
REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, AND CHILD HEALTH IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Trends and Challenges Facing Women and Children

El Salvador · Guatemala · Honduras · Nicaragua

**Division of Reproductive Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (DRH/CDC)
ATLANTA, GEORGIA USA**

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Implementing Organizations for Surveys:

Country	Year of Survey	Organization
El Salvador:	1988	Asociación Demográfica Salvadoreña
	1993	Asociación Demográfica Salvadoreña
	1998	Asociación Demográfica Salvadoreña
	2002/03	Asociación Demográfica Salvadoreña
Guatemala:	1987	Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá
	1995	Instituto Nacional de Estadística
	1998	Instituto Nacional de Estadística
	2002	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social y Universidad del Valle
Honduras:	1987	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asociación Hondureña de Planificación de Familia
	1991/91	Ministerio de Salud Pública
	1996	Secretaría de Salud y Asociación Hondureña de Planificación de Familia
	2001	Asociación Hondureña de Planificación de Familia y Secretaría de Salud
Nicaragua:	1992/93	Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Nicaragüense
	1997	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos y Ministerio de Salud
	2001	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos y Ministerio de Salud

Preface

It is our pleasure and privilege on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Bureau and the Central American and Mexico (CAM) Social Sector Component of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to write the preface to the most comprehensive compilation of data regarding women's and children's health in the Central American Region. Recognizing the wealth of social sector data available from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) programs, health and education office directors in the CAM region consisting of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua wanted to compare and contrast trends in key maternal and child health indicators in order to identify needs and potential synergies. The LAC Bureaus' Health Program joined the effort to help ensure that such information would aid the design and refinement of health programs and identify areas where these countries might work together more closely.

Great strides have been made in improving reproductive and child health in these countries during the last 10 years. In all of these countries, USAID has been the major donor in the health sector and can be proud of being a partner to these achievements. Still, disparities exist between rural and urban areas in all countries and between the income levels in each country. Often the reader will see similarities between achievements of El Salvador and Nicaragua compared to those of Guatemala and Honduras. Much is yet to be done in each country to achieve the health statistics of its neighboring country, Costa Rica, which has a similar culture and history, but overall better social and economic levels and health outcomes.

The RHS and DHS population-based survey programs have become the gold standard for health sector planners and decision makers in USAID Missions, as well as for host country governmental and non-governmental organizations and donor agencies such as UNFPA, PAHO, and UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Inter American Development Bank. This report provides insight on health behaviors, knowledge of HIV/AIDS, infant and child mortality and reproductive health. Regional trend data are easily available and usable for those seeking a regional approach to similar complex health problems, thus trying to maximize the impact of scarce health resources.

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