

## Abstract

This report examines the influence of parent's migration status on childhood mortality in sending households in the South African rural sub-district of Agincourt. A survival analysis of a cohort of children born in Agincourt between 1 January 1997 and 31 December 2003 was conducted using the Cox proportional hazards model to estimate the influence of parent's migration status on under-5 year mortality. Starting with a baseline census in 1992, the Agincourt Health and Demographic Surveillance System (AHDSS) data are collected and updated every 12 months wherein fieldworkers visit each household at the site to record the vital events, including births, deaths, and migrations that occurred since the previous census. Results of the survival analysis show that children born in households where the father was a temporary migrant while the mother remained at the rural household had a 35% lower risk of death compared to children in households where both parents were non-migrant (RR=0.647, 95% CI 0.439-0.954). The results also reveal that, controlling for parent migration status, children in single-parent (mother only) households had about 28% higher death hazard than children in two-parent households (RR=1.284, 95% CI 0.936-1.673). The findings suggest that temporary labour migration could be a means to improving household incomes and quality of life for children, particularly where the father is a temporary migrant while the mother remains behind taking care of the children. At the same time, children whose fathers are not indicated appear to be worse off whether their parents are temporary migrants or not.