

NCHS has been tracking infant mortality in the United States since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The latest data on infant mortality, released this week, shows no statistical change in the infant mortality rate from 2016 to 2017. Disparities by race and ethnicity in infant mortality remain, however, as the 2017 rate for infants of non-Hispanic black women was more than twice as high as that for infants of non-Hispanic white and Asian women, and for infants of Hispanic women.

A second publication this week looks at mortality from drug overdoses according to urban/rural location over a nearly two-decade period. The new study finds that in 2017, drug overdose death rates were higher in urban counties than in rural counties, although there was a difference by gender. Males had higher drug overdose death rates in urban areas, while females had higher rates in rural areas.

The pattern in urban-rural death rates from drug overdoses changed over time. From 1999 through 2003, overdose death rates were higher in urban counties. From 2004 through 2006, rates in urban and rural counties were similar. From 2007 through 2015, there was a shift, with overdose death rates higher in rural counties. Then, in 2016 and 2017, the pattern changed again, with overdose death rates being higher in urban counties than in rural counties.

The report also showed that in 2017, death rates from heroin, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, and cocaine were higher in urban areas, while death rates from semisynthetic opioids and psychostimulants such as methamphetamine were higher in rural areas.