



CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH IN ARMENIA

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Abstract

The aims of this article are: to present the analysis on the health status of children and adolescents of Armenia, the trends and factors affecting since 1990s; to analyze experiences and effectiveness of interventions in the field of Child and Adolescent Health implemented during the last 15 post-independence years; to discuss conclusions and lessons learned.

The relevant statistics was analyzed, including official data of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia and the National Statistical Service. Data of relevant child health surveys held in Armenia were also considered. The results of analysis highlighted both positive and negative tendencies in the health status of Armenian children and adolescents. Since mid 1990s, the child and infant mortality rates declined substantially, mainly due to decrease of mortality caused by acute respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases. This tendency was proved not only by the official national statistics, but also by independent observations. However, the infant mortality rate is still rather high, especially compared with the Western and Central European countries; in the main this is a result of the high neonatal mortality. The studies also revealed high prevalence of childhood disability and developmental disorders, which are estimated as high as 12% in children at the age below 8. The surveys also identified behavioral problems in school-aged children and adolescents such as unhealthy habits, mental health disorders, lack of knowledge/awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive health, etc. Results indicate that most policies and programs adopted in the field of Child and Adolescent Health in Armenia demonstrated effectiveness thereof and led to positive changes. However, existing problems stress the need for developing and implementing new strategies.

Key words: child, adolescent, health, mortality, morbidity

Introduction

Children are the future of the world; their health and well-being are the basis of the well-being and prosperity of the nations. A good health status starting from prenatal period to adolescence is the most important guarantee for the society's future, its economic and social development. Attributing importance to this fact, the international community emphasized several times the priority of child protection issues,

which are enshrined in a number of documents adopted by the United Nations (UN) Organization and different UN agencies: Children's Rights Declaration, "A Favorable World for Children", "Millennium Development Declaration", European Strategy for Child Health and Development, etc. The child health status, particularly the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), is recognized as one of basic indicators of welfare and development of any nation.

After declaring independence, the Republic of Armenia as a member state to the United Nations joined the Convention on the Rights of

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