



**An
Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh**

Central
Statistics
Office

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment

Dr. Kevin McCormack

Head of SDG Division – Central Statistics Office

Member of the UN's Inter Agency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDG)

Co-chair of the IAEG-SDG's Working Group on Geospatial Information (WGGI)

Co-chair of the WHO/UN Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment

TAG - Composition

- TAG shall have up to 40 members, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to the measurement of excess mortality.
- In the selection of the TAG members, consideration shall be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.
- Members of the TAG, including the Chairperson(s), were selected jointly by WHO and UN DESA, and appointed by WHO under the WHO Regulations for Study and Scientific Groups, Collaborating Institutions and Other Mechanisms of Collaboration, in consultation and coordination with UN DESA, following an open call for experts.
- <https://www.who.int/data/technical-advisory-group/covid-19--mortality-assessment/membership>



Terms of Reference - TAG

- To critically appraise current approaches to measuring excess mortality attributable to COVID-19 defined as deaths directly attributable to COVID-19 as well as those due to the indirect impacts of the pandemic on mortality from other causes of death
- Develop a comprehensive, pragmatic and policy relevant set of measurement methods to track excess deaths due to COVID-19 in countries, including the certification of COVID-19 deaths, all in the context of the implementation of the UN Legal Identity Agenda, a holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management.
- Review and offer guidance on methods for estimating the global death toll from COVID-19.



TAG – Targeted Outcomes

Inform the estimation of total mortality for 2020 and 2021 in future editions of World Population Prospects and World Health Statistics, through:

- Reliable and policy relevant estimates of excess deaths at the national, regional and global levels
- Better understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on total mortality, including effects on the cause of death structure in populations and the implications for public health policymaking of the interaction of COVID-19 infection with major causes of morbidity and mortality.
- Improved coordination in the production of mortality and cause of death statistics within and across national and international statistical systems, consistent with the increased emphasis on strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems promoted by WHO, UN DESA and partners



TAG – Working Groups

The Technical Advisory Group established five Working Groups (WG) to ensure that it took a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to delivering on its responsibilities.

- **Working group 1** - global mortality estimates.
- **Working group 2** - the use of household surveys and population censuses to fill data gaps.
- **Working group 3** - death registration and reporting systems: lessons learned from the pandemic.
- **Working group 4** - summary metrics of the toll in lives lost.
- **Working group 5** - inequality in COVID-19 mortality between and within countries



TAG – Working Group 3

Working group 3, on death registration and reporting systems: lessons learned from the pandemic, focuses on the registration of deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Specifically, in several countries and areas, the pandemic has had an adverse impact on the functioning of the civil registration system, with respect to the registration of deaths and issuance of death certificates, owing possibly to pre-existing deficiencies in registration systems or to the breakdown of such systems during the pandemic.
- Those deficiencies have resulted in data gaps that constrain the timely and reliable assessment of the number of deaths and the level and patterns of mortality.
- Simultaneously, national health systems, facing a once-in-a-century pandemic and stretched to their limits, have had difficulties in maintaining regular functions, such as the reporting of deaths and causes of death to the civil registration system, which ultimately resulted in discrepancies among sources concerning the number of deaths caused by COVID-19.



TAG – Working Group 3

Working group 3, on death registration and reporting systems: lessons learned from the pandemic, focuses on the registration of deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Specifically, in several countries and areas, the pandemic has had an adverse impact on the functioning of the civil registration system, with respect to the registration of deaths and issuance of death certificates, owing possibly to pre-existing deficiencies in registration systems or to the breakdown of such systems during the pandemic.
- Those deficiencies have resulted in data gaps that constrain the timely and reliable assessment of the number of deaths and the level and patterns of mortality.
- Simultaneously, national health systems, facing a once -in-a-century pandemic and stretched to their limits, have had difficulties in maintaining regular functions, such as the reporting of deaths and causes of death to the civil registration system, which ultimately resulted in discrepancies among sources concerning the number of deaths caused by COVID-19. In discussing the relevant national experiences, the working group highlighted several points that should be taken into consideration by national authorities:



TAG – Working Group 3 -Considerations

In discussing the relevant national experiences, the working group highlighted several points that should be taken into consideration by national authorities:

- i. Maintain timeliness. The more time that elapses between the occurrence of vital events, especially unregistered deaths, the more difficult it becomes to fill the gaps and rectify the non-registration;
- ii. Introduce interim solutions. Several experiences involving the collection and compilation of data directly from cemeteries and funeral homes during the pandemic yielded valuable information;
- iii. Reiterate the need to fully implement the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda as the fully developed model of interoperability of various components;
- iv. Define a minimum standard in times of pandemic and simplify the registration procedures;
- v. Learn from national experiences. Countries adapted to the circumstances, and the practices used provided valuable documentation that should be followed up and synthesized;
- vi. Digitize the civil registration system. Enabling online registration of vital events proved to be effective in a time of pandemic.





An
Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh

Central
Statistics
Office

Thank You