

# **An Upsurge in early childhood mortality in Kenya: A search for explanations**

Ikamari, Lawrence DE

## **Abstract:**

This study seeks to document recent trends in early childhood mortality in the country and to offer some plausible explanations for the upsurge in the trends. Data and information from various sources are used in this paper to achieve this purpose. The results obtained show that infant, child and under-five mortality rates had declined in the 1960s and 1970s but were taking an upward trend since early 1990s. This situation is attributable to a combination of factors, including increased poverty, adverse effects of economic hardships and cost recovery programs associated with structural adjustment programs, increased childhood malnutrition, decreased use of certain maternity care services, decline in the coverage of child immunizations, inability of the public health system to provide services, and the HIV/ AIDS epidemic and the recent ethnic clashes that rocked some parts of the Rift Valley, Coast, Nyanza and Western province. In order to reverse the upward trend in mortality, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts to reduce poverty, to enable most people to have adequate food supply, improve the public health sector so that it can deliver health care to all people; to make greater efforts to raise the living standards of rural populations and improve the quality of housing, sanitary and sewerage conditions in urban slums. In addition, concerted efforts must continue to be made to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS, to assist Aids orphans and to eliminate completely and to avoid recurrence of ethnic clashes and cattle rustling.