



Summary of Regional Vital Statistics 1999

- The number of births in the West Midlands has fallen by 1,543 from 65,400 to 63,857, a 2.36% reduction in births on 1999 compared with a 2.26% drop for England & Wales.
- The perinatal mortality rate is 9.9/1,000 births (634 cases) in the West Midlands. This is higher than the rate for England & Wales (8.2/1,000 births) and of all other Health Regions.
- The stillbirth rate for 1999 is 6.1/1,000 births (391 cases) in the West Midlands, the highest rate since the change in stillbirth definition in October 1992. This represents a 10% increase on 1998 (5.6/1,000 births). The stillbirth rate in the West Midlands exceeds that for England & Wales (5.3/1,000 births), with non-overlapping confidence intervals (Fig 1). The regional rate is the highest of all English Health Regions and Wales (Figure 2).
- The early neonatal death rate for the West Midlands has risen slightly in 1999, from 3.7 to 3.8/1,000 live births, representing a 3.3% increase on the previous year. This remains higher than the early neonatal death rate for England and Wales (2.9/1,000 live births). The early neonatal death rate in the West Midlands is the highest for any region in England & Wales (Fig 2).

Analysis of cause of death by the Wigglesworth classification shows that the largest component of stillbirths is in the 'unexplained' category (66%; Fig 3) while the largest contributor to neonatal mortality is 'prematurity' (55%; Fig 4).

Figure 1

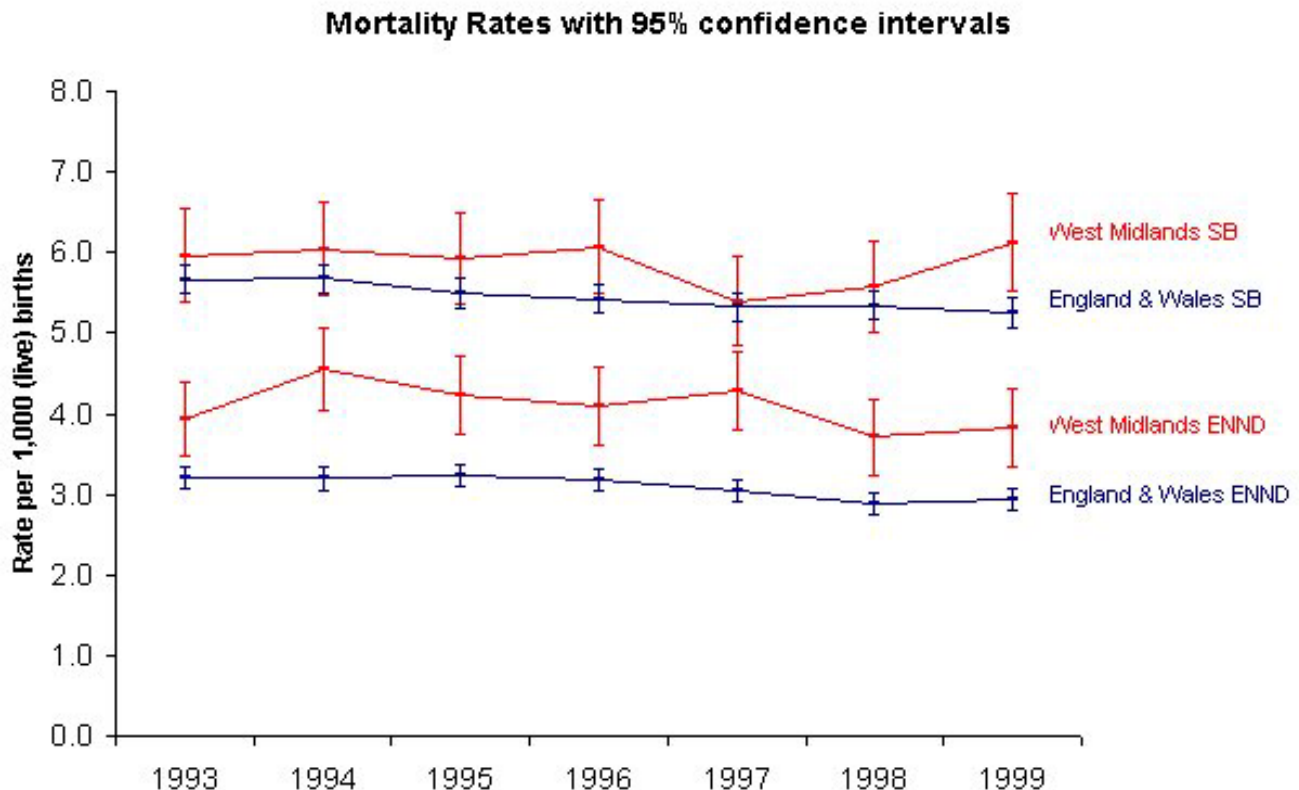
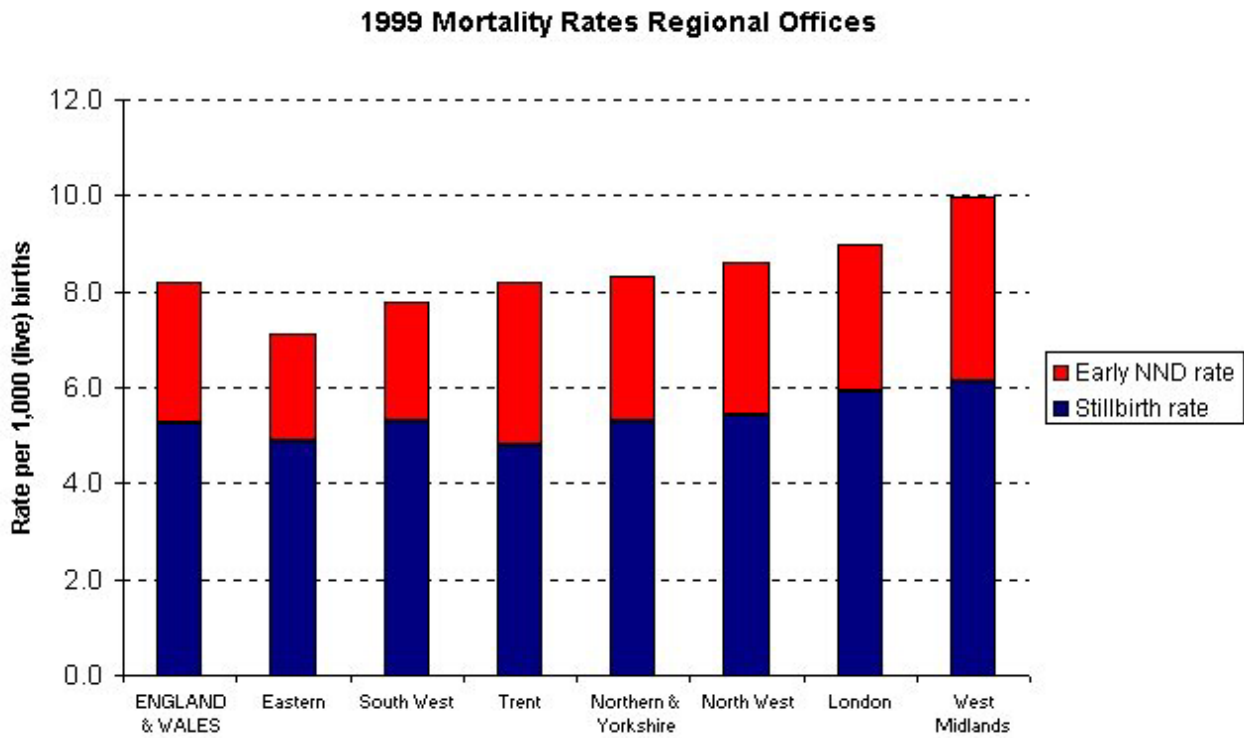


Figure 2



Figures 3 and 4

