

C. *Leading Causes of Infant Mortality*

The following are some of the leading causes of infant mortality:

1. **Intra Uterine Hypoxia** – This occurs when the fetus is deprived of an adequate supply of oxygen. It may be due to a variety of reasons such as prolapse or occlusion of the umbilical cord, blockage of blood flow in the umbilical vessel, placental infarction and maternal smoking;
2. **Neonatal Sepsis** - type of neonatal infection and specifically refers to the presence of bacterial blood stream infection (BSI) in a newborn baby such as meningitis, pneumonia, pyelonephritis or gastro enteritis at the setting of fever;
3. **Fetal Asphyxia** – a condition of hypoxemia (low level of oxygen in the blood), hypercapnia (elevated level of carbon dioxide in the blood), and respiratory and metabolic acidosis that may occur in the uterus. This results from interference in placental circulation, umbilical cord compression or premature separation of the placenta;
4. **Meconium Aspiration** – Meconium is the baby's first feces or poop and is typically passed in the womb during early pregnancy and again first few days after birth. Aspiration of meconium can happen before, during or after labor and delivery when a newborn inhales or aspirated a mixture of meconium and amniotic fluid (the fluid wherein the baby floats inside the amniotic sac). The inhaled meconium can partially or completely block the baby's airways and makes it difficult to breathe;
5. **Septicemia** – bacteria in the blood that often occurs with severe infections. Also called sepsis, septicemia is a serious life threatening infection that gets worse very quickly. Most common infections that lead to septicemia are urinary tract infection, lung infection, kidney infection or infection in the abdominal area;
6. **Status Asthmaticus** – severe asthma attacks or acute exacerbation of asthma that remains unresponsive to initial treatment with bronchodilators and is associated with symptoms of potential respiratory failure;
7. **Anencephaly** – absence of a major portion of the brain, skull and scalp that occurs during embryonic development. Upper part of the neural tube forms and closes which helps form the baby's brain and skull, spinal cord and backbone. Low intake of folic acid before getting pregnant and in early pregnancy increases the risk of having a pregnancy affected by neural tube defects;
8. **Hydrocephalus** – commonly referred to as water in the brain. (Water is actually Cerebro Spinal Fluid –CSF which is a clear fluid that looks like water in the brain and is produced in the 4 ventricles of the brain, connected by narrow pathways. As a result, pressure is placed on the brain at the skull causing neurological problems;
9. **Feto Placental Insufficiency** – This is uncommon but a serious complication to pregnancy. It is a blood flow disorder marked by a reduction in the mother's blood supply causing placental malfunction. When this happen, the placenta is unable to supply adequate oxygen and nutrients to the baby from the mother's bloodstream, adversely affecting survival and growth of the baby;
10. **Multiple Congenital Anomaly** – structural defect present at birth which is different from the norm and caused by socio economic and demographic factors; genetic factors; infections, maternal nutritional status or environmental factors;
11. **Intra Uterine Fetal Death or Intra Uterine Fetal Demise** – fetal death occurs after the 20th week of pregnancy and is considered a miscarriage.