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Selection and Adaptation Components of Infant Mortality

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We test the selection hypothesis of infant mortality against the adaptation hypothesis by decomposing the mortality age pattern over the first year of life into an adaptation- and a selection component. We show that the population level decline in mortality over the first hour of life is significantly influenced by mortality selection, i.e.~the frailest infants leaving the population shortly after birth. The subsequent mortality decline predominantly results from mortality changes observed in homogeneous sub-populations. This confirms the common view of the infant mortality age pattern being caused by adaptation on an individual level. The analysis is informed by detailed micro-data on births and infant deaths in the United States including more than 25 million births and 162,546 deaths. No parametric assumptions were necessary.

Extended Abstracts:

[schoeley-2016-selection_and_adaptation_components_of_infant_mortality.pdf](#) (338.3KB)

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