

## Neonatal Mortality, Infant Mortality, and Under-five Mortality Rates in the Provinces of Zimbabwe: A Geostatistical and Spatial Analysis of Public Health Policy Provisions

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**Abstract :** The aim of this research is to present a disaggregated geostatistical analysis of the subnational provincial trends of child mortality variation in Zimbabwe from a child health policy perspective. Soon after gaining independence in 1980, the government embarked on efforts towards promoting equitable health care, namely through the provision of primary health care. Government intervention programmes brought hope and promise, but achieving equity in primary health care coverage was hindered by previous existing disparities in maternal health care disproportionately concentrated in urban settings to the detriment of rural communities. The article highlights policies and programs adopted by the government during the millennium development goals period between 1990-2015 as a response to the inequities that characterised the country's maternal health care. A longitudinal comparative method for a spatial variation on child mortality rates across provinces is developed based on geostatistical analysis. Cross-sectional and time-series data was extracted from the World Health Organisation (WHO) global health observatory data repository, demographic health survey reports, and previous academic and technical publications. Results suggest that although health care policy was uniform across provinces, not all provinces received the same antenatal and perinatal services. Accordingly, provincial rates of child mortality growth between 1994 and 2015 varied significantly. Evidence on the trends of child mortality rates and maternal health policies in Zimbabwe can be valuable for public child health policy planning and public service delivery design both in Zimbabwe and across developing countries pursuing the sustainable development agenda.

**Keywords :** antenatal care, perinatal care, infant mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, under-five mortality rate, millennium development goals, sustainable development agenda

**Conference Title :** ICCH 2021 : International Conference on Community Health

**Conference Location :** Istanbul, Türkiye

**Conference Dates :** June 28-29, 2021