United Nations Expert Group Meeting on
Innovative methods to measure the impact of COVID-19 on mortality through surveys and censuses
23 – 25 August 2022
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Work programme

Final

Tuesday, 23 August 2022

Registration: 8:30-8.45am

Session 0. Welcome (8:45-9:15am)

Moderator: Mr. Stéphane Helleringer, NYU Abu Dhabi

- Dr. Paula England, Dean of Social Science, NYU Abu Dhabi
- Mr. Kevin McCormack, co-Chair, UNDESA-WHO Technical Advisory Group on COVID Mortality Assessment; Head of Division, Sustainable Development Goals Indicators & Reports, Central Statistics Office, Ireland
- Dr. Dena Assaf, United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Arab Emirates
- Ms. Francesca Perucci, Assistant Director, United Nations Statistics Division

Session 1. What do we need to measure in terms of adult mortality and where are the gaps? (9:15 – 12:15am)

The session covers:

- The current status in measuring adult mortality through censuses and surveys, for monitoring adult mortality regularly and assessing the impact of the pandemic (or other types of disasters).
- Data needs, for countries that do not have a reliable civil registration and vital statistics system to produce statistics on adult mortality. These could include: data coverage in terms of the level of geographic areas, age groups and/or other key disaggregation dimensions; frequency of data (annually or other frequency) and reliability requirement (coefficient of variation?). The discussion will also cover the data needs for monitoring adult mortality both regularly and during a crisis such as COVID-19. Data needs will also be classified under a tier system, with the tier-1 as the core requirement and tier-2 as additional data needs.
- Following the discussions above, areas for data improvement will be highlighted to inform discussions in the remaining sessions of the meeting. Criteria for which support would be needed to use censuses and surveys for adult mortality estimates will also be covered.
Session 1a. Current status of adult mortality data collection (9:15-10:30am)

Moderator: Francesca Perucci, UNSD

- Presentations:
  - National presentations about current data sources and identify data needs and gaps (5 mins each, 35m in total)
    - Botswana
    - Ecuador
    - Fiji
    - Ghana
    - Lao PDR
    - Morocco
    - Sri Lanka
  - Availability of national data for COVID-19 excess mortality estimates (10m): William Msemburi, WHO

- Q&A (15m)

Coffee and tea break (10:30-10:45am)

Session 1b. Data needs and gaps (10:45am – 12:15pm)

Moderator: Stephane Helleringer, NYU Abu Dhabi

- Presentations:
  - The work of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (10m), Francesca Perucci, UNSD and Gero Carletto, World Bank; co-Chair of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys
  - A summary of questions and estimation methods to obtain mortality measures from censuses (10m): Bernardo Queiroz, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil
  - Overview of availability of adult mortality data and data needs, for regular monitoring of mortality trends and for measuring the impact of COVID-19 on mortality (10m). Haoyi Chen, UN Statistics Division and Stephane Helleringer, NYU Abu Dhabi and Chair, UNDESA-WHO Technical Advisory Group on COVID Mortality Assessment, Working Group 2

- Round-table discussion (50m):
  - Emelda Okiro, KEMRI/Wellcome Trust collaborative programme, Kenya
  - Jenny Garcia, Institut National d’Études Démographiques INED, France
  - Nandita Saikia, International Institute for Population Sciences, India
  - Ari Purbowati and Sri Wahyuni, Indonesia BPS

- Discussion (20m)

LUNCH AT NYUAD (12:15-1:45pm)

Session 2. Changes and innovations in better asking questions to capture adult mortality in censuses and surveys (1:45-3:30pm)
This session aims to give an overview of recent changes in data collecting on adult mortality and innovative approaches to better meet with data needs, such as including new questions in surveys and censuses.

**Moderator: Tebogo Laletsang, Botswana**

- **Presentations (5m each)**
  - Availability of adult mortality data from population censuses. Meryem Demirci, UNSD
  - Questions used in surveys to estimate adult mortality, Trevor Croft, Demographic and Health Survey
  - Country presentations (experiences, quality of data and lessons learnt)
    - Collecting mortality in the 2019 Viet Nam population and housing census, Ha Nham Thi Thu, VietNam Statistics Office
    - Experiences and quality of mortality data from population censuses/surveys in Indonesia: Ari Purbowati/Sri Wahyuni, BPS Indonesia
    - Asking causes of death in censuses and surveys: Galande Johnstone/Stephen Baryahirwa, Uganda Bureau of Statistics
    - Asking about death registration during census: experiences and lessons learned from the 2013 Senegal Census. Atoumane Fall and Lala Travare, National Agency of Statistics and Demography of Senegal
  - Extending the reference period for data collection for COVID impact assessment: Evidence from India. Nandita Saikia, International Institute for Population Sciences, India
  - Experiences in asking the place of death. Vesper Chisumpa, University of Zambia
- **Q&A (30m)**

**Coffee and tea break (3:30-3:45pm)**

**Session 3. Collecting adult mortality data that are more inclusive (3:45pm-4:45pm)**

The session discusses ways to improve the inclusiveness of adult mortality data collection, focusing on measuring old-age mortality (60 and older) and those living in institutions and difficult to survey areas that are usually poorly covered by surveys and censuses.

**Moderator: Meryem Demirci, UNSD**

- **Presentations (8m each)**
  - Mortality of indigenous populations in Latin America. Bernardo Queiroz, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil
  - Social disadvantage and life expectancy in India, Aashish Gupta, Harvard University
  - Adult mortality: Measuring rural-urban gaps, Ashira Menashe-Oren, Université Catholique de Louvain
  - Implementing inequality assessments of death registration in CRVS systems. Petra Nahmias, UN ESCAP Statistics Division
- **Q&A (20m)**

**Wednesday, 24 August 2022**
Session 4. Innovations in measuring adult mortality through surveys – sampling strategies (8:45am – 10:15am)

The session covers various sampling strategies to collect data on rare events; and sample registration systems in countries without complete death registration system.

Moderator: Cheryl Sawyer, UN Population Division

- Presentations (10-15m each)
  - Application of principles of network sampling to estimating prevalence of modern-day slavery/mortality, Rajesh Srinivasan, Gallup Poll
  - Innovative sampling strategies for difficult to survey population, Haoyi Chen, UNSD
  - Sample registration systems:
    - Healthy Sierra Leone (HEAL+SL) national mortality study, Prabhat Jha, University of Toronto
    - Sample registration system with Verbal Autopsy (SAVVY). Vesper Chisumpa, University of Zambia
- Q&A (20m)

Coffee and tea break (10:15-10:30am)

Session 5. Conducting high-frequency mortality surveys (10:30am – 12:15pm)

The session reviews recent progress in the conduct of mobile phone surveys on mortality measurement, discusses remaining challenges in measurement from mobile phone surveys, and identifies possible opportunities for further improvement.

Moderator: Meryem Demirci, UNSD

- Presentations (8-10 mins each):
  - Mobile phone surveys to measure mortality – the experience of MSF and Epicentre from the field. Manuel Albela Miranda, Médecins Sans Frontières
  - Rapid mortality mobile phone surveys (RaMMPS) during COVID-19: Insights from Burkina Faso. Bruno Lamkoande, Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso
  - Using phone surveys to assess mortality: evidence from Bihar, India. Aashish Gupta, Harvard University
  - Excess and cause-specific mortality from SARS-COV-2 in India. Prabhat Jha, university of Toronto (moved from session 7)
- Q&A

LUNCH AT NYUAD (12:15-1:45pm)

Session 6. Group discussion: Improving census and survey design to better measure adult mortality (1:45-4:45pm, with coffee break 3:30-3:45pm)

Moderator: Haoyi Chen, UNSD

- Group work: Participants are split into small groups of 7-8 mixing NSOs, academics and UN/other organization, preferably by geographic region to allow identifying specific needs
- **Expected output:** a ranked list of design elements to be included in upcoming surveys/censuses or to be tested in additional studies. Each group reports to plenary.

-Hospitality dinner from NYU Abu Dhabi, 7pm

Thursday, 25 August 2022

**Session 7. Integrating survey and census data on adult mortality with other data sources (8:45am-10:30am)**

The session focuses on methods that integrate survey with other data sources such as censuses, administrative data (CRVS), and nontraditional data such as geospatial information. An overview of using follow-up surveys for verbal autopsy will also be covered in the session, although not in great details as there is a WHO group already leading the work on this topic.

Moderator: Meli Leslie Ligalaulau Nadakuca, Fiji

- Presentations:
  - *Estimating mortality from census data: a record linkage study in the Nouna Demographic and Health Surveillance System in Burkina Faso*. Bruno Lankoande, Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso
  - *Integrating CRVS, surveys and census data on adult mortality*. Cheryl Sawyer, UN Population Division
  - *Measuring mortality in HIV-focused surveys: experiences from the PHIA Project*. Jessica Justman, ICAP Global Health
  - *Integrated disease serosurveys*. Samantha Dolan, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
  - *Integration of census, survey and geospatial data*. Atoumane Fall, Senegal National Agency of Statistics and Demography

- Q&A

*Coffee and tea break (10:30-10:45am)*

**Session 8. Integrating the proposed innovative methods into national statistical systems (10:45am – 12:15pm)**

The session discusses the overall resource constraints in national statistical offices; and how that would impact on introducing new data collection in the existing system. Discussions will also cover how the proposed innovative methods can be integrated into national statistical systems, serving different levels of data demand, under different national statistical/survey system settings and with different statistical capacities; and further work needed including new guidance and resources required for adopting the new methods. The session will also discuss broader consultations of the proposed recommendations with national statistical offices, and through the UN Statistical Commission in 2023. Lastly how different communities can work together to help further the agenda will also be discussed.
Moderator: Francesca Perucci, UNSD

- Round table discussion (reacting to a set of questions to be provided before the meeting):
  o Abena Osei-akoto, Director, Surveys and Censuses, Ghana Statistical Service
  o Kevin McCormack, Head of Division, Sustainable Development Goals Indicators & Reports, Ireland Central Statistics Office
  o Stéphane Helleringer, Professor NYU Abu Dhabi; Chair, TAG COVID Mortality – Working Group 2
  o Samantha Dolan, Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
  o Apoorva Jadhav, Senior Technical Advisor for Demography and Health Policy, USAID
  o Eman Abdelkreem Aly, Technical officer, Information Systems for Health Division of Science, Information and Dissemination, WHO EMRO
  o International agency: Sofiya Yuveshanova (remote), Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF
- Q&A

LUNCH AT NYUAD (12:15-1:45pm)

Session 9. Conclusions and recommendations (1:45 – 3:00pm)

The session reviews the proposed recommendations and discusses next steps as proposed in the background document; and as further discussed during the meeting.

- Conclusion and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting, UNSD
- Discussion

Session 10. Closing (3:00-3:30pm)