

Stillbirth (fetal death)

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type: Glossary Item

METEOR identifier: 327266

Registration status: [Health](#), Superseded 07/03/2014

Definition: A fetal death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception of 20 or more completed weeks of gestation or of 400 grams or more birthweight.

The death is indicated by the fact that after such separation the fetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles.

Context: Perinatal statistics

Collection and usage attributes

Comments: The WHO definition of live birth, and the legal definition used in Australian states and territories, do not specify any lower limit for gestational age or birthweight. In practice, liveborn fetuses of less than 20 weeks' gestation are infrequently registered as live births. In analysing data from the perinatal collections, it is recommended that the same criteria of gestational age and birthweight should be used for live births and stillbirths. Births for which gestational age and birthweight have not been recorded (usually occurring outside hospitals) should be included in the perinatal collections if it seems likely that the criteria have been met.


Terminations of pregnancy performed at gestational ages of 20 or more weeks should be included in perinatal collections and should be recorded either as stillbirths or, in the unlikely event of showing evidence of life, as live births.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: National Perinatal Data Development Committee

Relational attributes

Related metadata references: Has been superseded by [Stillbirth \(fetal death\)](#)
[Health](#), Superseded 03/12/2020
[Indigenous](#), Superseded 14/07/2021
[Tasmanian Health](#), Superseded 24/03/2023

Is re-engineered from  [Stillbirth \(fetal death\), version 1, DEC, NHDD, NHIMG, Superseded 01/03/2005 .pdf](#) (13.6 KB)
No registration status

Metadata items which use this glossary item: [Perinatal NMDS 2013-14](#)
[Health](#), Superseded 07/03/2014