

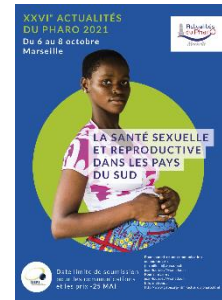
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The need to address paediatric health inequalities in French Guyana

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Introduction: French Guiana is a French overseas region in South America, bordering Brazil and Suriname, which faces marked socio-economic inequalities. Several studies have shown that the most disadvantaged adults in this territory are more prone to illness, both acute and chronic. Pregnant women are also more likely to be subject to obstetric complications and preterm births are a major concern in this region. While for adults, pregnant women and newborns, the impact of social inequalities in health has been identified, the consequences of these social inequalities in health for children and adolescents living in French Guyana have been little described. Furthermore, successive economic crises have accentuated this already worrying situation, particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic.

A review of the available data was carried out in order to better understand the issue of paediatric social inequalities in French Guyana.

Method: A narrative review of the available data was carried out using traditional search engines and by soliciting the reference actors in French Guyana.

Results: Certain paediatric health indicators are worse than those found in mainland France. This region has a high rate of congenital malformations and chromosomal anomalies, resulting in an infant mortality rate that is three times higher than that reported in mainland France. Infectious diseases are also of particular interest, with insufficient vaccination coverage for this territory; moreover, they represent the leading cause of death for children under 15 years of age, particularly meningitis due to pathogens for which vaccines exist and are recommended in the French vaccination calendar. Access to water and food is problematic for part of the population, with epidemics reported in certain areas where access to drinking water is difficult. Cases of lead poisoning have also been reported, mainly in precarious geographical areas.

This presentation aims to address this emerging issue of social inequalities in health in French Guyana and to present areas for improvement in this situation.