Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on Mortality: rethinking sampling strategies

Tuesday, 5 July 2022 | 9:00-10:30 am EDT

Concept Note

Population censuses and household surveys have been the main sources of data for estimating mortality among both children and adults in countries with incomplete or unreliable systems for civil registration and vital statistics. While there is a long history of directly and indirectly estimating adult mortality level based on relevant questions included in censuses and surveys (e.g., household deaths, survival of parents and survival of sisters), such methods might not be suitable for measuring the impact of COVID-19 on population mortality levels.

Under the Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment (TAG) established jointly by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), a working group was created to provide recommendations to national statistical offices on innovative methods in collecting time-sensitive and reliable data through censuses and surveys for use in measuring the excess mortality associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations of the Working Group will help to fill data gaps in adult mortality estimation in the context of COVID-19 and to build a more agile and resilient statistical system in preparation for future crises (pandemics, natural disasters, etc.).

Members of the Working Group come from national statistical offices, academia and international organizations. As an initial step towards elaborating a set of recommendations, the Group prepared a stocktaking paper on existing practices in using censuses and surveys for measuring adult mortality and on recent initiatives in various countries that aimed to increase the availability of data on adult mortality. The stocktaking paper is presented as a background document to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-third session.

As the Working Group moves towards building recommendations for countries to improve data collection on adult mortality through censuses and surveys, the TAG-Working Group 2 is organizing a series of webinars focusing on innovative approaches, and centered around themes such as the use of high-frequency surveys, sampling strategies for mortality surveys and collecting information on causes of death. More information about past events is available here.

This is the second webinar of the series, focusing on sampling strategies to collect data on adult mortality, which is a rare and potentially sensitive event. It will cover issues such as the selection of respondents, the sample sizes required to detect recent periods of excess mortality and/or differentials in mortality, as well as possibly innovative strategies to increase statistical power. The session will consist of a short presentation on current sampling strategies and their limitations (e.g., coverage, response rates, statistical power), followed by a panel discussion with survey experts and end users of survey data.

Chair/moderator:

Stéphane Helleringer, NYU – Abu Dhabi, Chair, WG2 of the UN/WHO Technical advisory group on COVID-19 mortality.

Presentation:

- An overview of sampling strategies, Sinan Turkyilmaz, Professor, Institute of Population Studies, Hacettepe University

Panel discussion – challenges in sampling adult mortality or rare event and possible solutions?

- James Muwanga, Head of Surveys, Uganda Bureau of Statistics
- Jeffrey Eaton, Senior Lecturer in HIV Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Imperial College London
- Etienne Gigoux, médecins sans frontières
- Haoyi Chen, Coordinator, Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

Q&A

Register here to join the event!