

Actualités du Pharo 2022 – Session 4

Measuring levels and trends of mortality in the general population: how to overcome the lack of a functioning civil registry?

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While significant progress in health has been made since the 1950s in the South, the same has not been true for the systematic registration of deaths and their causes in low- and middle-income countries. Outside Latin America, vital statistics are still very incomplete or non-existent, and there are major challenges in measuring the available health indicators. We will present the main alternative data sources for estimating mortality in the general population (censuses, sample surveys, local population monitoring), the associated estimates, their interest and their limitations. Today, while child mortality is relatively well estimated, the same is not true for adult mortality and mortality by cause. With the health transition and the ageing of the population, the need for knowledge has changed. This situation, which has been denounced for a long time, does not allow for a detailed study of adult health problems, nor for a rapid assessment of the impact of a health crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. We will conclude this presentation with a discussion of current initiatives to remedy this situation and the ethical and other challenges they pose.