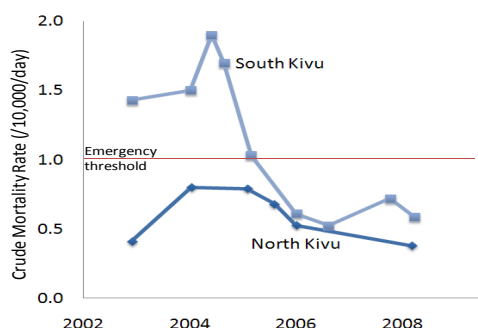


Health Situation in North Kivu

MORTALITY For the last 10 years, the volatile eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the scene of many clashes and hostilities. This unstable situation has had considerable impacts on the health condition of the local populations. Since 2000, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has conducted several mortality surveys across DRC. In 2002, they reported that the mortality rate in the eastern part of the country was higher than in any other country in the world and much higher than the emergency threshold (1 death/10,000 people/day). The highest mortality rates in 2000-2001 were found in Mweso, a district close to Goma in North Kivu. More recent data however suggested an encouraging evolution. The latest IRC survey from 2007 showed a significant decrease in mortality rates in eastern DRC, below the emergency threshold in almost all surveyed areas. In addition, the highest figures were no longer in North Kivu.

NUTRITION Over the last years, the nutritional status of



children in North Kivu has generally remained relatively acceptable. An exception, however, is the area around Rutshuru, where surveys between 2001 and 2007 indicated levels above the emergency threshold.

SOUTH KIVU Throughout the last 5 years, the health situation in South Kivu was poorer than in North Kivu. This difference however has almost disappeared and the health indicators for both provinces are at present almost at equal level. On the other hand, the north of South Kivu, bordering North Kivu, is the area where the situation is still the most precarious. The current violence and resulting influx of displaced people might compromise this positive evolution.

DISPLACEMENT Massive displacement has already begun. Residents from the North Kivu province are fleeing the violence and adding to the existing 1.25 million internally displaced people

(IDP) in DRC and over 100,000 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries. These types of population movements can result in the emergence of large-scale epidemics, as was the case in 1994 in Goma, where a cholera epidemic killed 12,000 Rwandese refugees. In addition to the displaced Congolese, some 50,000 Rwandan and Burundese refugees are currently living in eastern DRC. The current events will most likely have impacts on their health situation.

EPIDEMICS WHO has already reported hundreds of cases of cholera and several cases of measles. The principal causes for these are displacement and lack of clean water. Displaced people tend to gather in makeshift camps with poor hygiene conditions, increasing the risk for disease transmission. In addition, malnutrition, which can be related to acute displacement, impairs people's resistance against diseases. In this context, a July 2008 measles epidemic in Katanga, some 600 km from North Kivu, is noteworthy. Although a massive vaccination campaign was undertaken, the situation should be closely monitored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank the following organizations for their data: UNHCR, WHO, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children - UK, World Vision International, PRONANUT and Action contre la Faim International Network. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (US Department of State) and the Department for International Development of the UK government for supporting the CE-DAT project.

Reference values for Sub-Saharan Africa

(source: UNICEF)

Crude Mortality Rate	0.44/10,000/day
Under Five Mortality Rate	1.14/10,000/day
Global Acute Malnutrition	< 5%
Measles Vaccine Coverage	>95%

Recommendations

- Ensure adequate vaccination coverage, especially in areas with many displaced.
- Ensure access to clean water and food
- Prevent the conflict from affecting the health conditions of residents in South Kivu

CE-DAT and CRED News

Upcoming Event

Symposium: "Documenting Mortality in Conflicts"
November 6th & 7th, 2008 - Brussels, Belgium

Recently published

Methods and tools to evaluate mortality in conflicts: critical review, case-studies and applications
Click [here](#) to download this working paper.

Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters

Université catholique de Louvain, 30.94 Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 1200 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-(0)2-764.33.27 - Fax: +32-(0)2-764.34.41 - www.cedat.org - contact@cedat.org