

21. MORTALITY UNDER FIVE YEARS: ONE OF THE MAIN PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

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Introduction. This literature review was conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding of the levels & trends of mortality rates in South-East Asia. This in turn allows for conclusions to be drawn regarding ways in which regional mortality rates can be improved. Under-five mortality is a crucial indicator representing the level of child health as well as a country's overall development. Thus, a high child mortality rate generally indicates unmet needs in sanitation, medical care, nutrition, and education. It also presents multiple burdens at different levels such as societal, economical, familial, which create a long-lasting unfavourable effect on a society. Therefore, along with exploring the main causes and factors responsible for the levels of child mortality rates, this thesis studies the different burdens faced by Southeast Asian countries associated with this issue.

Aim of study. To synthesize the available information on under-five mortality in Southeast Asian countries.

Methods and materials. The data collected in this study was obtained from articles published by experts in public health, as well as reports from organisations based in the UN such as WHO, UNICEF, and local ministries of health. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been analysed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the levels and trends of under-five mortality in South-East Asia.

Results. Through this study, I have found that although the under-five mortality rates both globally and in South-East Asia have decreased significantly over the last two decades, there appears to be a reduced decline of under-five mortality rate in the last decade. Not all countries in the region are affected similarly by this issue, as a gap is clearly seen between Singapore which has the lowest under-five mortality in the region and Myanmar which currently has the highest rate in the region. Furthermore, although these countries are at extremes in terms of under-five mortality rates, they share the same predominant causes.

Conclusion. Under-five mortality rate in South-East Asia remains high due to the level of development of the countries located in this region. The high under-five mortality rate in South-East Asia however, is not a true representation of the issue in all countries in the region. Ultimately, this leads to the conclusion that the issue needs to be addressed at an economical and developmental level in the country.