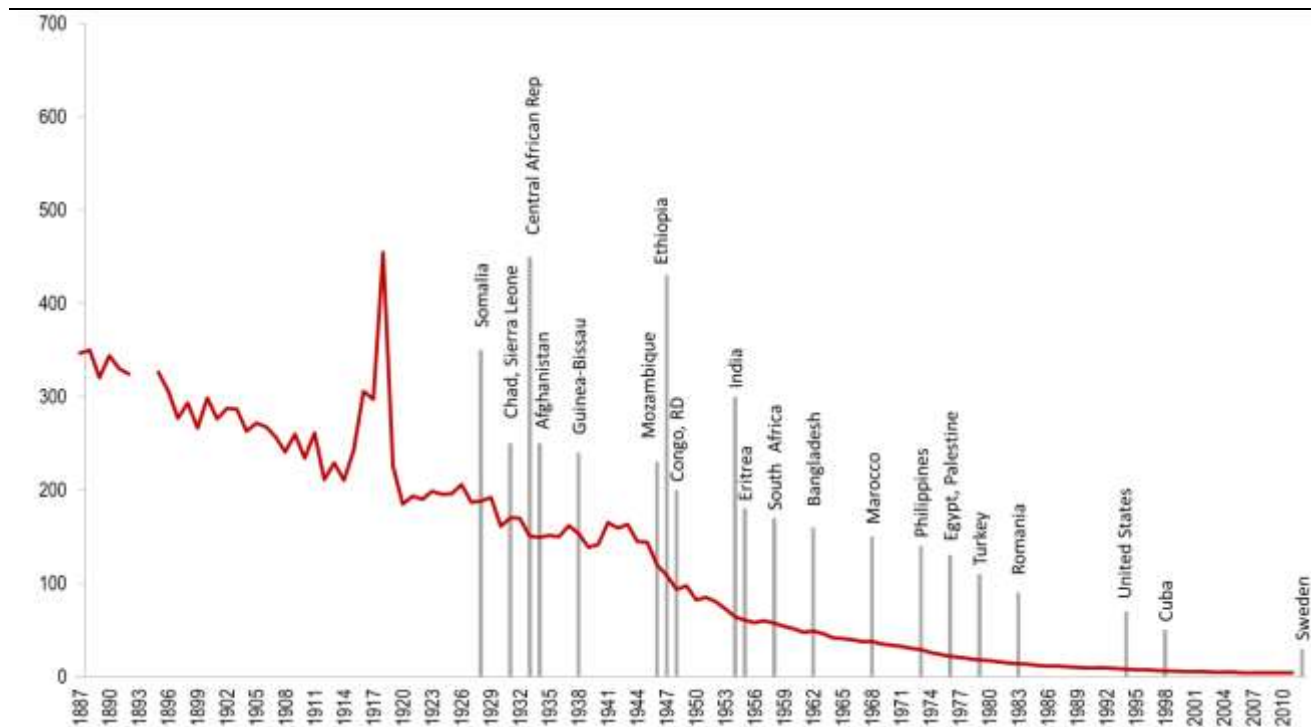
At the end of 1800, children died mainly due to infectious diseases. In 2011, 72 percent of deaths were caused by conditions that had their *origin* in the fetal or perinatal period (48%) or by congenital malformations (24%).

Nowadays, almost 85 percent of under-five deaths occur in the first year of life, in particular during the first week.

In 2006, with regard to the infant mortality rate (children under one year), among the resident population, the Italian mortality rate was lower than in the foreign resident one (respectively, 3.2 and 5.0 per 1,000 live births).

Both populations show a decreasing trend and in 2011, the infant mortality rate was 2.9 and 4.3 per 1,000 live births.

FIGURE 1. ITALIAN UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY RATE, FROM 1887 TO 2011 AND POSITION OF SOME COUNTRIES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RATE IN 2010 (a). Deaths per 1,000 live births



(a) Bibliographic source : Child Mortality Report 2011, Unicef – WHO

Contact persons:

Socio-demographic and Environmental Statistics Directorate

Luisa Frova

Ph. +39 06 4673 7382

email frova@istat.it

Silvia Simeoni

Ph. +39 06 4673 7417

email silvia.simeoni@istat.it