

# Monitoring the Pacific non-communicable disease (NCD) crisis

*CRVS data on mortality and cause of death is essential for improving health in the Pacific Islands.*

## Mortality data as a measure for NCDs

- Mortality is an important measure of the impact of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on a population. It is used to understand:
  - ▶ how many people with NCDs are dying from those NCDs, and
  - ▶ the overall burden of disease (from death and disability combined) from NCDs.
- In particular, we are interested in premature adult mortality from NCDs.
- Pacific Island Countries and Territories have limited information from which to measure both the impact of the NCD epidemic and the effectiveness of public health interventions. Currently most measures are derived from models. Measures such as the probability of dying from selected diseases require high quality information and may be difficult for countries to generate.
- **Routine vital registration based on certification of cause of death is the best source of information for measuring mortality indicators. It provides population data on a continuous basis, and is the best means of obtaining data on causes of death.**

*In 2011, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in Auckland declared the 'Pacific is in an NCD Crisis'.*

The region has some of the highest rates of obesity and diabetes in the world, and in many countries, premature mortality from NCDs is having a significant impact on life expectancy.

All Pacific Island Countries have signed up to the WHO target of reducing mortality between the ages of 30-69 (inclusive) from the four major NCDs – Cardiovascular disease, Diabetes, Chronic Lung Conditions, and cancer – by 25%

## Measures of NCD mortality

### Direct measures of NCD mortality

- Probability of dying from NCDs
- Age-specific proportional mortality from NCDs
- Age-specific mortality rate from NCDs
- Age-standardised mortality from NCDs

### Proxy Indicators for NCD mortality

- Adult mortality (45q15)
- Life expectancy at 40 (LE 40)
- Proportional mortality (by underlying cause of death) / against trends in Life Expectancy (E0).

## Improving CRVS for NCD monitoring

There has been significant work over the last several years to assist countries to improve their mortality and cause of death reporting and analysis capacity through the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan with support from the Brisbane Accord Group. Work directly related to better NCD mortality monitoring includes:

- Improved coverage of death registration and reporting
- Certification and cause of death training
- Coding support and regional solutions for sustainability
- Data analysis and report writing capacity building
- Quality assurance and review
- Data dissemination and accessibility.

The continuation of the NCD epidemic in the Pacific Islands, along with the likely inclusion of NCDs in the Post 2015 development goals, will further increase the demand for data.

Countries will need stable baselines, based on empirical data, to adequately plan and evaluate their response to the NCD epidemic.

SPC & UNSW, with support of the broader BAG group, are collating available mortality data into a regional baseline report for release in early 2015.



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