Adult mortality: Measuring rural-urban gaps

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Why mortality can differ by rural/urban sector

Child mortality is higher in the rural sector
Orphanhood method
sub-Saharan Africa, DHS, 45q15

Sibling survival method
53 countries, DHS, \textit{45q}_{15}

Comparison of methods

Potential rural/urban bias in adult mortality estimates

Survival bias

→ mortality clustering likely in rural areas (association with SES)

Childlessness (no orphans)/ Only children (no siblings)

→ more common in urban areas

Recall bias/ inaccuracy in reports

→ likely higher in rural areas (association with literacy)

Mis-classification due to migration/ Assumption of same residence

At least 1/8 people migrate internally (across regions)

→ dominant rural to urban migration wrongly attributes deaths to rural sector
Sensitivity to migration

Orphanhood

Sibling survival histories


Accounting for internal migration in future surveys

Surveys could include a question on residence of those reported on:

- *same area?*
- *rural/urban?*
- *administrative region?*

Even with such a question, caution would still be needed:

*circumlar/ seasonal migration*
Accounting for older ages (60+)?
Parental Survival Histories

Respondents need report on:

**Vital status of biological parents**

- **Alive**
  - Ages of surviving parents
- **Deceased**
  - Age at parents’ death and time since the death

<2 minutes per respondent
And with a question on residence...
Rural-urban gaps in older ages!
Parental Survival Histories

Data-driven estimates of mortality over age 60 (rather than model life tables)

Rely less on mortality in younger age groups

higher rural mortality among children does not directly translate into higher urban adult mortality

Country specific, allowing for tailored interventions

Rural/urban sex-specific death rates for ages 60+
Thank you