

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON THE INCIDENCE/PREVALENCE OF STILLBIRTHS

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FETAL DEATH

Definition

■ Fetal death has been defined by the World Health Organization as death before complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy.

OBJECTIVE

- **To provide a tabulation of the incidence of stillbirths in different settings**

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING STUDIES FOR THIS REVIEW

Type of participants

- ◆ pregnant women or women with at least one stillbirth in the past

Type of study design used

- ◆ any study in English providing prevalence or incidence of stillbirths will be included for assessment (including cross-sectional, cohort and surveys of incidence)
- ◆ Type of outcome
- ◆ incidence of stillbirths

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Studies with no data about incidence of stillbirths
- Studies with no data about total number of live births
- Studies that provide data on stillbirths associated with very specific risk factors (e.g. fetal malformations, pregnant women with diabetes)
- Case-control studies
- Reports referring to data collected from before 1980

SEARCH STRATEGY

- Electronic data bases of Medline from 1998 till 2003
- Articles with data about incidence of stillbirths from the reports identified by:

The WHO systematic review on the epidemiological evidence for maternal morbidity and mortality (project A 15060).

DATA EXTRACTION FORM

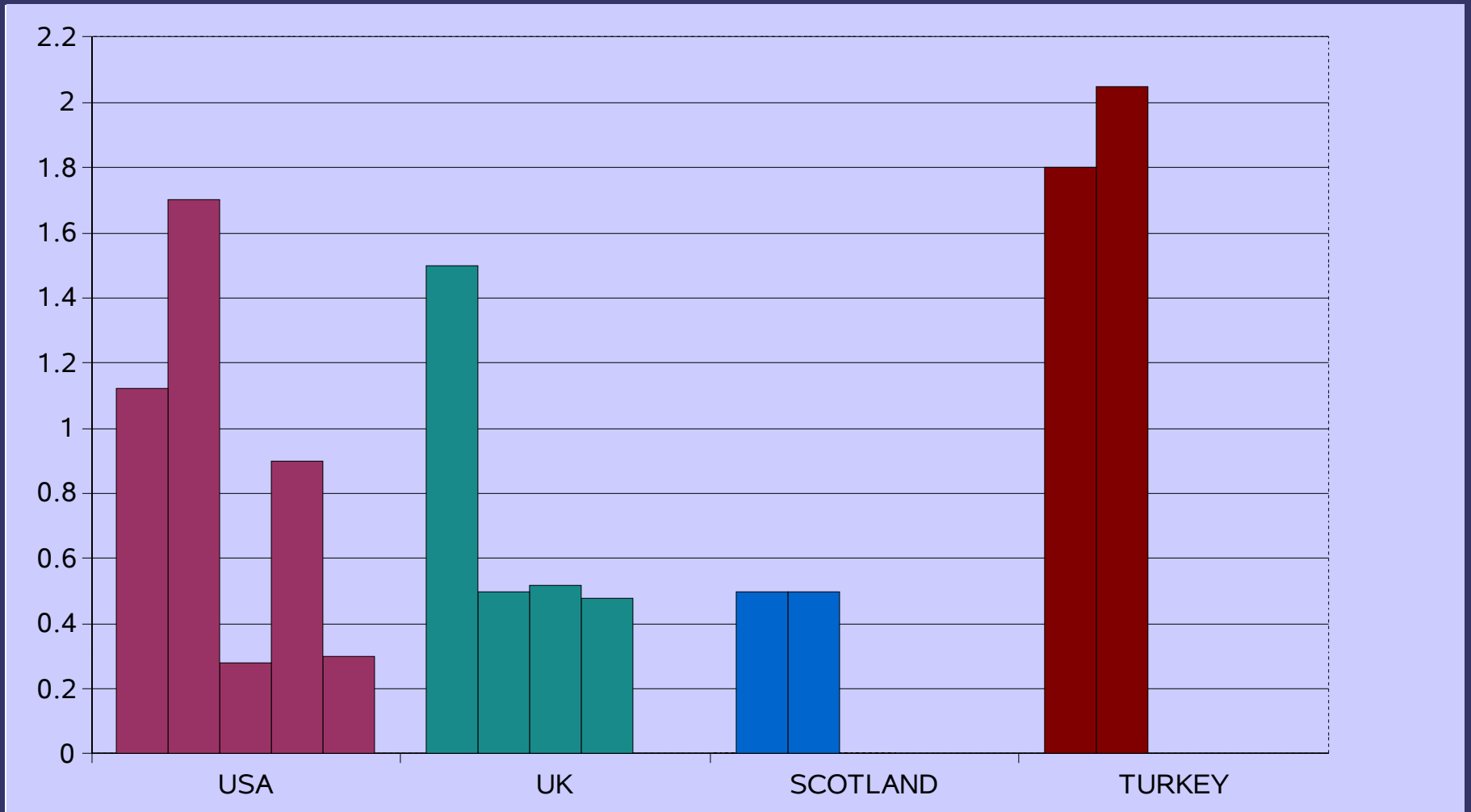
- Module I - general information
- Module II - characteristics of the study
- Module III – data reporting stillbirths

RESULTS

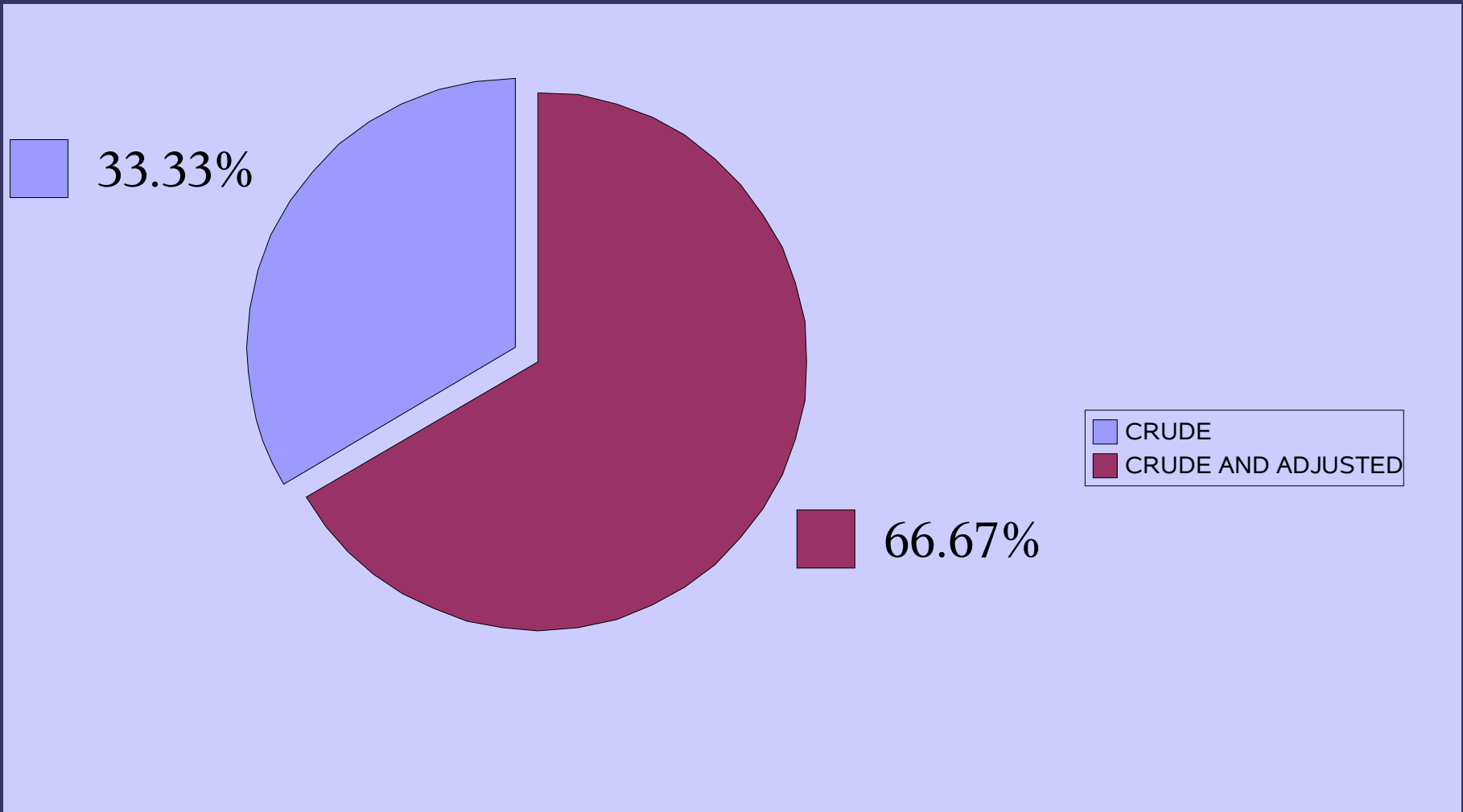
- 27 studies

- Incidence of stillbirths:
0.15% to 10%

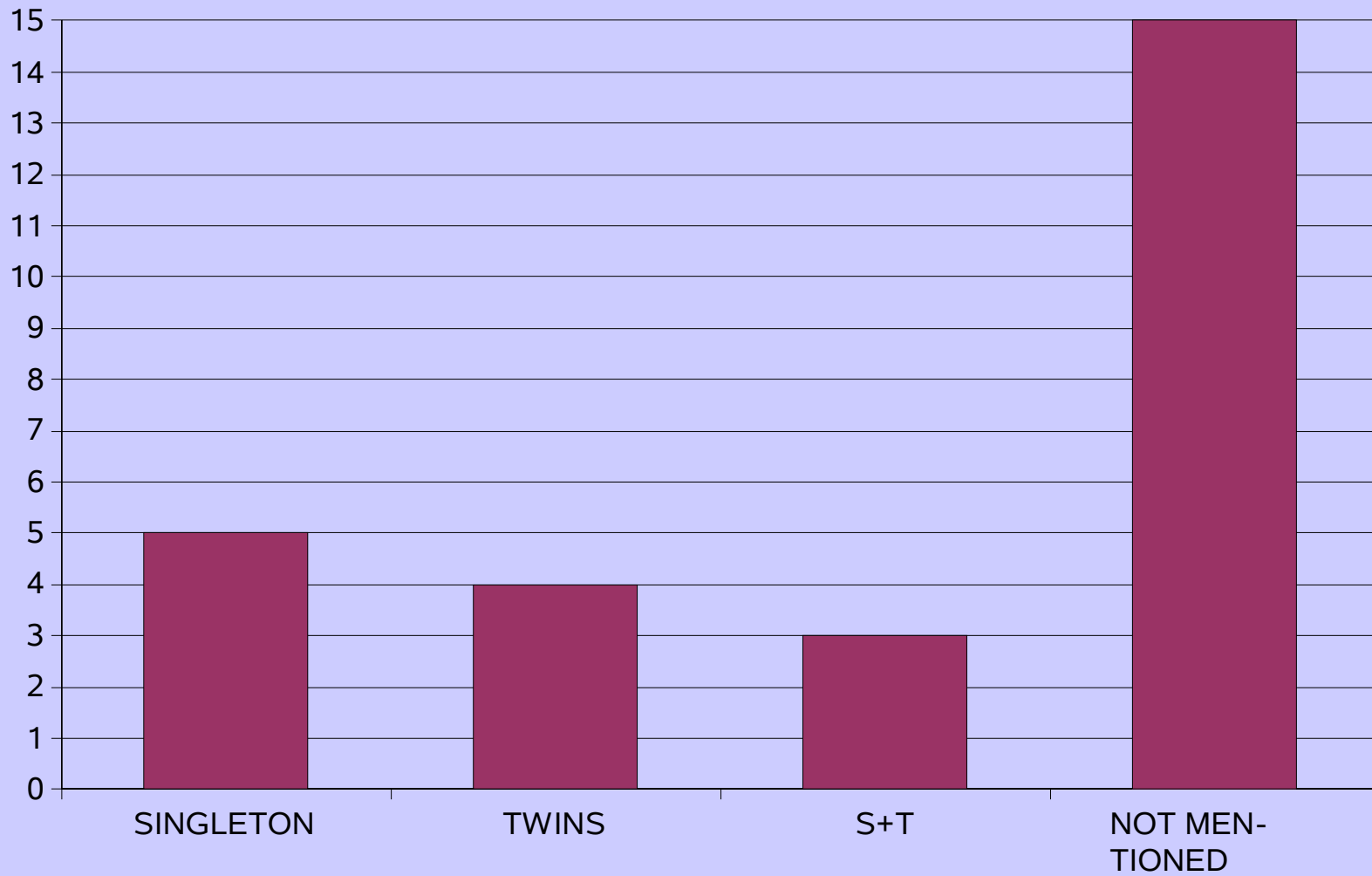
DISTRIBUTION OF DATA ON INCIDENCE OF STILLBIRTHS (%) ACCORDING TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



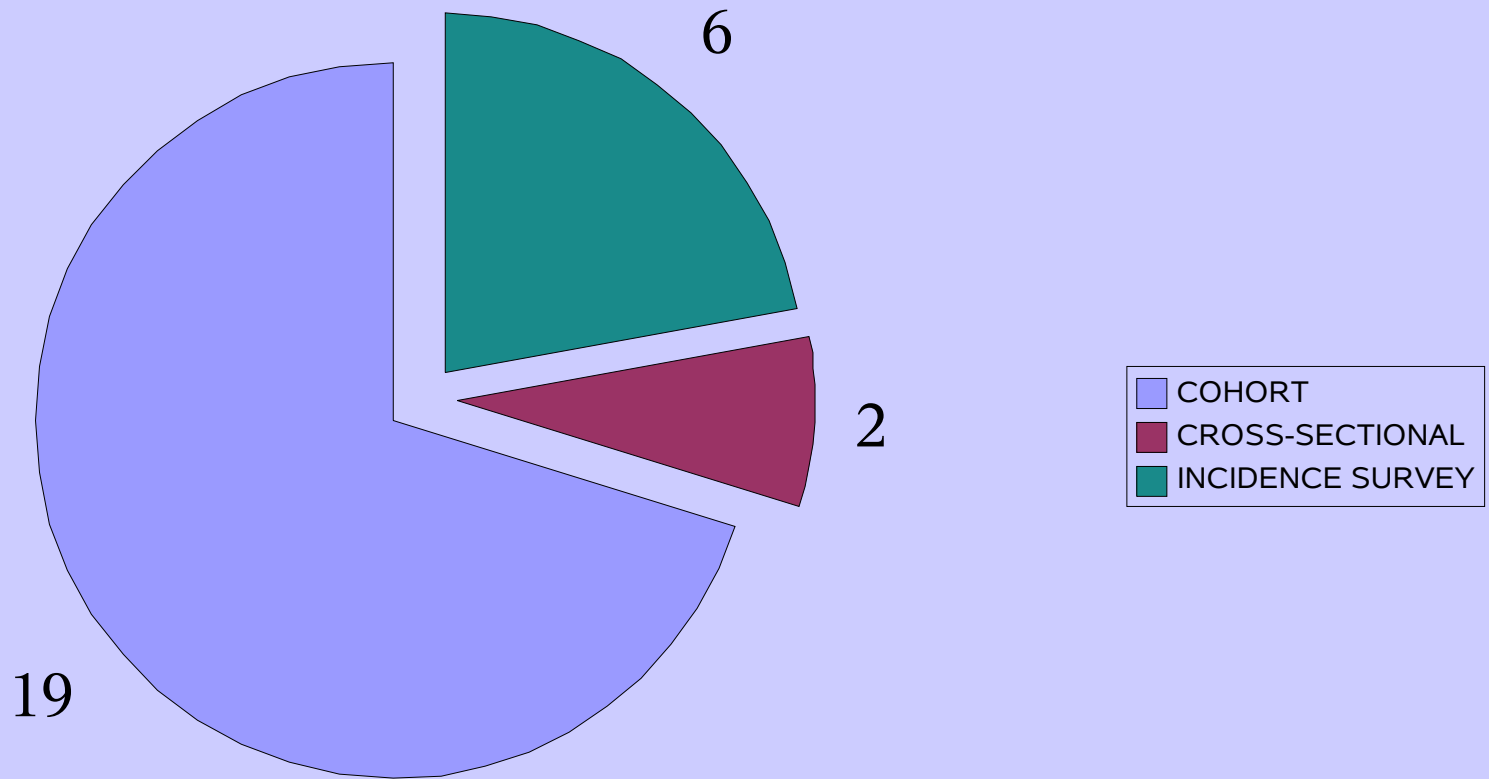
DISTRIBUTION OF DATA ACCORDING TO TYPE OF ESTIMATES: CRUDE/ CRUDE AND ADJUSTED



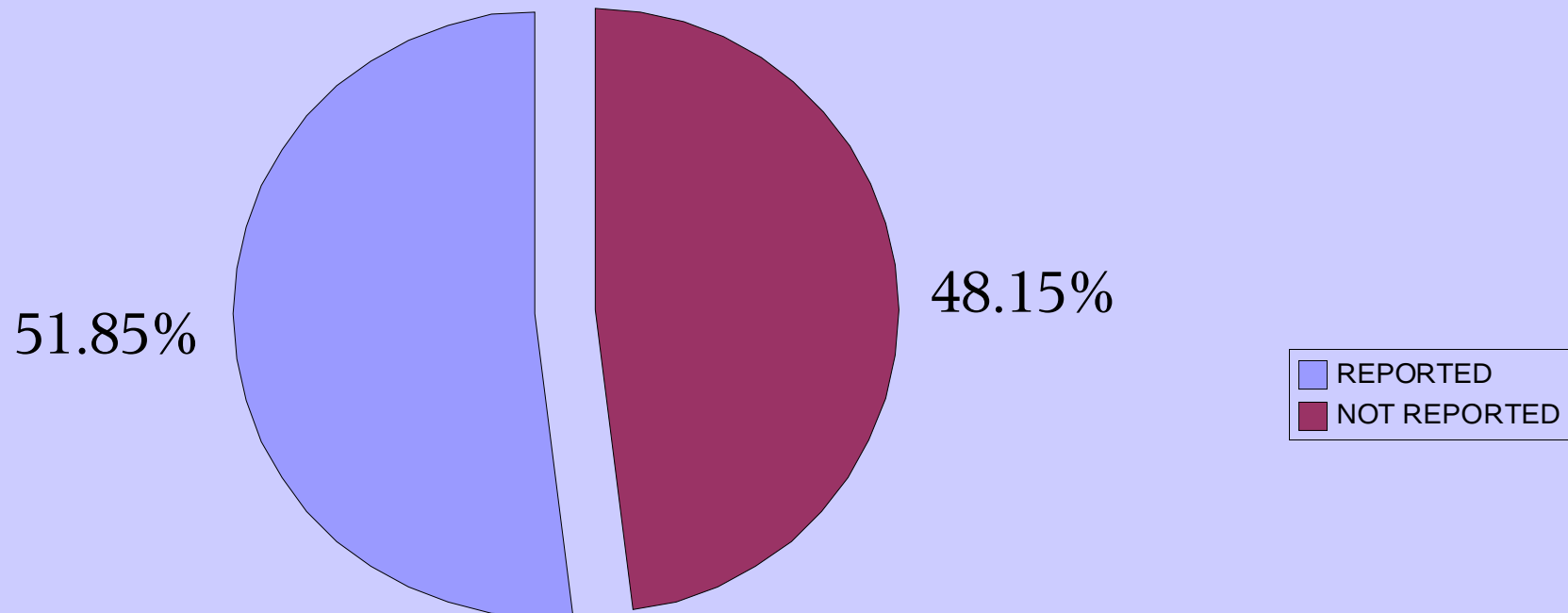
DATA BY TYPE OF PREGNANCY



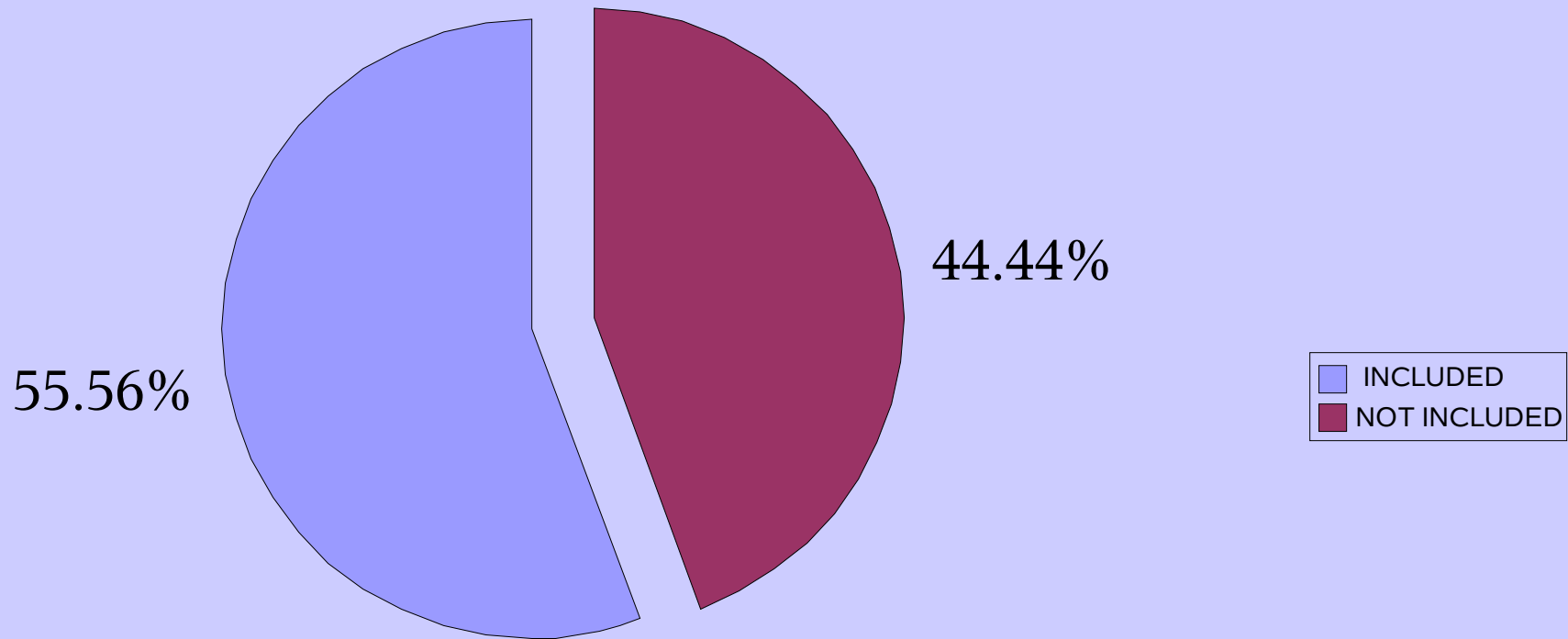
DATA BY STUDY DESIGN



STUDIES REPORTING INCIDENCE OF EARLY NEONATAL DEATH



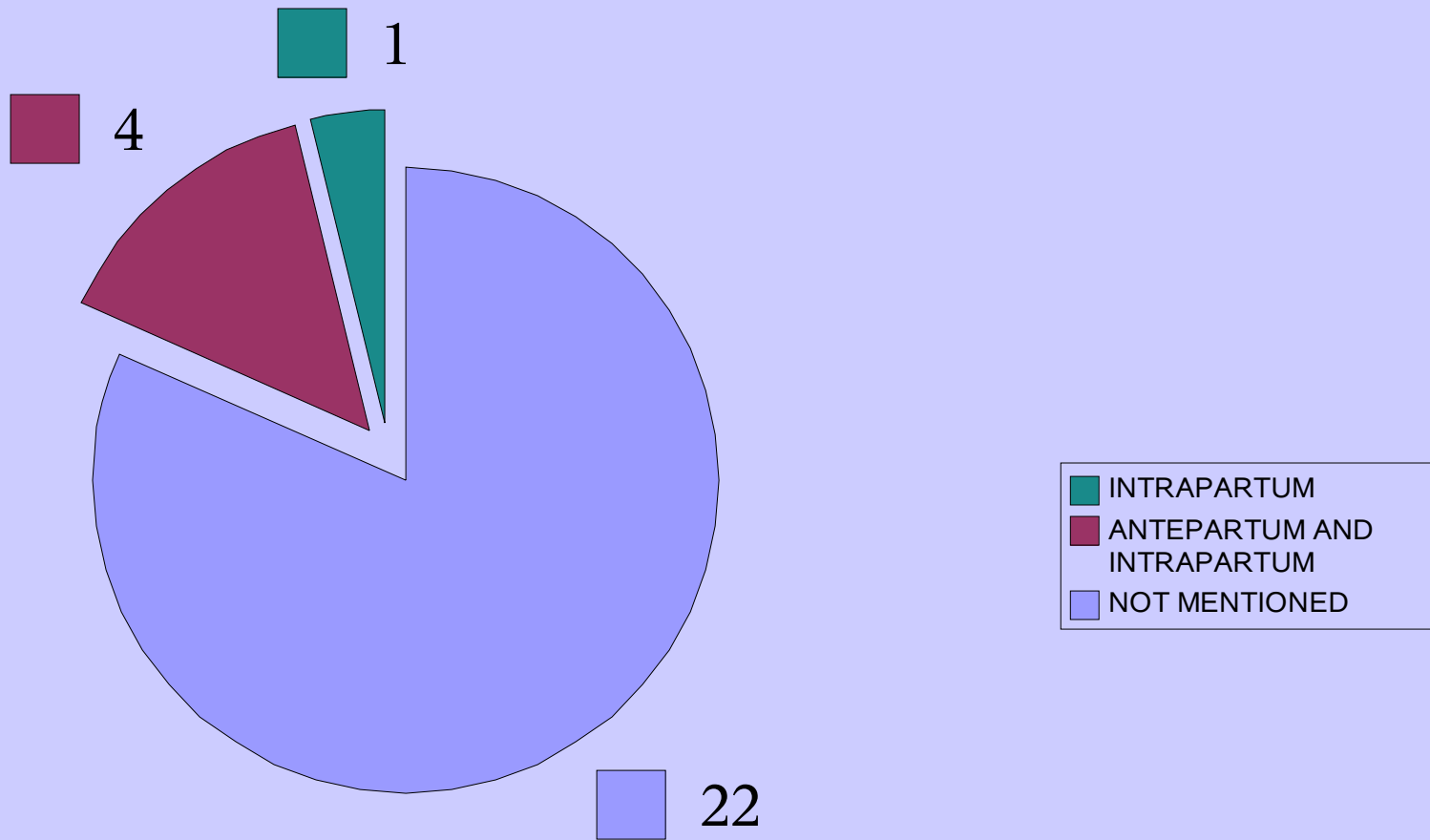
STUDIES INCLUDING DEFINITION OF STILLBIRTH



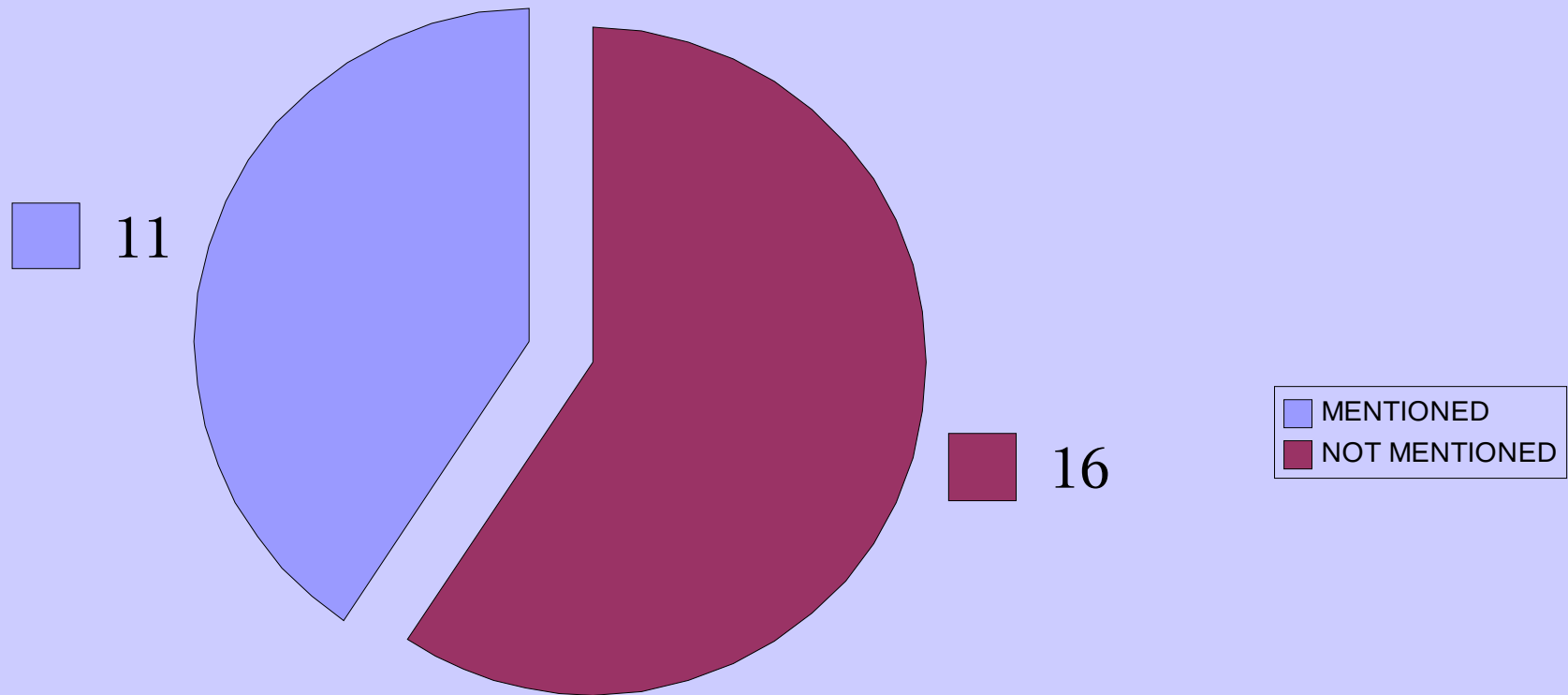
STUDIES ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL



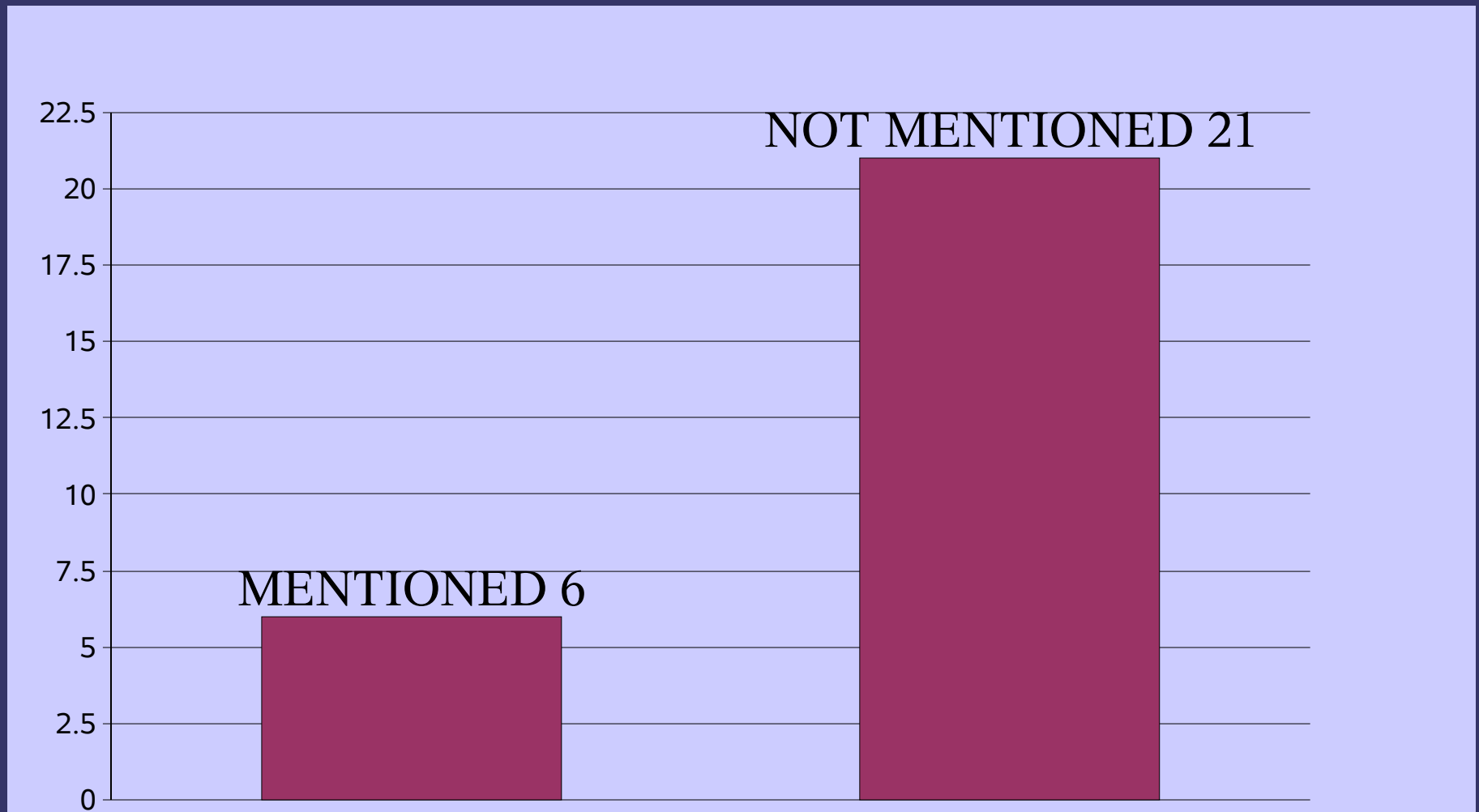
DATA ACCORDING TO TIME OF DEATH



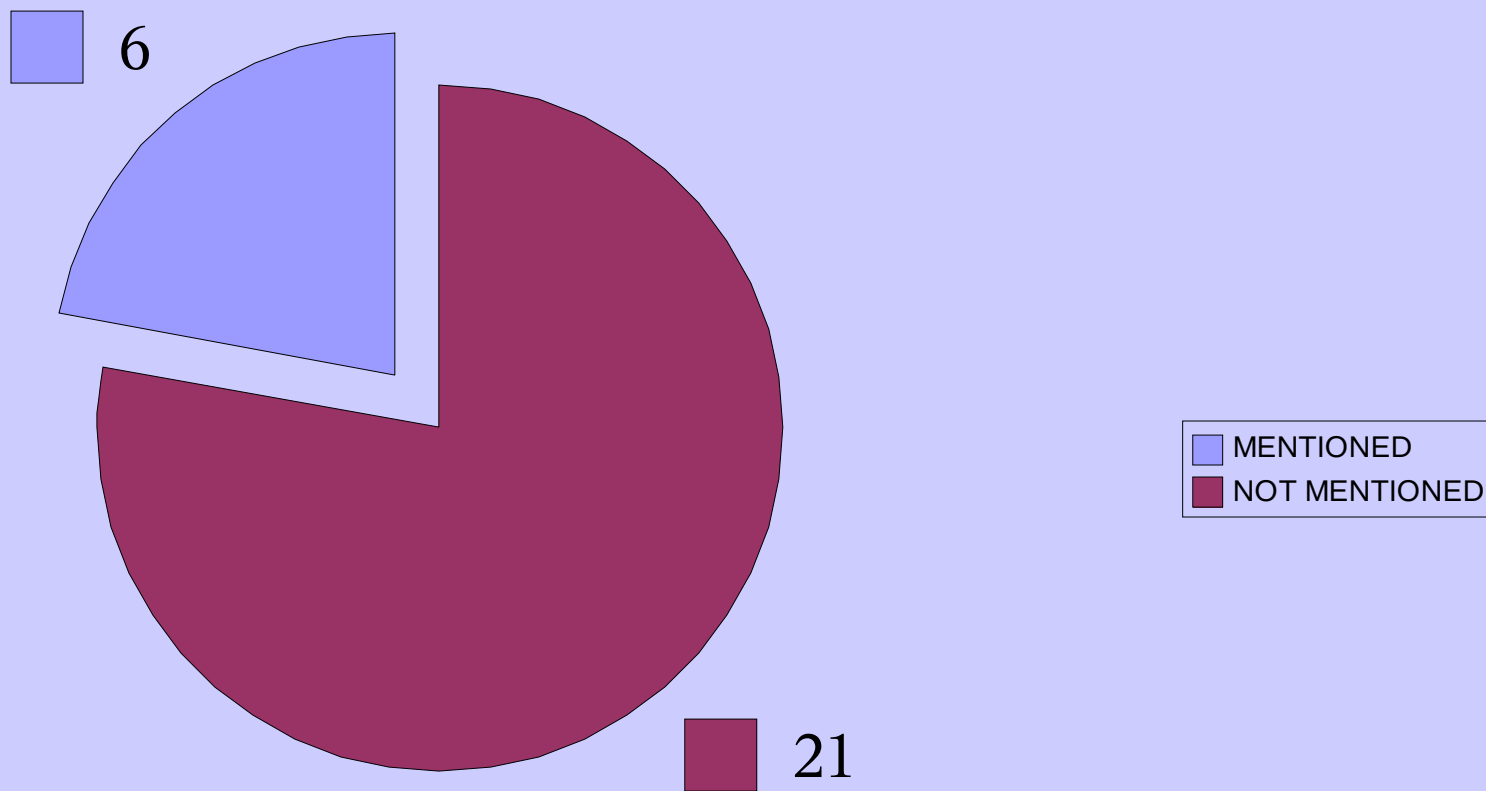
REPORTING DATA RELATED WITH AGE OF PREGNANCY



NO. OF STUDIES REPORTING THE OBSTETRICAL HISTORY OF WOMEN



NO. OF STUDIES REPORTING THE AGE OF PATIENTS



DISCUSSION

- The limit between miscarriage and stillbirth
- Data according to socio-economic level of the countries
- Data regarding gestational age, type of the pregnancy and health characteristics of the women

CONCLUSIONS

- The incidence of stillbirths is comparable in most settings at around 1-2% of total number of births
- Fifty-five % of studies mentioned the definition of stillbirths and the limit between miscarriage and stillbirth varied from 20 weeks of gestation (United Kingdom) till 28 weeks of gestation (India).
- In our review more than half of the studies did not report the data by antepartum or intrapartum events, type of pregnancy, obstetrical history of the mother or pregnancy age.

CONCLUSIONS

- The majority of the studies (21) were carried out in developed countries and the incidence of stillbirths in these studies varied from 0.15% to 2.2%
- Developing countries have an incidence of stillbirths between 0.40% and 10%. Most of the results higher than 2% were identified in developing countries
- Countries and regions within countries should conduct regular audits of registration practices to determine geographic and temporal trends in the occurrence of livebirths and stillbirths