Causes of Death: why it matters

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United Nations ESCAP
Workshop on the midterm reporting of the Asia-Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Decade, 2015-2024
Bangkok, Thailand, 20 September 2019
Why monitor causes of death?

- Evidence based public health policies
  - Monitoring of interventions in the health system impossible with poor data
  - Disease and injury patterns are not static => importance to allocate funding for interventions based on current relevance

11 SDG indicators require data on Deaths by cause
Challenges in collection of mortality and cause-of-death data

- Underreporting of deaths, incompleteness of records and errors in capturing of demographic information of events
- Poor mortality certification practices
- Weak cause-of-death coding practices
Regional Action Framework targets on causes of death

Goal 1: Universal registration of births, deaths & other vital events

1.E. By 2024, at least ... per cent of all deaths recorded by the health sector in the territory and jurisdiction in the given year have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate

Goal 3: Accurate, complete and timely vital statistics (including on causes of death) are produced based on registration records and are disseminated

3.C By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths occurring in health facilities or with the attention of a medical practitioner have an underlying cause of death code derived from the medical certificate according to the standards defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate)

3.D By 2024, the proportion of deaths coded to ill-defined codes will have been reduced by ... per cent compared with the baseline year

3.E. By 2024, at least ... per cent of deaths taking place outside of a health facility and without the attention of a medical practitioner have their underlying cause of death code determined through verbal autopsy in line with international standards
Table 4 Causes of Death

- Information should be maintained by the health sector.
- The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) provides a comprehensive and comparable tool for identifying causes of death and diseases in general.
- Target 3C and 3D are measured in the contextual questions below the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Records</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of deaths recorded by the health sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Of which: Number of deaths which have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate (ICD)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Number of deaths with ill-defined codes and codes that cannot be an underlying cause</td>
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<td>Targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1E: Percentage of all deaths recorded by the health sector that have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate (ICD) ($=100\times(2)/(1)$)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3D: Percentage of deaths coded to ill-defined codes ($=100\times(3)/(1)$)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

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