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Male-female disparities in potential years of life lost due to premature mortality in the Philippines

Presenting speaker: Dr Maria Midea Kabamalan, University of the Philippines Population Institute, the Philippines

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Introduction

Premature mortality or deaths occurring at any age lower than the life expectancy adversely impacts the social and economic performance of a country. The WHO reports that premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, neoplasms, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes accounts for 80 percent of all deaths in the world. External causes, particularly road traffic injuries and intentional self-harm, accounts for 2 million deaths each year. With the global pandemic, COVID-19 ranked fourth among the leading causes of death worldwide, with over 6.7 million people dying of the disease. In the Philippines, premature deaths due to NCDs has been the leading causes of death since 1990s. COVID-19 alongside intentional self-harm also greatly contributed to the country's death rates in recent years.

Gender disparities in these causes are apparent as exposure to risk factors vary between male and female populations. These are brought about by differences in lifestyle choices, behavioural factors, or social gender norms. While statistics show that men die earlier than women due to lifestyle behaviour, and deaths due to external causes are higher among men, only a few studies have been made on differences on mortality between males and females in the Philippines, and cause-specific mortality studies are scant.

In addition, periods of crisis and contextual factors such as lack of access to services, poverty, or underdevelopment have gender-differentiated impacts. The economic and social impacts of COVID-19, for instance, have disproportionately affected women. In less developed areas of the Philippines, it is not unlikely that women more than men are affected by lack of access to health services or heightened



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economic insecurity due to the pandemic which can increase women’s susceptibility to conditions that lead to premature mortality.

Objectives

This study aims to produce estimates on sex-specific potential years of life lost (PYLL) due to premature deaths from NCDs, land transport accidents, intentional self-harm, and COVID-19 based on civil registration and vital statistics data. Specifically, this study aims to estimate and compare the PYLL due to each of the NCDs, land transport accidents, intentional self-harm and COVID-19 disease, by sex and age group at the national and regional levels for the period 2006–2020. The study will also look into the differences between deaths that happen in the community and in facilities.

Methods

The PYLL will be computed based on the civil registration and vital statistics data on deaths by age, sex and causes from 2006 to 2020. The PYLL measures the relative impact of various diseases and underscores the loss to society due to premature deaths. It measures the years of life not lived due to premature mortality or the number of years that the person would have lived had they reached a specified age.

Results and Conclusion

The findings and conclusion are not yet available at this time. However, the study will estimate sex-specific PYLL that will show the magnitude of premature deaths between male and female populations given that NCDs, external causes, intentional self-harm and COVID-9 account for the majority of deaths in the Philippines in 2020. This will not only identify the gap between men and women in PYLL by cause of premature death, it will also provide evidence into the existing gender disparities in causes of premature death. By looking at the differentials of sex-specific PYLL, this study can also provide evidence on the gender-differentiated impact of underdevelopment on causes of premature deaths. Finally, this study will provide a gender lens in understanding the possible social and economic consequences of PYLL.