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Rio De Janeiro, Brazil: Malnutrition Principal Cause Of Infant Mortality

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According to a report by Brazilian daily newspaper O Globo (01/26/92), malnutrition is the principal cause of infant mortality in Rio de Janeiro state, especially during the first 28 days of life. In 1987, of 2,961 deaths of children under four years of age in Rio de Janeiro state, 2,502 occurred during the first year, and 1,201 (48%) within the first month. Mothers of most of these children were malnourished, and did not receive pre-natal care. According to Jean Ruffier, women's health program coordinator for the municipality's Infant and Youth Secretariat, adolescents account for an estimated 20% of births, and many of the young women are malnourished. Ruffier said that 38% of newborns in Rio de Janeiro are underweight (under 3 kg.). The Rio de Janeiro municipal health secretariat's epidemiology department estimates 18,000 serious cases of malnutrition in the city for 1992. Of the 150,000 births expected in 1992, Rio city officials predicted that 12% will be born malnourished.

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