

within the first month, and remaining (36 %) during the other eleven months^(1, 2, 3).

More than 10 million children younger than 5 die each year, most of them do so from preventable causes, nearly all in poor countries. The major killers in the developing countries have been and still are diarrhea, acute respiratory infection and neonatal diseases. Diarrhea remains a common illness among infants and children throughout the world. In developing countries, diarrhea is a common cause of mortality among children aged <5 years, with an estimated 2 million deaths annually^(1, 3, 4, 5, 6).

Lower respiratory tract infection (LRTI) is frequently used interchangeably to include bronchitis, bronchiolitis, and pneumonia. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates are 150.7 million cases of pneumonia each year in children younger than 5 years, with as many as 20 million cases severe enough to require hospital admission^(7, 8). The mortality rate in the developed countries is low (<1 per 1000 per year)^(9, 10, 11). While in the developing countries, respiratory tract infections are not only more prevalent but are also more severe, accounting for more than 4 million deaths annually⁽¹²⁾.

The neonatal period accounts for 38% of all deaths in children younger than five⁽¹³⁾.

Most neonatal deaths (99 %) arise in low income and middle income countries and almost half occur at home⁽¹⁴⁾.

The major direct causes of Neonatal (NN) death globally are; Infection (36%), prematurity (28 %) & birth asphyxia (23 %)^(15, 16, 17).

Estimation of mortality rate in children younger than 5 years published by WHO shows: (17.5 %) of death were due to diarrhea, (10.5 %) to pneumonia, neonatal causes

(47.9%) & for others (24.1%)^(3, 7). While in the developed countries the major killers were prematurity which accounts for (32.1 %) and congenital abnormalities (17.1 %)^(1, 3).

Accurate information for the causes of death is necessary for an effective health planning and evaluation of health care program⁽¹⁸⁾. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) consider Under five Mortality Rate (U5MR) as the best single indicator of social development and well being, as this rate reflects; income, nutrition, health care and the basic education in the community⁽¹⁹⁾.

Classification of the causes of death is always difficult; in developed countries where the registrations of all cases of death are relatively complete, necessitating international classification of diseases. While it is more difficult in developing countries, where often less than half of all cases of death are registered, the died patient often received no medical attention, either because they live too far from the health system services or because the establishment of the cause was of no interest to any one^(20,21).

The Aim of study is to find out the main causes of death among children less than 5 year of age, to evaluate the effect of different variables like; age, sex, weight, months of the year, residency on the cause of death & to monitor health progress and provide what is needed for an efficient design of care delivery system.

Patients and Methods

The study was retrospective and hospital based done in the Pediatrics Teaching Hospital in Sulaymani; Sulaymani is one of the three governorates in Kurdistan region of Iraq. It has an average population of 1,547,071 with 265,000 children being younger than 5*.

The live birth rate in Sulaymani is around 1275/month**.