ISLAND OF RODRIGUES
An Analysis of the Health Situation

Rodrigues Island, administratively autonomous, is of volcanic origin, with an area of 104.0 km$^2$, and is located 560 km north-east of Mauritius with daily air-links. In general, the population is scattered over the island, with no dominant towns, except the administrative centre, Port Mathurin.

POPULATION AND VITAL STATISTICS

The estimated mid-year resident population of the Island of Rodrigues as at 1st July 2006 was 37,079 as compared to 34,939 in 1996. The population density, at the end of 2006 was 358 inhabitants per square kilometer. During the 10-year period (1996-2006) the average annual growth rate was 0.60 %. In the last decade, there has been a notable increase in the migration of Rodriguans to the main Island of Mauritius, mostly for economic reasons.

The proportion of population aged under 15 years decreased, from 34.0 % in 1996 to 30.9 % in 2006, while the proportion of elderly population (aged 60 years and above) increased from 6.9 % in 1996 to 9.5 % in 2006. The dependency ratio has decreased from 624.6 per 1,000 in 1996 to 597.3 per 1,000 in 2006. The sex ratio (males per 100 females) was 98.9 in 1996, while in 2006 it was 98.0.

Life expectancy at birth, 69.4 years for males and 75.8 for females in 1996, was 69.4 years for males and 74.8 for females in 2006.

The number of live births registered in 1996 and 2006 was 714 and 881 respectively, corresponding to a crude birth rate of 20.5 in 1996 and 23.8 in 2006. The number of deaths registered in 1996 and 2006 was 162 and 245 respectively, corresponding to a crude death rate of 4.6 in 1996 and 6.6 in 2006; in 2005, it was 6.1 with 224 deaths.

The number of infant deaths, that is deaths among children aged under one year, registered in 1996 and 2006 was 14 and 24 respectively, corresponding to an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 19.6 in 1996 and 27.2 in 2006. The lowest IMR, that is 12.3 per 1,000 live births, was recorded in 2005 when only 11 infant deaths were registered in the island.

The number of still-births registered in 2006 was 12 corresponding to a still-birth rate of 13.4 per 1,000 total births. In 1996, only 2 still-births were registered bringing the rate to the lowest ever recorded level of 2.8
HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM

In the Island of Rodrigues, at the end of 2006, there were one hospital with 121 beds and two health centres with in-patient facilities equipped with 55 beds. This brought the total number of beds in government institutions providing in-patient facilities to 176 as compared to 178 in 1996. Patients in need of tertiary health care are referred to Mauritius.

At the end of 2006, there were 14 Community Health Centres, providing basic services including treatment of common diseases and injuries, maternal and child care and family planning. There were three dental clinics, namely at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mont Lubin Health Centre, and La Ferme Health Centre. There was also a Health Office at Port Mathurin.

HEALTH PERSONNEL

At the end of 2006, there were 16 doctors in the Island of Rodrigues, that is one doctor for 2,327 inhabitants, while in 1996, there were 12 doctors with one doctor for 2,918 inhabitants. There were 2 dentists, that is a dentist for 18,615 inhabitants at the end of 2006. Almost all of these health professionals are employees of the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life posted to the island on tour service basis.

The number of qualified nurses and midwives was 155 at the end of 2006, that is one nurse/midwife for 240 inhabitants while in 1996 there were 98 nurses and midwives, that is one nurse/midwife for 357 inhabitants.

IN-PATIENT SERVICE

The number of admissions at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the two Health Centres (Mont Lubin and La Ferme) providing in-patient services, was 13,695 in 2006, while in 1996 it was 8,513. The average annual increase in admissions during the 10-year period was about 6.1%.

OUT-PATIENT SERVICE

The total number of attendances at the out-patient departments, that is the Accident & Emergency and the Sorted/Unsorted Unit at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Mont Lubin and La Ferme Health Centres was 171,317 in 2006, while in 1996 it was 92,284, representing an average annual increase of about 8.6%.
In 2006, the number of attendances for the treatment of common diseases and injuries at Community Health Centres was 53,737 while in 1996 it was 46,558. Over the 10-year period (1996-2006) the percentage increase in attendances was 15.4%.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

In 2006, a total of 866 births (10 stillbirths and 856 live births) occurred at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mont Lubin HC and La Ferme HC. Out of the 856 livebirths attended by trained personnel, 122 were with a low birth weight (less than 2500 grammes) representing 14.3% of live births as compared to 7.6% in 1996.

In 2006, a total of 864 livebirths were reported by the MCH services. The number of babies immunised against Tuberculosis (BCG) by MCH staff, was 864 representing 100.0% coverage among live births. The number of babies immunised against Diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and hepatitis B (3rd dose) was 815 with 94.3% coverage. Those immunized against Polio (3rd dose) were 823 (95.3% coverage) and Measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) were 845 (97.8% coverage). The relatively high percentages observed in Rodrigues are most probably due to postponement of immunisations schedule for the previous year and/or return to Rodrigues of babies born in the Island of Mauritius and/or immunizations of babies over one year old.

DENTAL HEALTH

The total number of attendances at the three dental clinics in 2006 was 14,247, while in 1996 it was 8,572. This represented a percentage increase of 66.2% during the 10-year period (1996-2006).

MORBIDITY

The number of discharged patients in 2006 was 12,509 of whom 982 (7.9%) were treated for Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium, 539 (4.3%) for Hypertensive diseases, 478 (3.8%) for Diabetes Mellitus and 426 (3.4%) for Bronchitis (chronic and unspecified) emphysema, and asthma. In 1996 the number of discharged patients was 8,341 of whom 438 (5.3%) for Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium, 396 (4.7%) for Hypertensive diseases, 210 (2.5%) for Diabetes Mellitus and 648 (7.8%) for Bronchitis (chronic and unspecified) emphysema, and asthma.

In 1996, the number of discharges for Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium which represented 5.3% of total discharges ranked 4th among principal causes of discharges, while in 2006 it represented 7.9% of total discharges and ranked 1st among the principal causes of discharges. In 1996
discharges for Diabetes Mellitus represented 2.5% of total discharges and ranked 11th among principal causes of discharges, while in 2006, it represented 3.8%, ranking 7th among principal causes of discharges. Bronchitis (chronic and unspecified) emphysema, and asthma which was 7.8% and ranked 1st among principal causes of discharges in 1996 represented 3.4% and ranked 8th among principal causes of discharges in 2006.

In 2006, the diseases responsible for the highest number of first attendances in Community Health Centres for the treatment of common diseases and injuries were Cough, pain in throat, chest pain, wheezing hiccough and sneezing, representing 13.4% of the total number of first attendances. Fever/pain all over came in the second position with 10.3% of total first attendances, followed by Tonsillitis, laryngitis, nasopharyngitis (common cold), sore throat, URTI with 8.6%. In 1996 the diseases responsible for the highest number of first attendances were Superficial injury, contusion and crushing with intact skin surface with 8.1% of total first attendances followed by Influenza with 8.0% and Gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea with 5.8%.

The distribution by ICD chapters shows that Diseases of respiratory system which was 18.4% of total first attendances in 1996 has decreased to 15.2% in 2006. During the same period, Infectious and parasitic diseases decreased from 14.5% to 6.1%. Diseases of the musculoskeletal and connective tissue which were 4.2% in 1996 and 8.9% in 2005 significantly increased to 14.7% in 2006, probably due to the outbreak of chikungunya in the island.

**CAUSE OF DEATH**

In 2006, 245 deaths were registered. Diseases of the circulatory system were responsible for 35.9% of the deaths. Endocrine, nutritional & metabolic disorders with 19.2% of the deaths were in the second place followed by Neoplasm with 12.7% and Diseases of the respiratory system with 6.9%. In 1996, 162 deaths were registered. Diseases of the circulatory system were responsible for 37.0% of the deaths. Diseases of the respiratory system with 11.7% of deaths were in the second place followed by Neoplasm with 10.9% and injury and poisoning with 9.9%.

In 2006, Heart diseases and Diabetes Mellitus were the first two principal causes of death with 20.4% and 18.4% of deaths respectively.

No Maternal deaths were registered in 2006. During the period 1996-2005 four Maternal deaths were registered in the Island: one in 2000, one in 2001 and 2 in 2002.