

# MORTALITY

## Chapter 6. Mortality

Mortality data are not collected directly in the decennial censuses. Indirect measures can be obtained from the questions on children ever born and children still alive as noted in the previous chapter on fertility in the CNMI. These data indicate a gradual increasing life expectancy of females at birth, from 67 in 1973 to 69 in 1980 (Levin and Retherford, 1986:10). The rates may be affected by a reluctance in Micronesian societies to mention dead persons, causing a tendency for respondents to selectively omit mention of dead children when responding to the child survivorship questions. (As noted in the fertility chapter, if such omissions occur, the reverse-survival factors used in the own-children fertility method will be too low, and the estimates may be biased).

The figures for life expectancy at birth are somewhat higher than for other areas of the Pacific but the quality of health care in the Northern Mariana Islands, especially on Saipan, is better than in many other areas. At least for Saipan, most people are only a relatively short distance from the hospital, where health care has been free, or available at only nominal cost. Infant and child mortality are low, as is general mortality.

Mortality will be explored more fully in a subsequent paper.