

## JPP5 - PREPREGNANCY HEALTH IN SURINAME

### BACKGROUND

The Caribbean country Suriname is located on the north-eastern coast of South America and has an ethnically diverse population of 541,638 people. The urban districts Paramaribo and Wanica harbor the largest proportion of the total population (Paramaribo 44.5%, Wanica 21.8%). The main ethnic groups are the Hindustanis (27.4%), Maroons (21.7%), Creoles (15.7%), Javanese (13.7%) and mixed ethnicities (13.4%). There are proportionally more people with a higher vocational or university training in the urban districts than in the non-urban districts. People with higher educational levels in Suriname generally have higher incomes and better access to healthcare. While the country is still categorized as an upper middle-income country, the economy has experienced currency depreciation and high inflation.

The annual number of births is 10.000 and 90% of births are delivered in the hospitals in Paramaribo. One out of five pregnancies has adverse perinatal outcomes including stillbirths, preterm births and low birthweight babies, see figure 1.

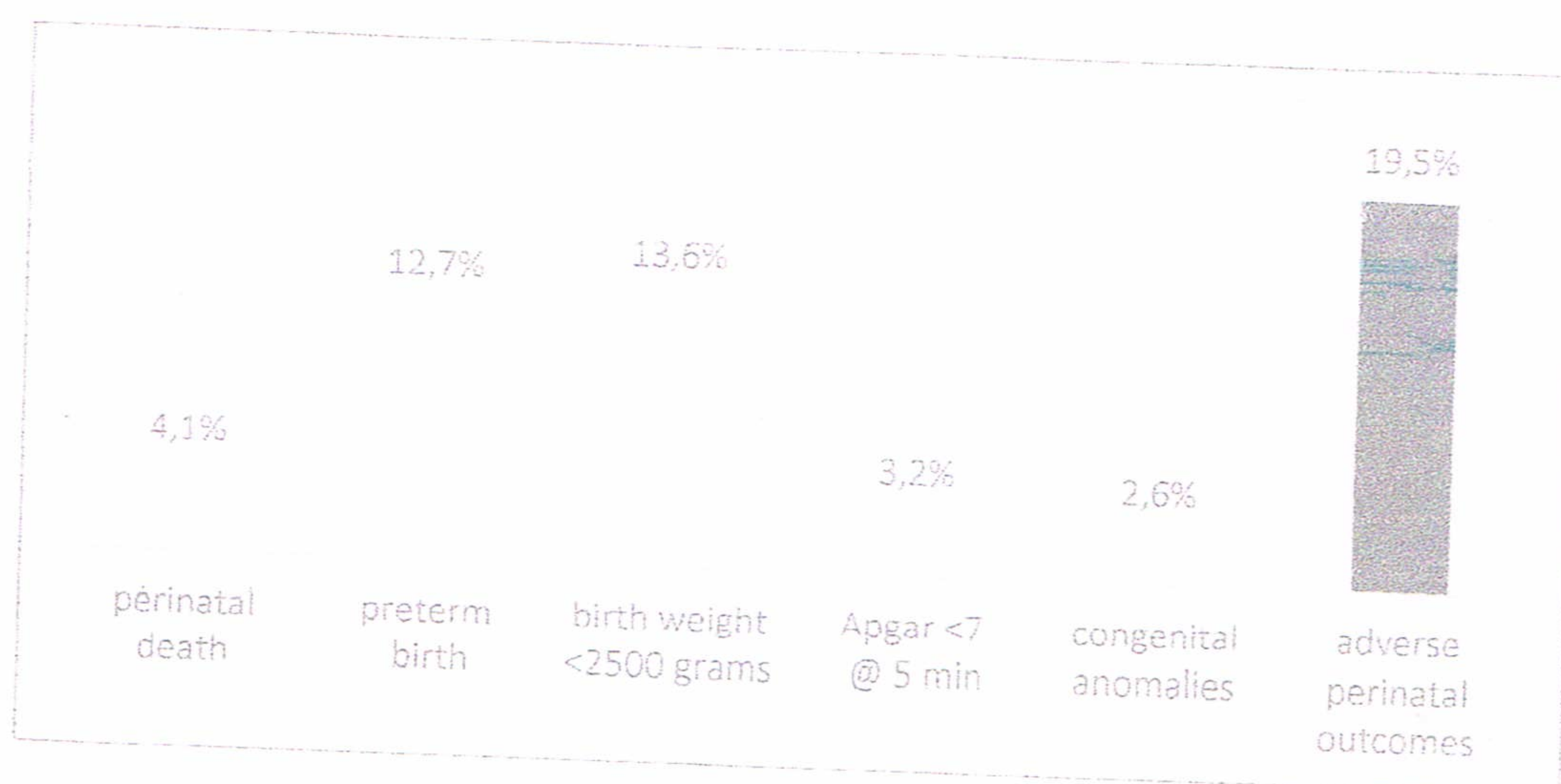


Figure 1. Prevalence of adverse perinatal outcomes in Suriname (source Perisur)

The risk of adverse perinatal outcomes is related to maternal demographic factors (teenage pregnancies and advanced maternal age, primiparous women and women with 3+ previous pregnancies, tribal and indigenous people), social factors (lower educated women, women living in non-urban areas, poor residential conditions, not insured women) and environmental factors (exposure to neurotoxicants such as mercury and lead).

85% of adverse perinatal outcomes are caused by factors that can be influenced during early pregnancy or even in the period before pregnancy. Therefore, interventions to decrease underlying risks are important to improve maternal and newborn health and care. Insufficient knowledge about pre-pregnancy and pregnancy risks and lack of pregnancy planning contribute to these poor outcomes. Women/couples of reproductive age are therefore important target groups for health education interventions since their health and health knowledge plays an important role in pregnancy planning and pregnancy and birth outcomes.