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Panama: On Impact Of Poverty & Poor Health Care On Child Mortality

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Dec. 5, Planning Ministry (MIPPE) employee Rosa Elena de la Cruz told reporters that on an annual basis, 23 per 1,000 children in the zero to one year age category die of malnutrition, intestinal diseases, congenital anomalies and violence. The same statistic for children under five is 34 per 1,000. De la Cruz said the principal causes of Panama's high rate of child mortality are poverty and inadequate health care. She noted that only 60% of children who begin primary school finish, and 22% of school-age children are not enrolled. According to de La Cruz, an estimated 42% of the nation's 2.5 million inhabitants are children; a third of the 2.5 million are under five years of age. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 12/05/91)

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