

It will at once be evident how very constant whooping cough has been in its fatality for the different age groups.

Table 1 shows the uniformity with which the female death rate exceeds that for males. The proportionate difference varies somewhat, but the general trend is very constant.

Whooping Cough Since 1907

The last epidemic in recent times was that of 1907 when 307 deaths were recorded giving a death rate of 3.34 per 10,000 population. Since then the whooping cough death rate has only twice exceeded one per 10,000, while in the last 30 years it has only twice exceeded 0.3 per 10,000. The disease has never been dangerous to persons over the age of five, and the low death rate for young children at the present time may be due not so much to a lessening of its virulence as to the general improvement in the health of infants. Whooping cough in the past must frequently have been fatal to infants already suffering from malnutrition, and intestinal and other disorders, and the very great reduction in these conditions would enable many children to survive an attack who might otherwise have succumbed. The introduction in very recent years of potent vaccines will also have had some effect on the death rate.

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