

9-1-2005

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Recommended Citation

Thorsell, Elisabeth (2005) "Some Figures on Infant Mortality," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 25 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol25/iss3/4>

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Some Figures on Infant Mortality

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

The following figures on infant mortality might be of interest when one tries to understand more of the life of our ancestors.

Sweden has a long history of official statistics, starting already in 1749 when the *Tabellverket* (Office of Statistical Tables) started. They have collected figures on the population of Sweden ever since, but the name has been changed to *Statistiska Centralbyrån* (Central Bureau of Statistics).

They wrote to all the parish pastors [or "ministers"] and sent them forms to fill out every year with

the number of people born, married, and deceased. This is also the reason that we have the information on causes of death that are found in the death records. The minister had to fill out a special form about what diseases had been common in the parish during the year.

There is a special publication called *Historisk statistik* (Historical Statistics), published in two volumes in the 1960s, which gives easy access to many interesting facts, like the following figures on infant mortality. The figures are more detailed the

closer we get to the present.

When reading the following figures it is important to remember the big steps that have been taken in health care, hygiene, and nutrition during the last 250 years. Sweden in the 1700s was in many ways similar to a Third World country nowadays.

Stillborns are not included in this material

Figures for 1751-1760

Out of 1,000 boys, 214 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 girls, 194 died within the first year

Figures for 1801-1810

Out of 1,000 boys, 211 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 girls, 185 died within the first year

Parents' Marital status

Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 183 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 439 died within the first year

Figures for 1851-1860

Out of 1,000 boys, 157 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 girls, 134 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 boys, 52 died within the first month
Out of 1,000 girls, 42 died within the first month

Parents' Marital status

Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 137 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 232 died within the first year

Figures for 1891-1900

Out of 1,000 boys, 111 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 girls, 92 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 boys, 38 died within the first month

Out of 1,000 girls, 30 died within the first month
Out of 1,000 boys, 19 died within the first week
Out of 1,000 girls, 14 died within the first week
Out of 1,000 boys, 7 died within the first day
Out of 1,000 girls, 5 died within the first day

Parents' Marital status

Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 166 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 54 died within the first month
Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 25 died within the first week
Out of 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 10 died within the first day
Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 94 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 32 died within the first month
Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 15 died within the first week
Out of 1,000 children born in marriage, 6 died within the first day

Figures for 1967

Out of 1,000 boys, 14 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 girls, 11 died within the first year
Out of 1,000 boys, 12 died within the first month
Out of 1,000 girls, 9 died within the first month