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From the Private Secretary

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After a good deal of to-ing and fro-ing on infant mortality a week or so ago we concluded that, so far as perinatal mortality was concerned, we should stick to using the WHO figures you provided us with before Christmas (copy attached). As you will know, the statistics used in Social Trends came up at Cabinet two weeks ago and I have now had drawn to my attention a table drawn up by the CSO which is based on figures from the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

This latter table appears to be more up to date than the WHO equivalent, though it presents the countries concerned in a different rank order. For instance the WHO figures show that perinatal mortality in this country is lower than in Germany, whereas the European figures reverse the position.

I suspect that you are as fed up as I am with the minutiae of all the different statistics on infant mortality. But I should be grateful if you would look into the alternative table produced by the CSO and let me have advice on whether we may still use the WHO figures.

(Mark Addison)

Mrs. Flora Goldhill,
Department of Health and Social Security.

BF //

PERINATAL¹ AND INFANT² MORTALITY RATES, 1985

	Perinatal Mortality rate	Infant Mortality rate
United Kingdom	9.9	9.4
Belgium	12.2 ³	9.4
Denmark	8.1	7.9
France	10.7	8.3
Germany	7.9	9.0
Greece	16.8 ⁴	14.1
Irish Republic	13.6 ⁴	8.9
Italy	13.2	10.3
Luxembourg	7.1	9.0
Netherlands	9.8	8.0
Portugal	16.8	17.8
Spain	16.5 ⁵	7.3 ³

1. Stillbirths and deaths of infants within 7 days of birth per thousand live and stillbirths
2. Deaths of infants under 1 year of age per thousand live births
3. 1983 (latest available)
4. 1984 (latest available)
5. 1979 (latest available)

Perinatal Mortality International Comparisions WHO Statistics

Country	Year	Rate	
England and Wales	1984	10.1	*
Austria	1984	10.1	*
Belgium	1984	11.2	-
France	1984	11.1	-
Germany Federal	1984	10.5	-
Greece	1984	16.3	-
Republic of Ireland	1983	13.0	-
Italy	1981	16.6	-
Netherlands	1984	10.0	-
Luxembourg	1984	8.7	-
Spain	1980	15.3	-
Switzerland	1982	8.9	-
Denmark	1984	8.4	-
Finland	1984	7.5	-
Norway	1984	8.9	-
Sweden	1984	7.3	-
Japan	1984	8.3	-
Canada	1983	9.5	-
USA	1981	15.4	-

The year is the latest given by the majority of countries to WHO. Perinatal mortality includes live and still births but countries do not have a common baseline for registration of births which in the UK is 28 weeks gestation or any child which has shown any sign of life.

The UK statistics for 1984 indicate that fewer babies died here than in : France, Belgium, federal Germany, Greece, Italy Republic of Ireland, Spain and USA.