



Causes of Death: why it matters

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United Nations ESCAP

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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

INTERNATIONAL FORM OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH

Cause of death		Approximate interval between onset and death
Disease or condition directly leading to death*	(a)	
•	due to (or as a consequence of)	
Antecedent causes Morbid conditions, if any,	(b)	
giving rise to the above cause, stating the underlying condition last	due to (or as a consequence of)	
	(c)	
	due to (or as a consequence of)	
	(d)	
II Other significant conditions		
contributing to the death, but not related to the disease or condition causing it		
•		
*This does not mean the mode of dying, It means the disease, injury, or complicat		

- 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

Line	Variable	
Registration Records		
1	Number of deaths recorded by the health sector	
2	Of which: Number of deaths which have a medically certified cause of death recorded using the international form of the death certificate (ICD)	
3	Number of deaths with ill-defined codes and codes that cannot be an underlying cause	
Targets		
4	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*(2)/(1))	
5	3D: Percentage of deaths coded to ill-defined codes (=100*(3/(1))	

