

## Neonatal mortality post ISIS conflict in Iraq

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Neonatal mortality is an indicator to assess maternal and neonatal care.<sup>1</sup> Iraq has been suffering from wars, economic hardship, terrorism and internal displacement for last 4 decades.<sup>2</sup> The impact of such suffering on health was reported.<sup>3</sup> However, the impact of terrorism on health infrastructure which in turn manifested in neonatal mortality was neglected. This study carried out to demonstrate the effect of war against terrorism on neonatal mortality in Iraq.

Neonatal admissions and neonatal deaths in two hospitals in Baghdad (Children Welfare Teaching Hospital and Al-Kadhmia Children Hospital) obtained for the years 2012 to 2016. Neonatal mortality proportion (neonatal mortality / neonatal admission) (NMP) was calculated for each year. Distribution of NMP plotted.

Fig.1 shows the trends of NMP among the years. Dramatic increase in NMP was noticed after 2014 (time that Islamic State in Iraq and Sham "ISIS" occupied 1/3 of Iraq) in both hospitals. NMP in 2016 was 4 folds NMP in 2012.

The dramatic increase in NMP is consistent with that reported recently in Baghdad.<sup>2,3</sup> This dramatic increase in NMP might be explained by the deterioration in health services. Deterioration of health services was due overload of neonatal admissions which in turn caused by huge internal displaced persons (IDPs). IDP is a phenomenon escalating after 2014.<sup>4</sup> They were from 3 governorates in Iraq to Baghdad and south of Iraq. Low birth weight (LBW) and prematurity were

added reason for mentioned overload. These are products of continuous conflicts (lack of antenatal care, malnutrition and high stress which are in turn lead to LBW and prematurity).<sup>5</sup> Conflict affect the socioeconomic and culture (increase natural growth of community and teenage pregnancies).<sup>4</sup> All are added factors beyond the increase in NMP. Conflicts induce proliferation of disease and trauma especially the high risk group (women and children).<sup>6</sup> Health system in Iraq was deteriorated due wars and conflicts.<sup>3-5</sup> It is the major factor in this dramatic increase in NMP.

Conflicts in northern west Iraq led to a clear dramatic increase in NMP in Baghdad.

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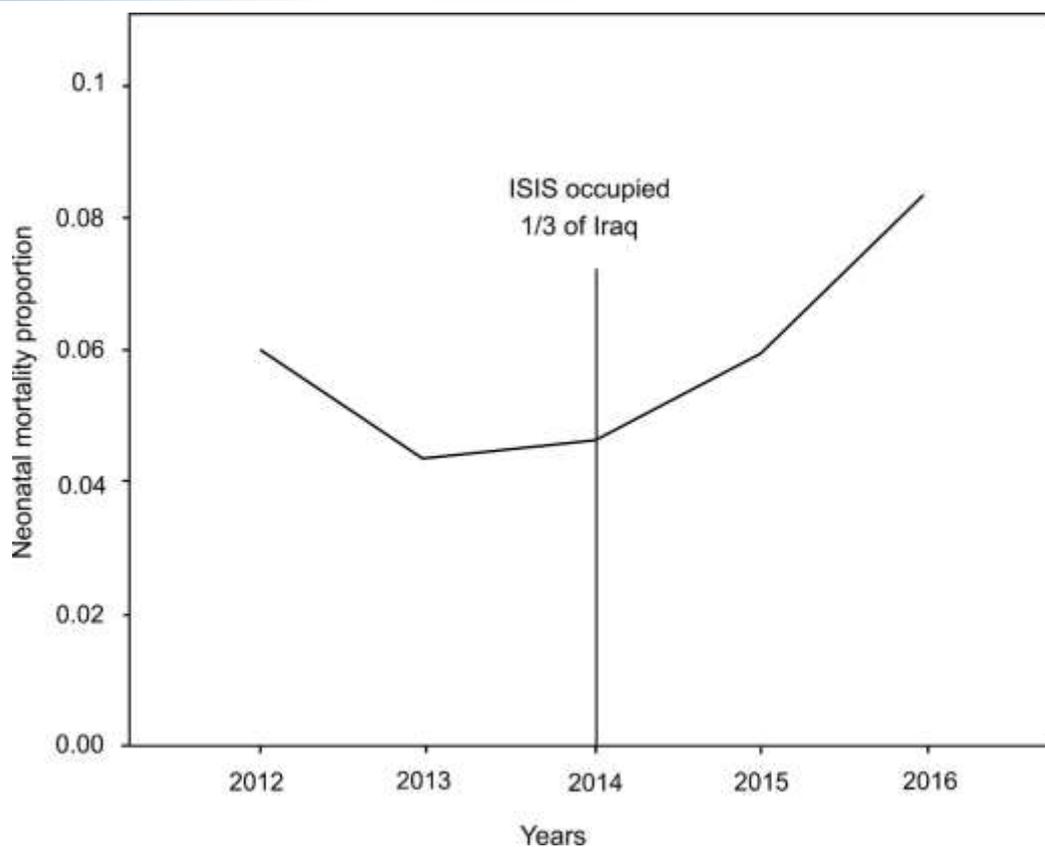


Fig. 1 NMP through the years 2012 - 2013