



SOME INTERESTING NUMBERS

by John Salyer RRT-NPS, MBA, FAARC

It can be instructive to reflect on the *nature* of things by pondering the *number* of things. Like it or not, we live in a world dominated by numbers. Some individuals' irrational fear of numbers not withstanding; getting, sharing, understanding, using and mastering numbers has become a key stone in the construct of western civilization and helps inform us (hopefully) in our daily journey through life

So let's review some interesting numbers associated with perinatal and neonatal care. These are in no particular order and were not gathered in any systematic way, but are ones that I found interesting. These numbers came from a variety of reputable sources.

244 - The birth weight in grams (8.3 ounces) of the smallest known surviving baby ever born (2004).

10,782 - The birth weight in grams (23 lbs, 12 ounces) of the largest known baby ever born. The child of a Canadian mother lived only 11 hours. In 1955 Camelina Fedele gave birth to a 22 lbs, 8 ounce baby that survived.

21 - The average age of new mothers in 1970.

25 - The average age of new mothers in 2008.

7 to 10 - The average number of births per mother in the 1700's. Note that less than half of these infants saw their first birthday.

3.5 - The average number of births per mother in the 1950's.

2 - The average number of births per mother in 2008.

9.4 - The percent of U.S. singleton births that are preterm

50.7 - The percent of U.S. twins births that are preterm

90.0 - The percent of US triplet births that are preterm. After triplets the names for multiple births get cooler and more obscure.

Consider: Quadruplets (4), Quintuplets (5), Sextuplets (6), Septuplets (7), Octuplets (8), Nonuplets (9), Decaplets (10),

Undecaplets (11), Duodecaplets (12), and Quindecaplets (15). Apparently there are historical examples of each of these phenomena actually occurring although I could find no known examples of septuplets or more where the children survived.

35 - Percent increase in the number of multiple births in Canada between 1979 and 1999.

2 - The percent decline in the birth rate for teen mothers (aged 15-19) between 2004 and 2005. Rates are now at their lowest level in the 65 years for which records have been kept.

4.1 - The average length of stay for all hospital deliveries in 1970

7.8 - The average length of stay for all C-sections in 1970

30.2 - The percent of all deliveries that are now done by caesarean. This is at an all time high and some theorists are attributing this to the Edwards effect.

37 - Percent of live births to unwed mothers in 2005. This was 28% in 1990. It is as high as 69% in some demographic slices.

4.3 - Number of babies born each second

5 - Age of the youngest woman (so to speak) to give birth. This Peruvian girl was taken to the hospital by her parents who thought she had a tumor. They figured out she was with child and she subsequently had a C-section. Her father was briefly imprisoned for incest but later released for lack of evidence.

67 - Age of the oldest woman to give birth. This retired professor said she "had not been able to resign myself to not having a baby." She had a younger woman's egg fertilized by her husband's sperm and implanted in her uterus.

69 - Highest number of children born to one woman. She was the first wife of a Russian peasant in the 18th century. I know, you are wondering about taking a second wife after your first one had 69 children. One assumes it was not to further enlarge his corpulent family. She achieved this remarkable record with a considerable economy of scale, having 27 birthing episodes that produced 16 sets of twins, 7 sets of triplets, and 4 sets of quadruplets.

1847 - The year anesthesia was first administered during childbirth.

4,112,052 - Number of live births in the U.S. (2004).

2,397,615 - Number of deaths in the U.S. (2004). Do not be fooled into thinking the difference between these two numbers represents population growth. This would not take into account the effects of immigration.

25,325 - The number of deaths in 2005 in the U.S. among 1-19 year olds.

11,132 - The number of deaths in this same group caused by accidental injury, which was the leading cause of death.



The 2008/2009 Focus Manager's Desk Reference
Reference it online at www.foocus.com

John Salyer, RRT-NPS is the Director of RC at Seattle Children's Hospital. He can be reached at John.Salyer@seattlechildrens.org