



Asia-Pacific CRVS Research Forum

3–4 April 2023 | Bangkok, Thailand

Bringing amendment for the B18 Inquirer's Certificate of Death in Sri Lanka

Presenting speaker: Dr Rangana Wadugedara, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

Tuesday 4 April 2023: Session 5.5

Keywords: Sri Lanka; Cause of Death; Certificate of Death; Inquirer

Introduction

The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) System in Sri Lanka records major vital events including births and deaths. The CRVS system captures more than 98% of births and deaths in Sri Lanka. Out of all deaths, around 48% of deaths occur in healthcare facilities and the rest happens in the community. Deaths that occur in a hospital or in the community which are subjected to inquest will be certified by Inquirer into Sudden Death (ISD) using the format B18 Inquirer's certificate of death. The format B18 was updated recently which was a milestone in CRVS development in Sri Lanka. The old format not containing Cause of Death (CoD) as per the international standard recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The lack of a standard format of CoD information in B18 in the past led to low quality national mortality statistics data.

Implementing an updated B18 form with WHO standards on the cause of death certification was the main objective of the amendment.

Methods

A Technical Working Group consisting of all relevant stakeholders was appointed by the National Steering Committee on Data for Public Health Policy coordinated by the Ministry of Health. Following a series of consultation meetings, the new B18 form was drafted with WHO standards of CoD certification. The new form was pre-tested on ten ISDs following a convenient sampling method, and they were asked to fill the new B18 form according to pre-determined 6 case scenarios. B18 forms filled by ISDs were assessed by a board of experts using a quality assessment tool based on ten common errors. An interview was conducted and recorded by the board of experts on the ISD's feedback on the new form.



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Results

The mean error count of the death certificates filled was recorded as 3.48 (SD=2.671). Based on the comments made by ISDs during the interviews, a few suggestions were identified to improve the usability of this new form. Draft B18 was further modified to increase the usability as per the suggestions recorded during the pre-test interviews.

Conclusion

The new B18 form was approved, and a Gazette notification was issued by the Government of Sri Lanka enabling the implementation of this form. In-service training was conducted for all ISDs on the island to train them based on the errors. This was a collaborative activity by relevant stakeholders including the Registrar Generals Department, the Ministry of Justice, Department of Census and Statistics led by the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka.