

Mortality and Violence in Haiti in 2023: 2 population-based surveys

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Background

Haiti faces chronic instability for decades, but recent years have seen exacerbation following the assassination of president Juvenel Moïse in 2021. Over 95 armed gangs are battling for control of Port-au-Prince and constant clashes paralyze infrastructure and medical assistance. Data on mortality and violence are virtually non-existent. To address this information gap, we conducted two retrospective mortality surveys, one among MSF national staff and another in the Cité Soleil commune population in Port-au-Prince.

Methods

The first cross-sectional survey was conducted in April 2023 among the MSF-OCP, OCA and OCB national staff and their families. All 1545 MSF Haitian employees were eligible. The second took place in August 2023 in the Cité Soleil commune, where a spatial sample of 1400 households was randomly selected. Indicators included crude mortality rate, causes of death, and experiences of violence.

Results

The MSF staff survey interviewed 819 members representing 3977 individuals, while the Cité Soleil survey interviewed 1669 households representing 8202 individuals. Mortality was low in the MSF staff, with only 6 deaths, in Cité Soleil, 176 deaths were reported, translating into a crude mortality rate of 0.63/10000/day [95% CI: 0.54 - 0.73]. Violence accounted for 40% of deaths, with an estimated age-standardized number of homicides of 2,300. Nearly half of MSF Staff family members and Cité Soleil participants experienced some form of violence.

Conclusion

Our findings confirm the alarming levels of violence experienced by the Haitian population. In 2022-2023, Haiti was one of the most dangerous countries in the world for civilians. Urgent action is needed to strengthen humanitarian access, healthcare provision and civilian protection.

Two surveys conducted by Epicentre/MSF in 2023 in Haiti confirm the extreme violence the population is suffering. Urgent action is needed to improve healthcare access and civilian protection.

