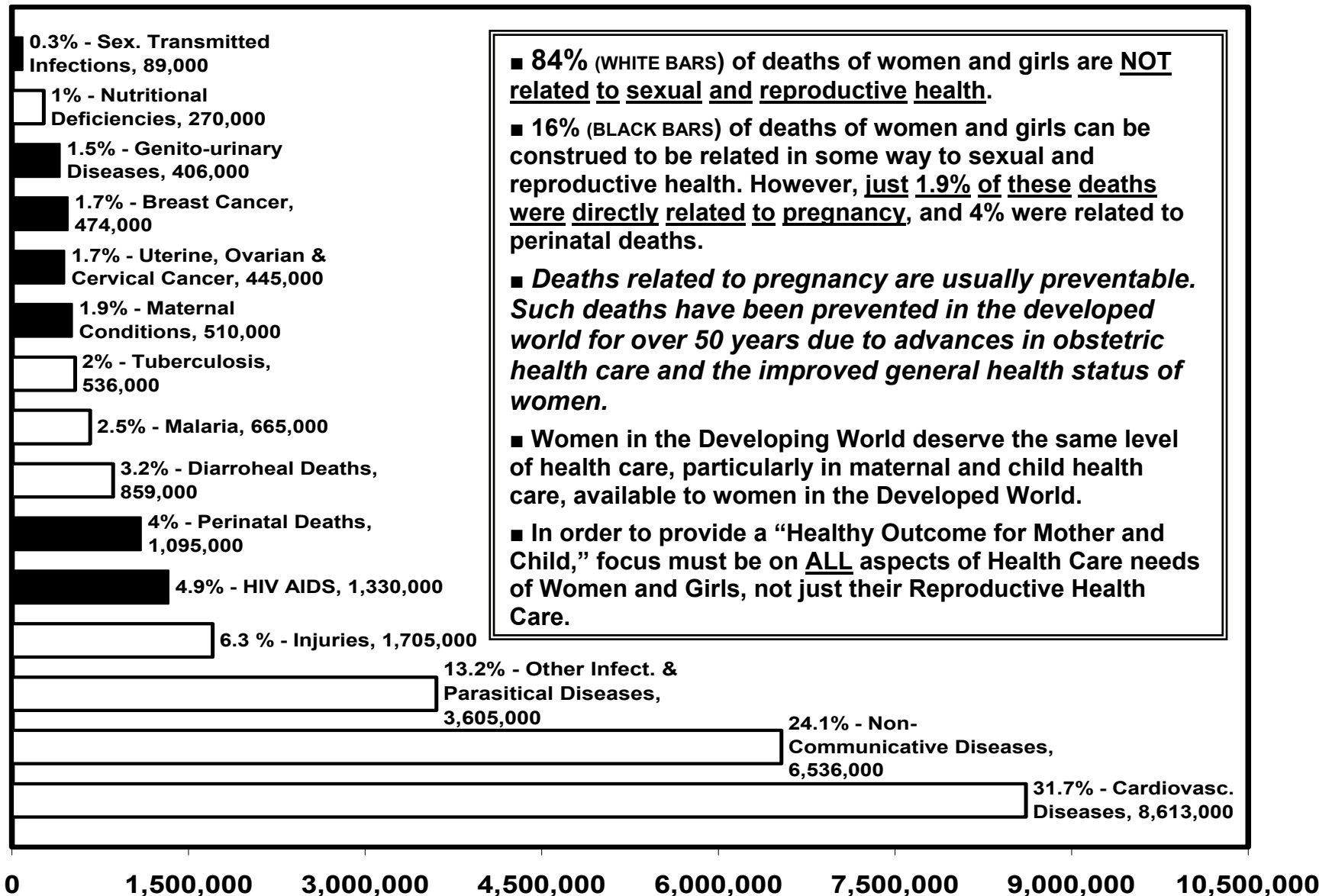


CAUSES OF DEATH WORLDWIDE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

2004 WHO REPORT (from 2002 WHO Statistics)



DID YOU KNOW?

- The maternal mortality ratio has not changed substantially over the past decade.
- 99% of maternal deaths occur in developing countries.
- 50% of women living in the world's poorest regions (the percentage is higher than 80% in some countries) deliver their babies without the help of a skilled birthing attendant.
- Although antenatal care is widely used in industrialized countries, in some regions 1/5 to 1/2 of women receive no antenatal care at all.
- Many neonatal deaths are due to the poor health of women and inadequate care during pregnancy.
- Most (87%) of maternal deaths are due to (1) direct causes such as hemorrhage, sepsis, obstructed labor, eclampsia, and ectopic pregnancy and (2) indirect causes such as malaria, anemia and heart disease (WHO web site).
- WHO identifies low social economic status, unskilled birthing attendants, and poor nutrition as major factors underlying the medical causes of maternal mortality.(WHO 1999 Report).
- **Maternal mortality risks are to a large extent preventable and avoidable** (WHO 1999 Report).
- Most causes of maternal death could be prevented or effectively treated with adequate basic health care and good obstetric care throughout pregnancy, at delivery, and post partum.
- “Significant ...reductions in infant mortality can be achieved with interventions designed to improve the health of the mother and her access to care during labor, birth and the critical hours immediately afterwards ” (WHO 1999 Report).
- The dramatic decline (1940-1950) in maternal mortality in the developed world coincided “*with the development of obstetric techniques and improvement in the general health status of women.*” (Maternal Mortality, A Global Factbook, WHO, 1991).
- Pre-existing conditions, such as malaria and anemia, have been cited as a primary indirect cause of maternal deaths in African countries. Malaria is a major cause of anemia in Africa; and in areas where it is endemic, malaria has been associated with low birth weights as well as maternal death and fetal loss.