



## **Infant mortality evolution in Romania: perspectives from a country in transition**

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In the last two decades transition was a word used to describe the important mutations that have characterized social and economic structures in Romania. All the changes left their mark on every aspects of life including on population health status, and all modifications were reflected in the evolution of health indicators. Considered one of the most sensitive indicators of living conditions, population health literacy level and healthcare system efficiency infant mortality rate is a negative indicator which reflects the intensity of children deaths before their first anniversary.

Based on the current statistical data collected at county level, this research aims to underline the existing spatial differences in Romania at county level, to identify spatial patterns, time trend and to point out the territories that need special attention and a more profound analysis for understanding the causes that are generating them.

Using mathematical and statistical methods we have calculated infant mortality for a previous and available period of time (1990 - 2010) and identified a trend influenced by exogenous and endogenous factors. With the help of GIS techniques we have created cartographic material for allowing us an easier identification of spatial disparities. Following the global trend, Romania achieved significant progress in reduction infant mortality. From values that exceeded 26 ‰ at the beginning of the nineties this indicator has continued to diminish until 9.79 ‰ in 2010. But, with all the improvements, value is still double in compare with European Union average. Although characteristic for Romania is the general downward trend, at the county level there can be identified different types of evolution and different spatial pattern. Having the lowest economic development level in the country, Northeast and Southeast counties maintain high values for infant mortality rate. Positive examples are given by Bucharest and some central and western districts, all with socio-economic indicators above the national average.

In this context, identification, monitoring and description of infant mortality rate spatial disparities are becoming key points for policy makers and stakeholders as first steps needed for finding the most suitable measures to reduce them, measures tailored for any administrative level in which they occur.