

Fetal Mortality

In the US, fetal deaths at 20 or more weeks gestation account for 49% of all fetal and infant deaths that occur between the 20th week of pregnancy and the 1st year of life.⁸³ In 2005, pregnant women in Kansas City experienced 43 fetal deaths (stillbirths) which was slightly above the average of 41 fetal deaths annually for the period 2001-2005. Mothers <20 y old accounted for 16.3% of stillbirths, those mothers 20-34 y old for 65.1% while women \geq 35 y old accounted for 18.6% (Table 32). Women 40 y of age and older had the lowest ratio of live births to stillbirths at 50.7:1, followed by teenagers 15-17 y old with 73.3:1. More males were stillborn than females and the ratios varied by race/ethnicity.

Table 32 Ratio of live births to stillbirths by age of mother, Kansas City, Mo, 2005

Age	Live births	Stillbirths	Ratio of live births:stillbirths	
10-14 y	23	0	-	-
15-17 y	293	4	73.3:1	127.1:1
18-19 y	597	3	199.0:1	
20-24 y	2,182	13	167.8:1	204.8:1
25-29 y	2,118	8	264.8:1	
30-34 y	1,519	7	217.0:1	184.0:1
35-39 y	689	5	137.8:1	
\geq 40 y	152	3	50.7:1	50.7:1
Total	7,573	43	176.1:1	176.1:1

One of the Yr 2010 national health objectives is to reduce deaths among fetuses \geq 20 weeks gestation to 4.1 deaths per 1,000 live births plus fetal deaths for all racial/ethnic populations. Overall, in 2005, Kansas City's rate was 5.7. And, although the risk for fetal death has declined nationally since the 1950s, disparities in the risk for fetal death by race/ethnicity persist.^{84 85} For the years 1996-2005, the race/ethnicity specific fetal death rate in Kansas City was 6.1 (Table 33).

Compared to non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks are 2.5 times more likely to experience a fetal death and Asians are 2.2 more likely. Hispanics, on the other hand had a lower risk of fetal death. Based on an analysis of all fetal deaths for the counties of Clay, Jackson, and Platte, the overall racial disparity between non-Hispanic blacks and non-Hispanic whites does not occur until about the 32 week of gestation.⁸⁶ Prior to that time, non-Hispanic whites are either disadvantaged or the rates are not significantly different (Table 34). The disparity ratios are presented in Figure 32. Since 54% of non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black fetal deaths, occurred prior to 33 weeks gestation (Figure 33), the disparity issue applies to only about 46% of fetal deaths.

⁸³ Barfield W et al. Racial/ethnic trends in fetal mortality – United States, 1990-2000. *MMWR* 2004;53:529-532.

⁸⁴ Allen CL et al. The influence of race on fetal outcome. *Am J Perinatol* 2005;22:245-248.

⁸⁵ Wingate MS, Alexander GR. Racial and ethnic differences in perinatal mortality: the role of fetal death. *Ann Epidemiol* 2006;16:458-491.

⁸⁶ Cai J et al. Fetal mortality: timing of racial disparities. *J Nat Med Ass* 2007;(in press for November).



Table 33 Race/ethnicity specific fetal death rates per 1,000 fetal deaths and live births, Kansas City, Mo, 1996-2005

	Stillbirths	Live births	Stillbirths + Live births	Fetal death rate
White, non-Hispanic	137	33,968	34,105	4.0
Black, non-Hispanic	259	26,539	26,798	9.8
Hispanic	31	9,246	9,277	3.3
Asian	12	1,349	1,361	8.8
Native American	3	502	505	5.9
Other/Not listed	8	1,241	1,249	6.4
Total	450	72,845	73,295	6.1

Table 34 Gestational age specific fetal death rates per 1,000 fetal deaths and live births for non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks, Kansas City, Mo, 1996-2005

Gestational age	Race	Stillbirths	Live births	Stillbirths + Live births	Fetal death rate
20-23 weeks	White, non-Hispanic	34	58	92	369.6
	Black, non-Hispanic	82	143	225	364.4
24-32 weeks	White, non-Hispanic	48	575	623	77.0
	Black, non-Hispanic	81	891	972	83.3
33-36 weeks	White, non-Hispanic	20	2,317	2,337	8.6
	Black, non-Hispanic	42	2,274	2,316	18.1
≥37 weeks	White, non-Hispanic	31	30,681	30,712	1.0
	Black, non-Hispanic	36	23,083	23,119	1.6
All ages	White, non-Hispanic	133	33,631	33,764	3.9
	Black, non-Hispanic	241	26,391	26,632	9.0

Figure 32 Disparity ratios in non-Hispanic black fetal death rates compared to non-Hispanic white fetal death rates by gestational age, Kansas City, Mo, 1996-2005

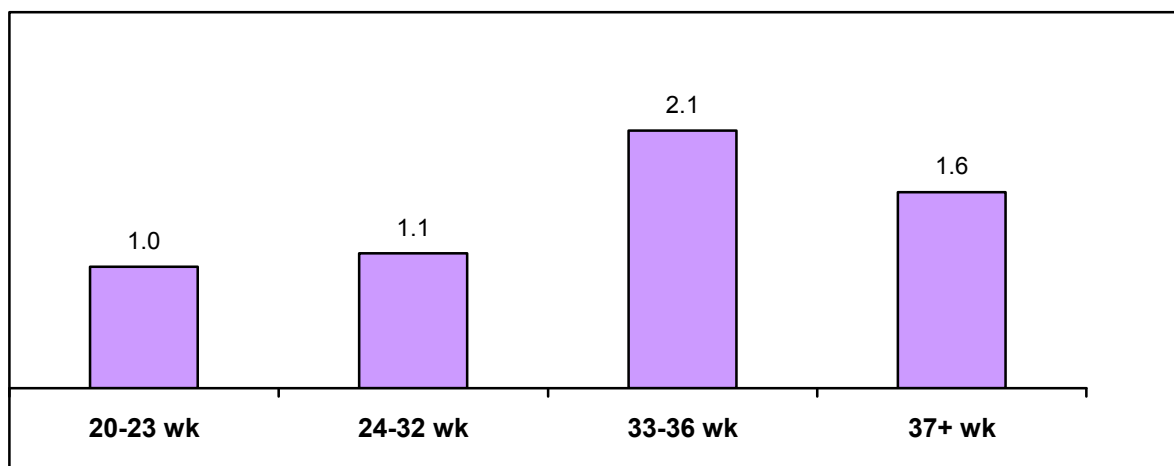


Figure 33 Percentage of fetal deaths by gestational age for non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks, Kansas City, Mo, 1996-2005

