

Iraq - Under-five mortality

Purpose

Two child and maternal mortality surveys, were carried out between February and May 1999 in the heavily populated southern and central parts of Iraq, and in the autonomous northern region of Iraq. The data from these surveys have been combined with data from earlier surveys to derive estimates of the under-five mortality rate (the probability of dying between birth and age 5 years expressed per 1000 live births) for the whole of Iraq over the period 1960 to 1999. This note also estimates the number of under-five deaths during the 1990s.

Specifics

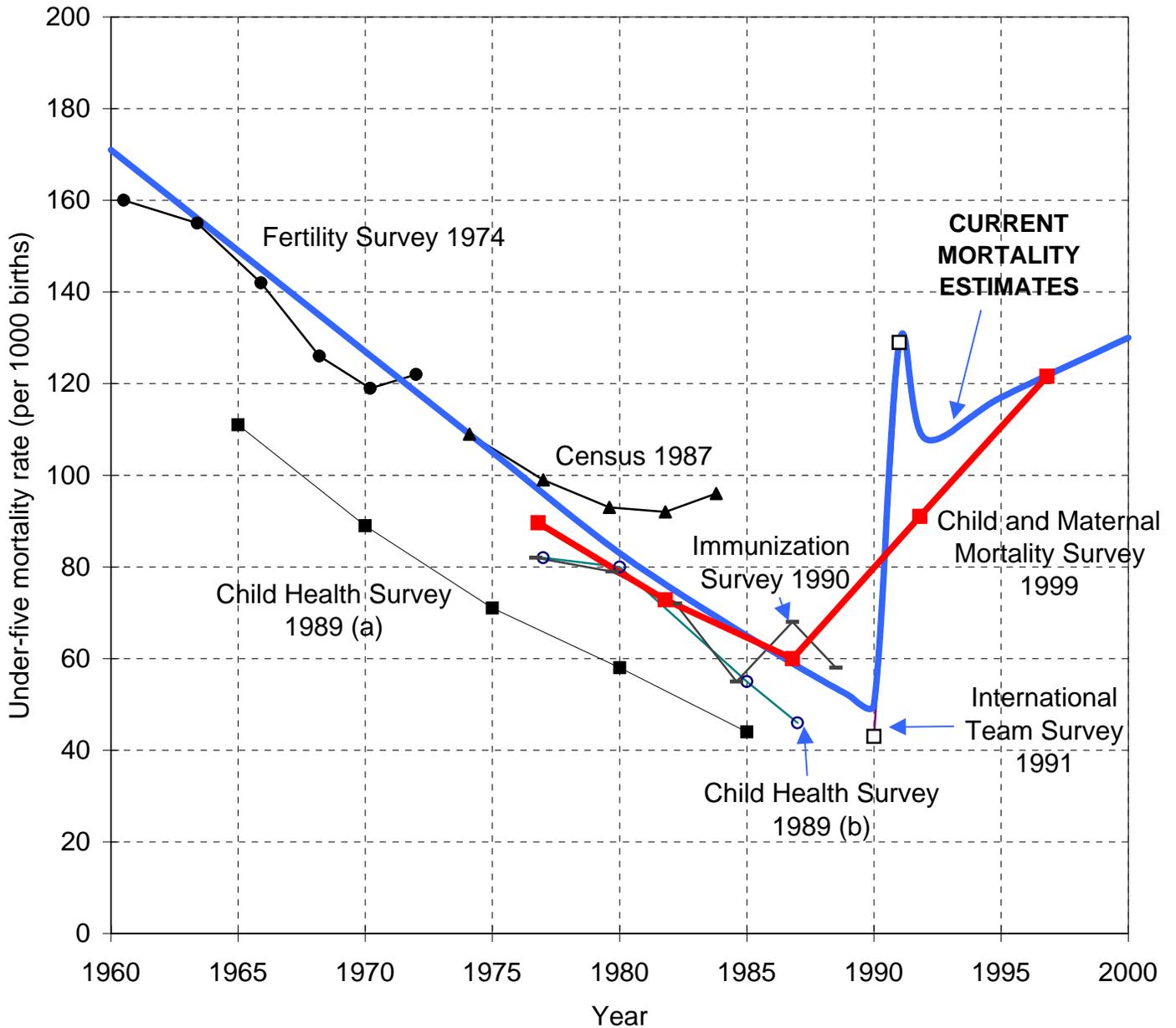
In order to derive estimates of the under-five mortality rate, the data from the 1999 surveys have been combined into a single data set that refers to the whole of Iraq. These data, together with data from other surveys, are charted over the period 1960 to 1999, and a line fitted to the data so as to provide a single consistent time series of estimates of the under-five mortality rate. The survey data and time series estimates, the latter labeled "current mortality estimates", are presented in chart 1.

Chart 1 shows the under-five mortality rate declining quickly and smoothly over the period 1960 to 1990. If this mortality rate trend had continued through the 1990s, the rate would have been around 30 per 1000 live births in 1999. However, the latest surveys show that the actual mortality rate in 1999 is around 130 - see chart 2.

The under-five mortality rate data shown in chart 2, together with data on births during the same period, can be used to estimate the number of under-five deaths - see chart 3. A conclusion from chart 3 is that if the substantial reduction in the under-five mortality rate during the 1980s had continued through the 1990s, there would have been half a million fewer deaths of children under-five in the country as a whole during the eight year period 1991 to 1998.

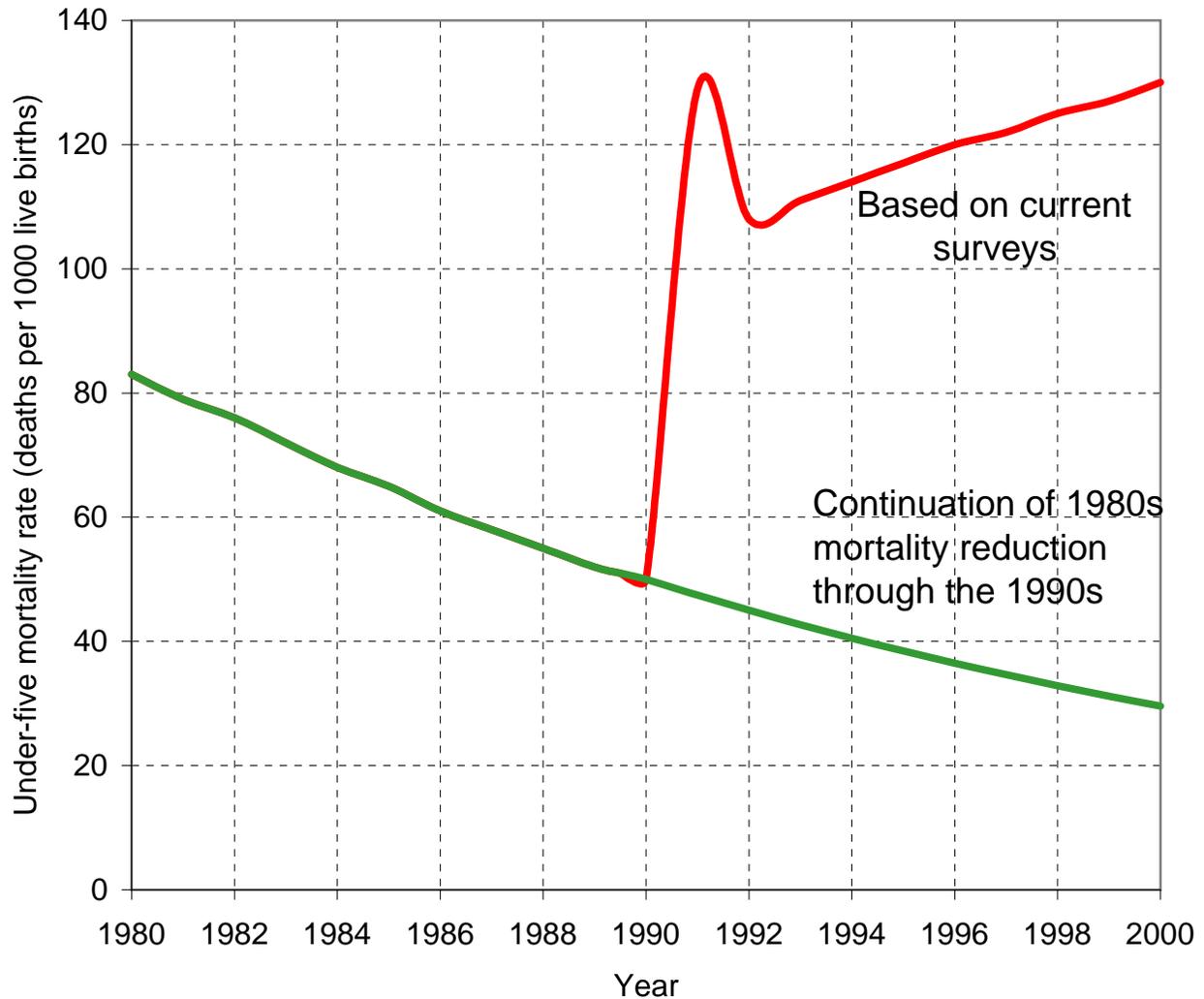
G. Jones
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CHART 1: IRAQ - UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY RATE



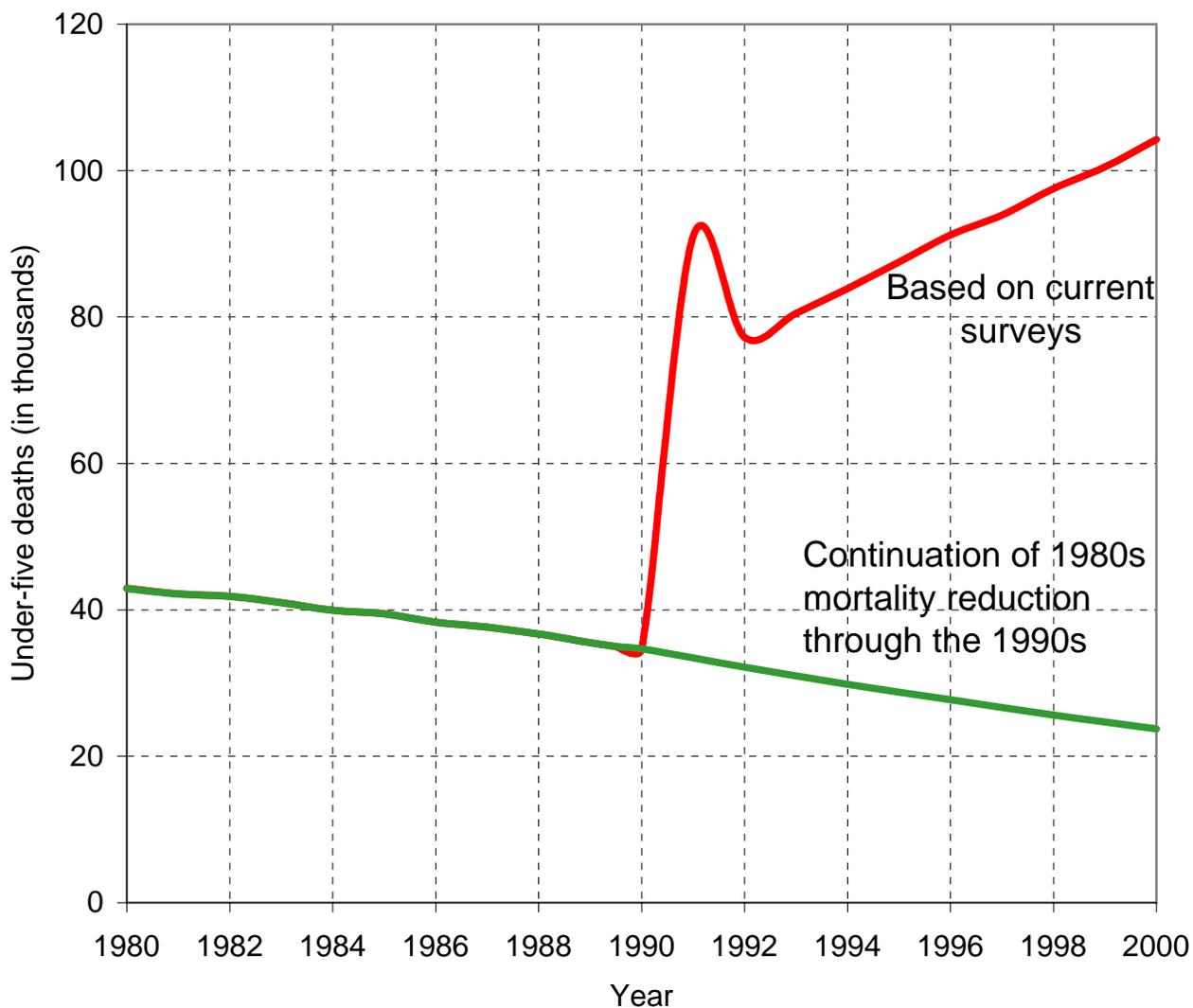
Data from household surveys are plotted in the above chart, with all points from a single survey joined together with a line. The thick blue line, labeled "CURRENT MORTALITY ESTIMATES", shows UNICEF's current estimates of the under-five mortality rate in Iraq, and are derived from the survey data. Methodology for these estimates can be found at <http://www.childinfo.org/cm/ir/kh98meth.html>.

Chart 2: Iraq - under-five mortality rate disparities



The chart shows the large disparity between the mortality rates based on recent surveys and what would have been the situation if the mortality trend in the 1980s had been continued through the 1990s.

Chart 3: Iraq - disparities in under-five deaths



The chart shows the large disparity between under-five deaths based on recent surveys and the number of deaths if the mortality trend in the 1980s had been continued through the 1990s. Births taken from the UN Population Division, World Population Prospects, 1998 revision