**The 2023 Annual Report on Child Mortality due to Unintentional Injury**

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**The 2023 Annual Report on Child Mortality due to Unintentional Injury**

**Data from the National Database for Child Injury and Safety**

**Database of Injuries Documented from the Media**

**The report was conducted by Beterem – Safe Kids Israel**

**Elad Kalif**

**Dr. Yigal Godler**

**Dr. Aviad Agam**

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# Report Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this report is to examine the data on mortality from unintentional injuries in 2023 among children and adolescents aged birth to 17. The data was collected by Beterem – Safe Kids Israel using the Database of Injuries Documented from the Media, as part of the National Array for Pediatric Injury and Safety (NAPIS).

In addition to the 2023 data, the report includes mortality data from 2008-2022 for comparison and trend analysis. The data are categorized by mechanism of injury, location of injury, age group, population group (Arab or Jewish; the ultra-Orthodox sector within the Jewish population), district of residence, and socio-economic area.

The report comprises three parts. Part 1 summarizes the key findings pertaining to the aforementioned variables. Part 2 discusses methodological aspects, including data sources and statistical processing methods. Part 3 provides detailed findings, expanding on the summary presented in Part 1.

# Part 1: Key Findings

Following are the key findings pertaining to mortality from unintentional injuries in 2023 among children and adolescents aged birth to 17. The data was collected by Beterem – Safe Kids Israel using the Database of Injuries Documented from the Media, as part of the NAPIS.

## General

**In 2023, there were 104 reported deaths of children and adolescents from unintentional injuries, corresponding to a mortality rate of 3.3 cases per 100,000 children and adolescents.**

This rate is identical to the average mortality rate from unintentional injuries in the years 2020-2022, which was also 3.3 per 100,000 children and adolescents. This rate is approximately 9% lower than the average mortality rate for 2019-2021, which was 3.6 per 100,000 children and adolescents.

The average mortality rate over the last three years (2021-2023) is about 34% lower than the average mortality rate in the first three years for which data is available in the aforementioned database (2008-2010).

**Chart 1: Trends in unintentional injury deaths in ages 0-17**

**3-year moving average, rate per 100,000, 2008-2023**



## Mechanism of Injury

The three main causes of child and adolescent mortality in 2023 were road accidents (51%), drowning (17%), and choking (7%), which together accounted for 75% of the reported deaths. Over the past five years (2019-2023), the leading causes of death have been road accidents (47%), drowning (15%), suffocation (9%), poisoning/burns from fires (5%), and falls (4%).

There are two types of injuries: road accidents and home and leisure accidents. **In 2023, the relative weight of road accidents was slightly higher than in the years 2019-2022, and correspondingly, the relative weight of home and leisure accidents was slightly lower compared to 2019-2022:** in 2023 there were 53 fatalities from road accidents, constituting about 51% of all accidents, compared to an annual average of 50 cases, constituting about 47% of all accidents, for the years 2019-2022. In 2023, there were 7 suffocation fatalities, compared to an annual average of 11 cases for the years 2019-2022. This year saw a relatively high number of drowning fatalities among children and adolescents (18 cases compared to an annual average of 16 cases for the years 2019-2022). Of these cases, 13 occurred in swimming pools, 4 in private pools, and 9 in public pools. Additionally, there was an increase in mortality from blunt force injury mechanisms, with 6 cases in 2023 (3%) compared to an average of 3 cases per year for the years 2019-2022 (2%)

**Chart 2: Distribution of unintentional injury deaths in ages 0-17
by mechanism of injury, in percentages, 2019-2023**



\* “Other mechanisms” include types of injuries that accounted for 3% or less of the total cases of child mortality from accidents: blunt force, cut/stab wounds, children left alone, poisoning, electrocution, getting trapped, bicycles and small wheels - self-accident, injury by an animal, burns, heat stroke/dehydration, suspected health issues.

## Age Groups

Over the past five years, the age groups at the highest risk for unintentional injury mortality were adolescents aged 15-17 (mortality rate of 5.5 per 100,000) and toddlers aged birth to 4 (5.3 per 100,000). The age group with the lowest risk of injury mortality was 5-9 year olds (1.9 per 100,000). In other words, **the risk of a teenager aged 15-17 dying as a result of unintentional injury is 2.9 times higher than that of a child aged 5-9.**

In 2023, mortality rates decreased by 33% in the 10-14 age group and by 7% in the birth to 4 age group compared to the 2019-2022 average. Conversely, the 5-9 age group saw an increase of 8% and the 15-17 age group saw an increase of 2%.

**Chart 3: Distribution of Unintentional Injury Deaths in ages birth to 17
by age groups, in percentages, 2023**



## Location of Injury

The main locations of injury during 2019-2023 “on the way” and “in the home and yard,” accounting for about 46% and 31% of deaths, respectively. About 19% of deaths occurred in “public spaces,” 2% in “educational institutions,” and only 0.4% in “the workplace.” In about 1% of cases, the location of injury was unknown.

**Chart 4: Distribution of unintentional injury deaths in ages birth to 17
 by location of injury, in percentages, 2019-2023**



## Population Groups

**In 2023, Arab children and adolescents accounted for about 52% of deaths, despite making up only about 24% of the child and adolescent population in Israel.** This relative burden is higher than in 2022, when 47% of children killed in accidents were Arabs.

Among Jews, the mortality rate in 2023 was about 12% lower compared to the 2019-2022 average, while in the Arab population, the mortality rate in 2023 was about 6% higher compared to 2019-2022. On average, for the years 2019-2023, the risk of an Arab child dying due to unintentional injury was 2.9 times higher than that of a Jewish child: 6.8 cases per 100,000 children in the Arab population compared to 2.3 cases per 100,000 children in the Jewish population. **This means that if the mortality rates of Arab children were identical to those of Jewish children, approximately 33 children could have been saved each year.**

**Chart 5: Distribution of unintentional injury deaths in ages birth to 17
by sector and population group, in percentages, 2023**



Despite the high burden of mortality among Arabs, the long-term trend indicates a **decrease in mortality rates from accidents among Arab children and adolescents:** mortality rates among the Arab population during 2021-2023 are 25% lower compared to 2008-2010; the percentage decrease in mortality rates among the Jewish population is higher, standing at 30%.

**Chart 6: Unintentional injury death rates in ages birth to 17,
comparison between Arabs and Jews and rate ratios, 2019-2023**

Rate ratios ■ Arabs ■ Jews



For children and adolescents aged birth to 17 as a whole, unintentional injury mortality rates over the past five years are 1.7 times higher among ultra-Orthodox children compared to non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish children: 3.4 cases per 100,000 versus 2.0 cases per 100,000, respectively. However, **the excess risk of mortality in the ultra-Orthodox community is evident in those under the age of 15:** among children under 15, the risk of an ultra-Orthodox child dying due to unintentional injury is 2.1 times higher (varying by age) compared to the risk for a non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish child. In contrast, among adolescents aged 15-17, the mortality rate among non-ultra-Orthodox Jews is slightly higher than the mortality rate among ultra-Orthodox adolescents. Unintentional injury death rates in the ultra-Orthodox population are influenced by the 2021 Meron crowd crush, in which 6 children aged 10-14 and 5 teenagers aged 15-17, all ultra-Orthodox, were killed.

## Socio-Economic Clusters

Over the past five years, mortality rates among children and adolescents from low socio-economic areas have been higher than those from medium and high socio-economic areas. **The risk of a child from low socio-economic clusters dying from unintentional injury (5.5 per 100,000 children) is twice as high as that of a child from medium socio-economic clusters (2.8 per 100,000 children) and 3.7 times higher than the risk of a child from high socio-economic clusters (1.5 per 100,000 children).**

About 45% of child deaths from unintentional injuries in the years 2019-2023 were among children and adolescents living in low socio-economic areas, while their relative share of the child and adolescent population in Israel is only about 26%. Children and adolescents living in low socio-economic Arab areas bear about 37% of the mortality burden, while their share of the child and adolescent population in Israel is only 16%.

**Chart 7: Risk of mortality due to unintentional injury in ages birth to 17 by socio-economic area (grouped into 3 levels), rate per 100,000, 2019-2023**



## District of Residence

Data on child mortality over the past five years indicate that the Tel Aviv District has the lowest mortality rate from accidents (1.8 children and adolescents per 100,000), while the Southern District has the highest rate (6.4 children and adolescents per 100,000). In other words, **the risk of a child living in the Southern District dying from unintentional injury is 3.6 times higher than that of a child living in the Central District.**

Approximately 30% of children and adolescents who died due to unintentional injury in the past five years resided in the Southern District, even though they constitute only about 16% of the child and adolescent population in Israel. **This data suggests that if the mortality rates among children in the Southern District were the same as those in the Tel Aviv District, about 21 children could have been saved each year.**

The Arab population in the Southern District is largely Bedouin and characterized by a high mortality rate of children and adolescents from unintentional injury (17.2 cases per 100,000 children and adolescents), even compared to Arab children from other districts (an average of 6.7 cases per 100,000). **This means that the risk of an Arab child living in the Southern District dying from unintentional injury is 2.6 times higher than that of an Arab child living in other districts.** The mortality rate of Arab children in the Southern District has increased by about 26% compared to the average for 2020-2022, which was 13.6 per 100,000 children.

# Part 2: Methodology

## Data Source

This report includes data on mortality from unintentional injuries among children and adolescents aged birth to 17, updated up to 2023, as collected by Beterem - Safe Kids Israel using the Database of Mortalities from Injury, as part of the NAPIS (Beterem, 2022). The database sources its data from articles in print and online media, both national and local, in Hebrew, Arabic, English, and Russian (in unusual cases, reports that were not documented in the media are added). Data collection in its current format has been ongoing since 2008. Since data from the media is received continuously and in real time, it provides an up-to-date picture of injury incidents and makes it possible to supplement information obtained from other sources.

The data contained in the Database of Mortalities from Injury have several unique characteristics compared to data on child mortality from unintentional injuries published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The former are:

* **Current:** This report includes data up to the year 2023, whereas the CBS’ data collection, coding, and classification methods are only updated up to 2022. Current data is crucial for analyzing injury trends and enhances the data’s usability as a tool for decision-makers. Regarding the socio-economic ranking of residential areas, the data is current as of 2019.
* **Complete:** Contrary to concerns that media-sourced data would be partial and inaccurate (e.g., Peden et al., 2020), a comparison of Beterem’s data with that of the CBS regarding child and adolescent mortality from unintentional injuries for the years 2008-2015 shows that in each of these eight years, the number of deaths recorded in Beterem’s database is significantly higher than those recorded by the CBS. Beterem’s database undergoes rigorous checks to prevent misclassification of deaths and duplication of records. Therefore, we believe that the discrepancy between the databases is due to under-reporting by the CBS rather than over-reporting by Beterem. While Beterem's comprehensive data is valuable for providing reliable information on unintentional injuries among children and adolescents in Israel (Agam et al., 2024), it is important to note that the database includes cases where the cause of death is unknown or under investigation. Additionally, media reports are based on the availability, discretion, and information of the news outlets. Therefore, they may not always include all the necessary parameters for documenting injuries and may contain inaccuracies. Moreover, the database only includes articles containing defined search terms. As a result, the phenomenon of unintentional injuries among children and adolescents in Israel may not be fully documented even in this database. In rare cases where Beterem becomes aware of the death of a child or adolescent from an unintentional injury that was not reported in the media, it is documented in the database after cross-checking the information and conducting rigorous checks to prevent duplications.
* **In-depth:** Beterem’s database is built on the Minimum Data Set (MDS) standard recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) for understanding injury circumstances. This format enables in-depth characterization of accident circumstances, including information on the location of injury (home, roads, public spaces, educational institutions, and workplaces) and the product involved in the accident. The database’s advantage in this regard is used to present detailed and comprehensive information on accident circumstances, which can contribute to the development of more targeted and effective prevention efforts.

## Statistical Analysis

Mortality data was segmented by various variables (mechanism of injury, location of injury, age of the victims, population group, district of residence, socio-economic area, and the percentage of ultra-Orthodox children in Jewish areas) for the years 2019-2023. Segmentation was also conducted separately for individual years and other time ranges. The separation by years aimed to examine trends unique to the current year and compare them to previous years. Victims were classified based on data received from the media regarding the victim’s population group, age, injury characteristics, and district of residence. Mortality rates were calculated using data on the annual population of children in Israel published by the CBS, categorized by age, population group, and district of residence (CBS, 2022). The percentage of Jewish children in various age groups belonging to the ultra-Orthodox sector was taken from the annual statistical report on ultra-Orthodox society conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute. The classification of areas by the population’s socio-economic status was based on clusters published by the CBS, updated for the year 2019. Regarding the classification of areas by population group - municipalities, local councils, and regional councils were classified as ‘mixed’ if the percentage of one of the populations, Jews or Arabs, was less than 80% but the percentage of the other population was greater than 10%.

For trend analyses of the overall mortality rate and the mortality rate segmented by population group, data from 2008-2023 was used along with a three-year moving average. This moving average is calculated at each point in time as the average mortality rate of three consecutive years. For example, the moving average of the overall mortality rate for 2008-2010 was calculated as the average of the mortality rates for 2008, 2009, and 2010. Similarly, the moving average of the overall mortality rate for 2011-2013 was calculated as the average of the mortality rates for 2011, 2012, and 2013. The use of moving averages is intended to mitigate fluctuations that may arise from random differences between years, particularly in mortality data, which is characterized by a small number of cases.

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# Part 3: Detailed Findings (Tables and Charts)

## Mechanism of Injury

**Table 1: Distribution of child deaths from unintentional injury by mechanism and year of injury, in absolute numbers and percentages, 2019-2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type/style of injury** | **Total** | **Death from unintentional injury among children aged 0-17** | **2019-2023** | **2023** |
| **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **Average** | **Percent** | **Percent** |
| Road accident – motor vehicle\*\* | 100 | 29 | 14 | 23 | 13 | 21 | 20 | 19% | 20% |
| Road accident – pedestrian | 87 | 20 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 16% | 19% |
| Road accident – found around the vehicle | 37 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 7% | 3% |
| Road accident – bicycle or small wheeled vehicle | 27 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 5% | 9% |
| **Total road accidents** | **251** | **64** | **44** | **50** | **40** | **53** | **50** | **47%** | **51%** |
| Drowning | 81 | 18 | 10 | 19 | 16 | 18 | 16 | 15% | 17% |
| Suffocation | 50 | 11 | 7 | 20 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 9% | 7% |
| Falls | 22 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4% | 4% |
| Poisoning/burns (as a result of fire) | 25 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 5% | 4% |
| Blunt force | 16 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3% | 6% |
| Heatstroke/dehydration (vehicle) | 15 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3% | 4% |
| Electrocution  | 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2% | 1% |
| Cut/stab wound | 8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2% | 1% |
| Getting trapped in or between objects/appliances/machines/spaces | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1% | 0% |
| Poisoning | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1% | 0% |
| Animals | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Heatstroke/dehydration | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0% | 2% |
| Burns | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Bicycles and small-wheeled vehicle – self-accident | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1% | 3% |
| **Total home and leisure** | **246** | **46** | **37** | **66** | **47** | **50** | **49** | **47%** | **48%** |
| Other – suspected illness or intentional injury | 21 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 4% | 1% |
| Other – unknown cause  | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2% | 0% |
| **Total** | **529** | **125** | **82** | **117** | **101** | **104** | **106** | **100%** | **100%** |

\* The numbers in this column are rounded to absolute numbers.
\*\* This category includes road accidents with victims as passengers or drivers, users of other motor vehicles, and passengers on public transportation.

**Chart 8: Distribution of deaths from road accidents in ages 0-17 by type of accident and age group, in percentages, 2019-2023**

**Chart 9: Distribution of deaths from home and leisure accidents in ages 0-17 by prominent accident types and age groups, in percentages, 2019-2023**



**Chart 10: Distribution of deaths in ages 0-17, road accidents versus home and leisure accidents by age group, in percentages, 2019-2023**



\* “Other” includes cases of suspected health issues, suspected suicide, and unknown causes.

## Age Groups

**Chart 11: Distribution of deaths from unintentional injury and relative share of the population, ages 0-17 by age group, in percentages, average for 2019-2023**

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**Chart 12: Ratio between each age group’s mortality percent and its percent of the child population in Israel, in rates, average for 2019-2023**

****

## Location of Injury

**Table 2: Distribution of child mortalities from unintentional injury by location of injury for each year, in absolute numbers and percentages, 2019-2023**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location of injury** | **Mortality from unintentional injury in ages 0-17** | **Percent 2019-2023** | **Percent 2023** |
| **2019-2023** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Home and yard | 163 | 41 | 26 | 34 | 37 | 25 | 31% | 24% |
| On the way | 245 | 56 | 38 | 49 | 46 | 56 | 46% | 54% |
| Educational institution | 12 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2% | 1% |
| Public space | 100 | 19 | 13 | 31 | 16 | 21 | 19% | 20% |
| Workplace | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Unspecified | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1% | 1% |
| **Total** | **529** | **125** | **82** | **117** | **101** | **104** | **100%** | **100%** |

## Population Groups

**Table 3: Distribution of child mortalities from unintentional injury
by population group, percent of Arabs injured each year, rates and ratios, 2019-2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Mortalities of children aged 0-17 from unintentional injuries** | **Percent Arabs** | **Rate per 100,000 Jews** | **Rate per 100,000 Arabs** | **Rate ratio** |
| **Total** | **Jewish** | **Arab** | **Other / unknown\*** |
| 2019 | 125 | 71 | 48 | 6 | 38% | 3.2 | 6.6 | 2.0 |
| 2020 | 82 | 33 | 47 | 2 | 57% | 1.5 | 6.4 | 4.4 |
| 2021 | 117 | 60 | 56 | 1 | 48% | 2.6 | 7.6 | 2.9 |
| 2022 | 101 | 53 | 47 | 1 | 47% | 2.3 | 6.3 | 2.8 |
| 2023 | 104 | 48 | 54 | 2 | 52% | 2.1 | 7.2 | 3.4 |
| **Total** | **529** | **265** | **252** | **12** | **48%** | **2.3** | **6.8** | **2.9** |

\* Christians, immigrant workers, refugees, unknown

**Table 4: Distribution of child mortalities from unintentional injury by sector of the Jewish population (ultra-Orthodox / non-ultra-Orthodox), percent of ultra-Orthodox children injured each year, rates and ratios, 2019-2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Mortalities of children aged 0-17 from unintentional injuries** | **Mortality percent of ultra-Orthodox Jews**  | **Rate per 100,000 non-ultra-Orthodox Jews** | **Rate per 100,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews** | **Rate ratio** |
| **Total** | **Non-ultra-Orthodox** | **Ultra-Orthodox** |
| **2019** | **71** | **47** | **24** | **34%** | **2.9** | **4.4** | **1.5** |
| **2020** | **33** | **24** | **9** | **27%** | **1.4** | **1.6** | **1.1** |
| **2021** | **60** | **30** | **30** | **50%** | **1.8** | **5.1** | **2.8** |
| **2022** | **53** | **27** | **26** | **49%** | **1.6** | **4.3** | **2.7** |
| **2023** | **48** | **37** | **11** | **23%** | **2.1** | **1.6** | **0.8** |
| **Total** | **265** | **165** | **100** | **38%** | **2.0** | **3.4** | **1.7** |

**Table 5: Distribution of child mortalities from unintentional injury by sector of the Jewish population (ultra-Orthodox / non-ultra-Orthodox) and age, percent of ultra-Orthodox children injured each year, rates and ratios, 2019-2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **Mortalities of children aged 0-17 from unintentional injuries** | **Percent of ultra-Orthodox Jews out of the general Jewish population** | **Rate per 100,000** **ultra-Orthodox Jews** | **Rate per 100,000** **non-ultra-Orthodox Jews** | **Rate ratio** |
| **Total** | **Ultra-Orthodox Jews** | **Non-ultra-Orthodox** |
| 0-4 | 102 | 45 | 57 | 30% | 4.2 | 2.3 | 1.8 |
| 5-9 | 47 | 16 | 31 | 26% | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| 10-14 | 47 | 23 | 24 | 23% | 3.4 | 1.1 | 3.2 |
| 15-17 | 69 | 16 | 53 | 24% | 4.3 | 4.4 | 1.0 |
| **Total** | **265** | **100** | **165** | **26%** | **3.4** | **2.0** | **1.7** |

## Socio-Economic Clusters

**Chart 13: Risk of mortality due to unintentional injury in children and adolescents aged 0-17 by socio-economic area (grouped into 3 levels) and population of their area, rate per 100,000, 2019-2023**

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## District of Residence

**Table 6: Distribution of child mortalities from unintentional injury by district of residence and population group, numbers and rates, 2019-2023[[1]](#footnote-1)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **District** | **Mortalities of children aged 0-17 from unintentional injuries** | **Total mortality rate** | **Mortality rate of Jews** | **Mortality rate of Arabs** | **Rate ratio** | **Percent of Arab children in the district** | **Percent of Arab children of all mortality cases** |
| **Total** | **Jewish** | **Arab** | **Other / unknown** |
| Judea and Samaria | 34 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 3.1 | 3.1 | - | - | - | 0% |
| Southern  | 143 | 47 | 95 | 1 | 6.4 | 2.8 | 17.2 | 6.1 | 25% | 66% |
| Central  | 77 | 46 | 28 | 3 | 2.4 | 1.5 | 11.0 | 7.2 | 8% | 36% |
| Northern  | 79 | 20 | 57 | 2 | 3.6 | 2.1 | 4.5 | 2.2 | 57% | 72% |
| Haifa | 38 | 17 | 19 | 2 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 4.6 | 2.1 | 34% | 50% |
| Jerusalem | 77 | 41 | 36 | 0 | 14.9 | 8.3 | - | - | - | - |
| Tel Aviv | 35 | 31 | 1 | 3 | 1.9 | 1.7 | - | - | - | - |
| Unknown | 46 | 29 | 16 | 1 | - |  |  |  | - | - |
| **Total** | **529** | **265** | **252** | **12** | **4.3** | **2.7** | **10.1** | **3.7** | **20%** | **48%** |

1. The population of Arab children living in the Tel Aviv District is relatively small (about 1.9% of all children living in that district). Therefore, the mortality rate of Arab children and the rate ratio between Jewish and Arab children are not presented for this district. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)