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. 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 was 37,314 in 2007 as compared to 35,140 in 1997. The population density, at the end of 2007 was 361 inhabitants per square kilometer. During the 10-year period (1997-2007) the average annual growth rate was 0.6 %. During these years, 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 32.6 % in 1997 to 31.0 % in 2007, while the proportion of elderly population (aged 60 years and above) increased from 7.1 % to 9.7 %. During that period, the total dependency ratio has increased from 595.0 per 1,000 to 606.0. The young age dependency ratio decreased from 520.5 to 497.7, while the old age dependency ratio increased from 74.4 to 108.3.

Life expectancy at birth, 69.1 years for males and 75.1 for females in 1997, was 70.3 years for males and 76.2 for females in 2007.

The number of live births registered in 1997 and 2007 was 681 and 844 respectively, corresponding to an increase in the crude birth rate from 19.4 per 1,000 mid-year population to 22.6. The number of deaths registered in 1997 and 2007 was 188 and 175 respectively, corresponding to a decrease in the crude death rate from 5.4 per 1,000 mid-year population to 4.7; in 2006, it was 6.6 with 245 deaths.

The number of infant deaths, that is deaths among children aged under one year, registered in 1997 and 2007 was equally 13, corresponding to a decrease in the infant mortality rate (IMR) from 19.1 per 1,000 livebirths to 15.4. The lowest IMR, that is 12.3 was recorded in 2005 with only 11 infant deaths. However, as shown in the chart that follows, it drastically rose to 27.2 in 2006.

The number of still-births registered in 2007 was 15 corresponding to a still-birth rate of 17.5 per 1,000 total births. In 1997, 4 still-births were registered corresponding to a still birth rate of 5.8. The lowest rate, that is 2.8, was recorded in 1995 and 1996 equally. As shown in the chart that follows, the still-birth rate drastically increased from 7.3 in 2002 to 17.9 in 2003 and 24.8 in 2004 then fell to 13.2 in 2005.
HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM

In the Island of Rodrigues, at the end of 2007, 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 1997. Patients in need of tertiary health care are usually referred to Mauritius.

At the end of 2007, 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 2007, there were 16 doctors in the Island of Rodrigues, that is one for 2,344 inhabitants, while in 1997, there were 13 doctors with one for 2,707 inhabitants. There were 2 dentists that is one for 18,750 inhabitants at the end of 2007 while in 1997 it was one for 17,596 inhabitants. 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 148 at the end of 2007, that is one nurse/midwife for 253 inhabitants while in 1997 there were 119 in this category, that is one for 296 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 11,696 in 2007, while in 1997 it was 7,725. The average annual increase in admissions during the 10-year period was about 5.1%. However, in 2006, the number of admissions rose to 13,695.

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, Mont Lubin and La Ferme Health Centres was 168,384 in 2007, while in 1997 it was 107,451, representing an average annual increase of about 5.7%. In 2006, it was 171,317.

In 2007, the number of attendances for the treatment of common diseases and injuries at Community Health Centres was 55,173 while in 1997 it was 50,102 representing an increase of 10.1%.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

In 2007, a total of 910 births (20 stillbirths and 890 live births) occurred at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mont Lubin HC and La Ferme HC. Out of the 890 livebirths attended by trained personnel, 101 were with a low birth weight (less than 2500 grammes) representing 11.4% of live births as compared to 9.7% in 1997.

A total of 894 livebirths were reported by the MCH services in 2007. The number of babies immunised against Tuberculosis (BCG) by MCH staff, was 849 representing 95.0% coverage among live births. The number of babies immunised against Diphtheria, Haemophilus influenza type B, hepatitis B and oral Polio Vaccine (3rd dose) was 864 with 96.6% coverage. Those immunized against Measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) were 803 (89.8% coverage). The relatively high percentages observed in Rodrigues are most probably due to postponement of immunisations scheduled for the previous year and/or return to Rodrigues of babies born in the Island of Mauritius.

DENTAL HEALTH

The total number of attendances at the three dental clinics in 2007 was 16,714 while in 1997 it was 11,806. This represented a percentage increase of 41.6% during the 10-year period.

MORBIDITY

The number of discharged patients in 2007 was 11,596 of whom 868 (7.5%) were treated for Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium (excluding Normal deliveries and Complications following abortions), 347 (3.0%) for Hypertensive diseases, 254 (2.2%) for Diabetes Mellitus and 327 (2.8%) for Bronchitis (chronic and unspecified) emphysema, and asthma. In 1997, the three principal causes of discharge were Bronchitis (chronic and unspecified) emphysema and asthma, Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium, and Hypertensive diseases representing 17.9%, 11.6% and 4.6% respectively.
In 2007, 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 hiccup and sneezing, representing 14.3% of the total number of first attendances. Fever/pain all over came in the second position with 8.1% followed by Tonsillitis, laryngitis, nasopharyngitis (common cold), sore throat, URTI with 8.0%.

Diseases grouped by ICD chapters indicate that Diseases of respiratory system which was 21.6% of total first attendances in 1997 has decreased to 17.3% in 2007. During the same period, Infectious and parasitic diseases decreased from 13.4% to 7.7%. Diseases of the musculoskeletal and connective tissue were 5.7% of first attendances in 1997 as compared to 10.8% in 2007. However, in 2006, they represented 14.7% probably due to the outbreak of chikungunya.

CAUSE OF DEATH

In 2007, 175 deaths were registered. The distribution of deaths by the chapters of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), as shown in the pie-chart below, indicates that Diseases of the circulatory system were responsible for 35.4% of the deaths. Neoplasm with 18.3% were in the second place followed by Endocrine, nutritional & metabolic disorders with 16.6% and Diseases of the respiratory system with 8.6%.

Deaths by ICD-10 Chapter – 2007

In 2007, Heart diseases and Diabetes Mellitus were the two principal causes of death with 20.1% and 14.9% respectively. In 2006, when there were 245 deaths, they represented 20.4% and 18.4% respectively.

No Maternal deaths were registered in 2007. During the period 1997-2006 four Maternal deaths were registered in the Island: one in 2000, one in 2001 and 2 in 2002.