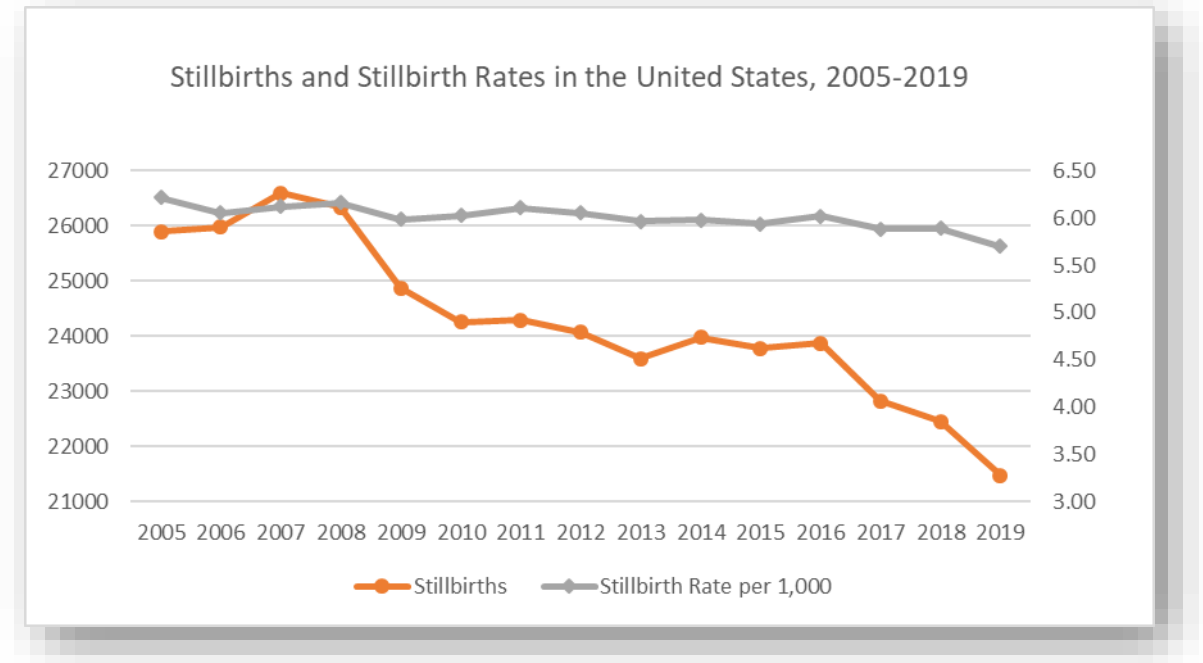


Stillbirth in the United States

Stillbirth in the United States

- In the United States, stillbirth rates are reported for pregnancy losses that occur at **20 weeks' gestation or later**
- Although the number of stillbirths has declined, the **rate** has changed very little
 - 6.22 per 1,000 in 2005
 - 5.70 per 1,000 in 2019
- The perceived reduction in stillbirth is due to a decrease in the total number of births during this period



Putting the Numbers in Perspective: 22,000 stillbirths each year...

- Equivalent to losing 3 classes of kindergarteners **each day**
- Exceeds the number of deaths for children aged 0-14 years from the following causes *combined*:
 - Preterm birth (3,679)
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (1,334)
 - Accidents (1,208)
 - Drowning (689)
 - Guns (305)
 - Fire (291)
 - Flu (142)

Stillbirths: More than the Numbers

- Stillbirths are devastating and have a profound and lifelong impact on the families who endure them
- Impact of stillbirth is wide reaching, and includes:
 - Mental health
 - Living and subsequent siblings
 - Economic consequences
 - Relationship strain
 - Stigma and social isolation

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Stillbirth

- In 2019, for every 1,000 births to...
 - White mothers, 4.87 babies were stillborn
 - Black mothers, 10.22 babies were stillborn
- Stillbirth is 2.1 times more common among Black than White women
- This difference is attributable to the impact of the experience of racism (both interpersonal and institutional) on health, which impacts a multitude of factors, including quality of and access to care

Stillbirth Data in the United States

- Vital records (fetal death certificates) are the only national source of stillbirth data in the United States
- CDC provides guidance for stillbirth reporting, however definitions vary by state
- Suffer from poor quality:
 - Not all stillbirths are recorded
 - Not all requested information is provided for each stillbirth
 - Not all information provided for each stillbirth is correct

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_08.pdf

Stillbirths are NOT Inevitable

- Genetic or structural defects account for approximately 10% of stillbirths
- **At least** 25% of US stillbirths are preventable
 - That could be at least 5,500 lives saved *each year*
- Comparisons to other high income countries suggest that as many as 75% of stillbirths in the United States are preventable

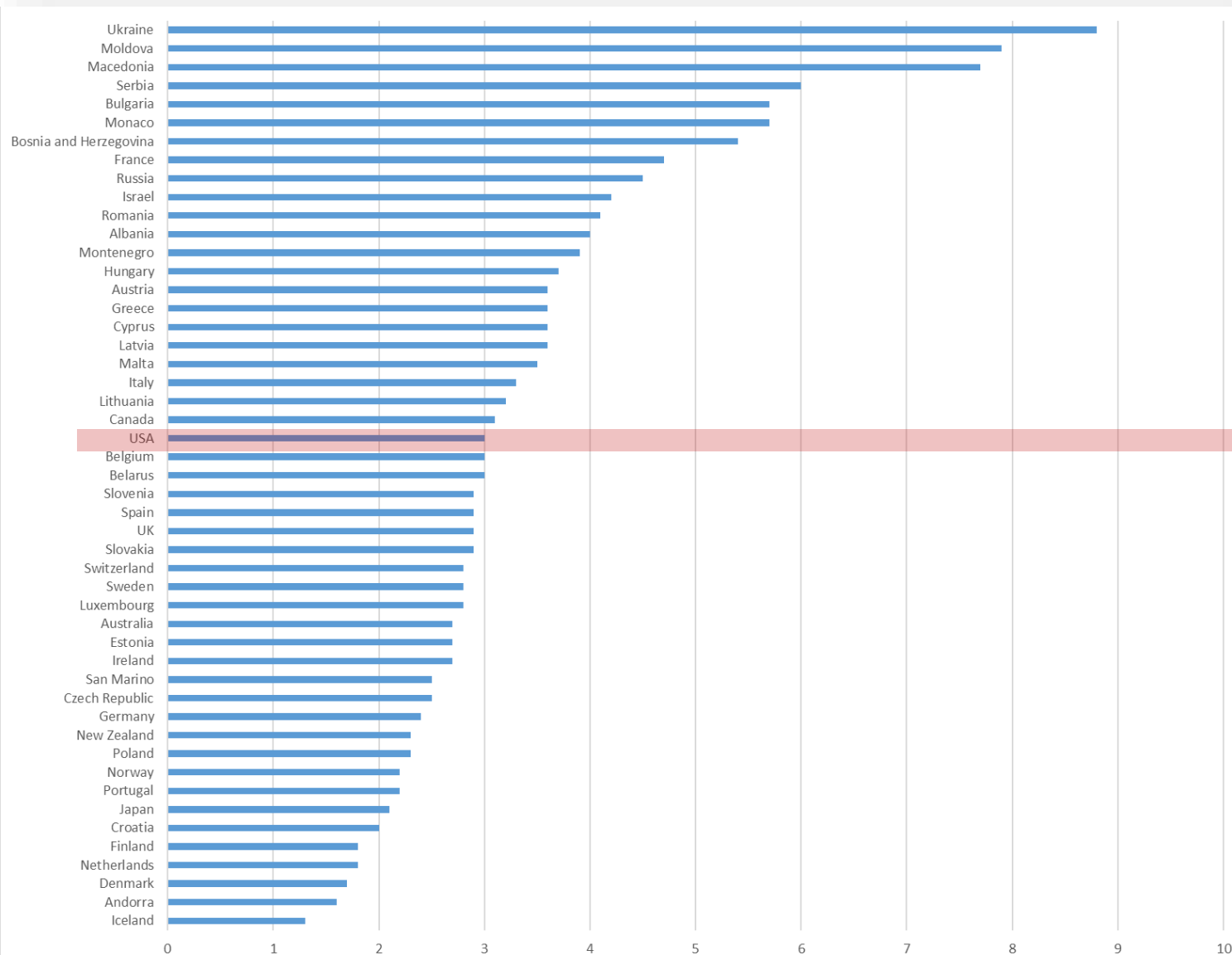
Global Stillbirth Comparisons

Global Comparisons of Stillbirth

- Stillbirth definitions vary by country
- To allow for appropriate comparisons, global stillbirth rates are compared using a definition of pregnancy loss occurring at **28 weeks' gestation or later**

Global Comparison of Annual Stillbirth Rates, 2015

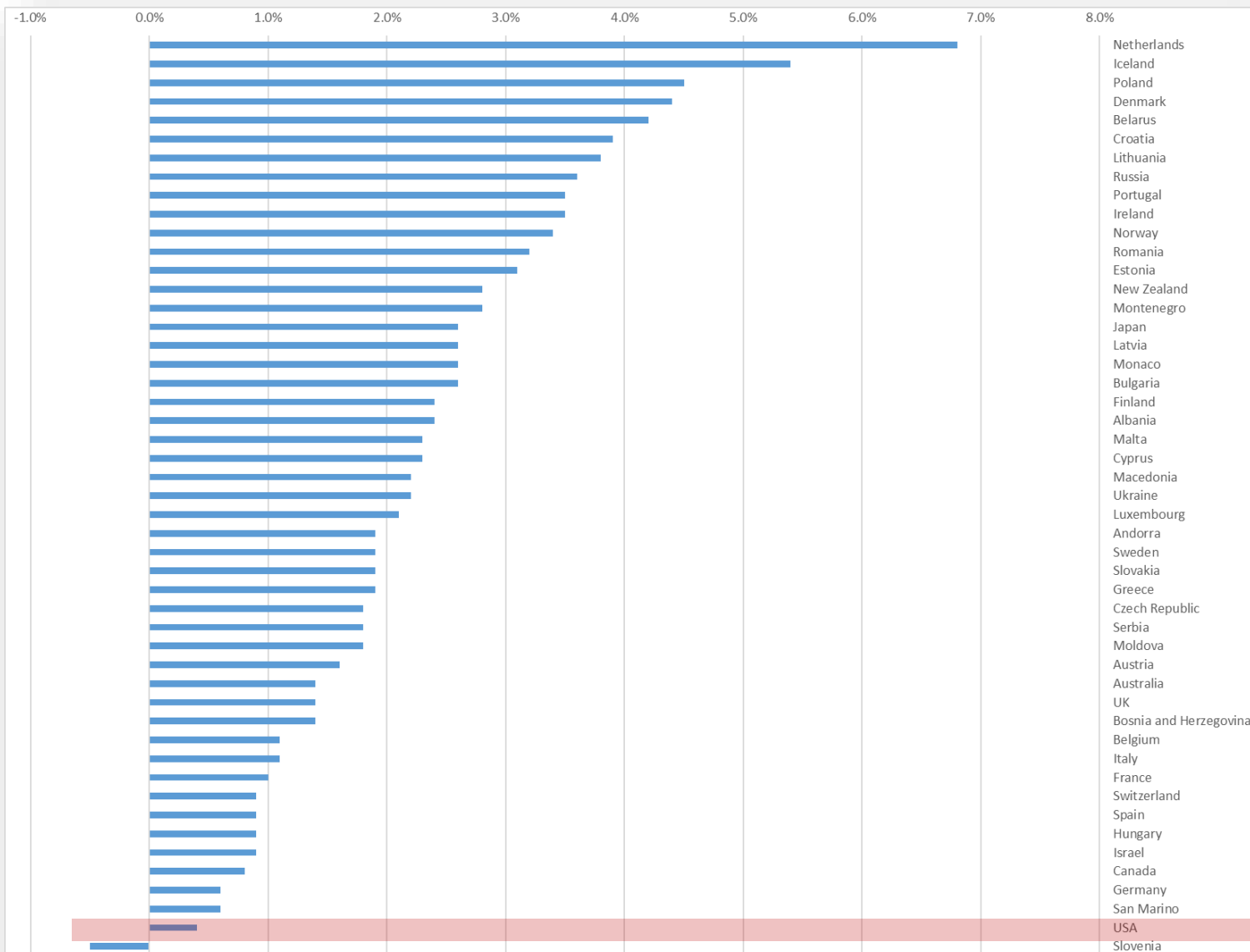
Smaller values indicate lower stillbirth rates



Among the 49 high-income countries studied, the United States (highlighted in red) ranked **25th** in stillbirth rates in **2015**, with a rate of 3.0 stillbirths at 28+ weeks' gestation per 1,000 births.

Global Comparison of Annual Stillbirth Rate Reduction – 2000 vs. 2015

Larger values indicate a greater reduction in the stillbirth rate during this time period



In a study of **high-income countries**, the United States (highlighted in red) ranked **48 of 49 countries** in stillbirth reduction from **2000 to 2015** – with a reduction of only **0.4%**.

Data from: Flenady, Wojcieszek et al. 2016

More recently, a global comparison of the stillbirth rate reduction from **2000-2019** ranked the United States at **183 of 195 countries**. Only 12 countries had a lower reduction in the stillbirth rate than the US.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/84851/file/UN-IGME-the-global-burden-of-stillbirths-2020.pdf>

Quality Targets Related to Progress in Reducing Stillbirth Rates

- Universal healthcare
- National perinatal audit program
- Adequate perinatal pathologists
- Mechanisms for national collection of SB data
- Government-funded research programs
- Classification system
- National guidelines bereavement care
- Identified mechanisms for stigma reduction
- Stillbirth rate target
- Stillbirth rate equity target
- Antenatal Care quality target

The United States has only implemented 27% of these targets, whereas Australia has implemented 90%.

Using this metric, the United States falls behind Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom.

Data are currently only available for 13 countries – these comparisons may be even less favorable once additional information becomes available.

Stillbirth Equity Ratios

- A measure to compare the stillbirth rates of the most and least disadvantaged groups
- Ratio = 1 → no difference (i.e., full equity)
- Ratio > 1 → worse outcomes for the most disadvantaged group
- United States had the worst stillbirth equity ratio of the 6 countries* with available data with a value of 2.4
- Stillbirth rates for the most disadvantaged groups were 2.4 times the rates of the least disadvantaged groups

*Australia, Brazil, Finland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States

What are other countries doing?

Australia

- Stillbirth Centre of Research Excellence
 - Funded by the national government
 - Multimillion dollar grants for a large research, communications, and advocacy team
- Recently launched its first [National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan](#), with the following priorities and action plans:
 - Ensuring high quality stillbirth prevention and care
 - Raising awareness and strengthening education
 - Improving holistic bereavement care and community support following stillbirth
 - Improving stillbirth reporting and data collection
 - Prioritizing stillbirth research

Ireland

- [National Perinatal Epidemiology Center \(NPEC\) National Clinical Audit of Perinatal Mortality](#)
 - “Identify modifiable risk factors to decrease the risk of perinatal death & inform clinical practice”
- Robust [clinical practice guideline](#) on investigation and management of stillbirth and intrauterine fetal death

United Kingdom

- **National Maternity & Perinatal Audit**
 - “Evaluate the care processes and outcomes in order to identify good practice and areas for improvement in the care of women and babies”
 - Stillbirth is included in the audit
- **Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle (SBLCB)**
 - A guide for health care providers to help reduce perinatal mortality across England

Stillbirth in the United States

Data

- US stillbirth rates are reported for pregnancy losses that occur at **20 weeks' gestation or later**
- **In 2019, nearly 21,500 babies were stillborn**
 - Equivalent to losing three classes of kindergarteners each day
 - Nearly three times the number of deaths of children aged 0-14 from the following causes **combined**: preterm birth, SIDS, accidents, drowning, guns, fire, flu & poison
- **For every 1,000 US births, 5.7 babies are stillborn** – this **rate** has changed very little over the last 15 years
- Stillbirth is **2.1 times more common among Black than White women**, attributable to the **impact of racism on health**, which impacts a multitude of factors, including quality of and access to care
- US stillbirth data come from **vital records**
 - CDC provides guidelines for reporting, but **definitions vary by state**
 - Suffer from **poor quality**, including missing and inaccurate data

More than just Numbers

- Stillbirths are devastating and have profound and lifelong impact on the families who endure them. **The impact of stillbirth is wide reaching** and includes: mental health, living & subsequent siblings, economic consequences, relationship strain, stigma & social isolation
- **Stillbirths are not inevitable** – just 10% are attributable to genetic causes
 - At least 25% of US stillbirths are preventable
 - Comparisons to other high income countries suggest that 75% of US stillbirths could be preventable

Global Comparisons of Stillbirth

- Definitions vary by country, thus comparisons are of pregnancy losses that occur at **28 weeks' gestation or later**
- The **US was ranked 25th among 49 high income countries** with respect to stillbirth rates
- A global comparison of the **reduction in stillbirth rates from 2000 to 2019 ranked the US 183rd of 195 countries** – *only 13 countries had a lower stillbirth rate reduction than the US during this period*

What are other Countries Doing?

Australia

- **Centre of Excellence in Stillbirth Research** – funded by national government with multimillion dollar grants for a large research, communications & advocacy team
- Newly launched its first **National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan**

Ireland

- **National Perinatal Epidemiology Center (NPEC) National Clinical Audit of Perinatal Mortality** – aims to “identify modifiable risk factors to decrease the risk of perinatal death & inform clinical practice”
- Robust **clinical practice guideline** on investigation and management of stillbirth and intrauterine fetal death

New Zealand

- Stillbirth rates have declined significantly since 2007, when the **Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Review Committee** began collecting data

United Kingdom

- **National Maternity & Perinatal Audit** – which includes stillbirth and “evaluate[s] the care processes and outcomes in order to identify good practice and areas for improvement in the care of women and babies”
- **Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle (SBLCB)** – A guide for health care providers to help reduce perinatal mortality across England