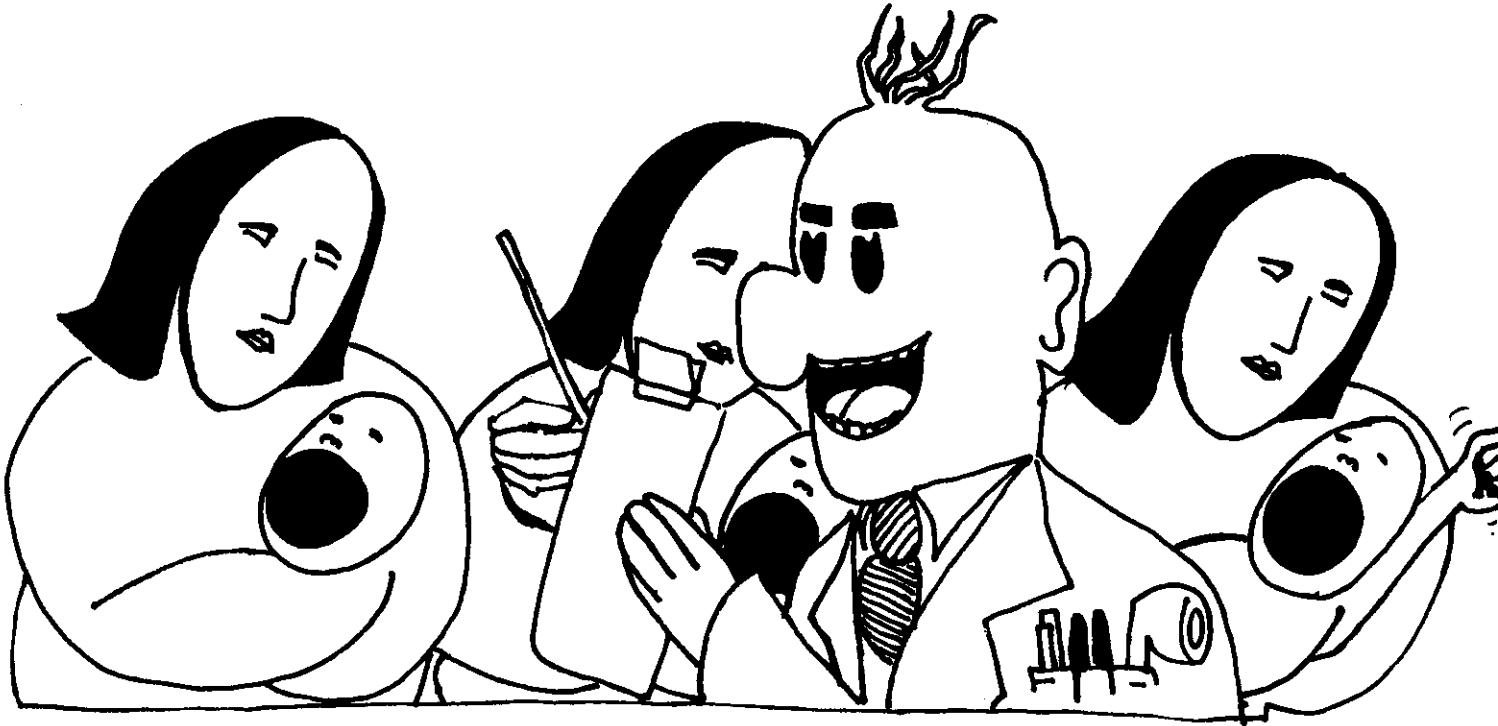


Health Statistics



Dear Roy

As a postscript to the Bibby-Macfarlane discussion in RS9, I should like to mention that the DHSS is currently funding a study (in Bristol) which is looking at perinatal mortality rates by social class, maternal age and birth order using the Registrar General's returns for 1973. There was also a study using 1950 data (Healy and Heasman, H.M.S.O., 1959) and comparisons are being made between these two years. In addition there are various research studies, such as the 1958 perinatal mortality survey.

There are several technical difficulties associated with making social class comparisons. One is to do with changing allocations of occupations to social classes over time and another to do with the labour involved in actually coding social class. Like Alison, though I do agree with John's general concern and hope that the newly announced interest of the DHSS in social class differences (Guardian 28/3/76) will lead to the routine collection and presentation of social class statistics in the annual health statistics reports.

Yours sincerely

Harvey Goldstein

of Infant Mortality