Table of contents

Introduction

Part 1. Ten highlights in health statistics

- Progress towards MDG 5: maternal mortality
- Coverage gap and inequity in maternal, neonatal and child health interventions
- HIV/AIDS estimates are revised downwards
- Progress in the fight against malaria
- Reducing deaths from tobacco
- Breast cancer: mortality and screening
- Divergent trends in mortality slow down improvements in life expectancy in Europe
- Monitoring disease outbreaks: meningococcal meningitis in Africa
- Future trends in global mortality: major shifts in cause of death patterns
- Reducing impoverishment caused by catastrophic health care spending

Part 2. Global health indicators

Mortality and burden of disease

Mortality

- Life expectancy at birth (years)
- Healthy life expectancy (HALE) at birth (years)
- Neonatal mortality rate per 1000 live births
- Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births
- Under-5 mortality rate (probability of dying by age 5 per 1000 live births)
- Adult mortality rate (probability of dying between 15 to 60 years per 1000 population)
- Maternal mortality ratio per 100 000 live births
- Cause-specific mortality rate per 100 000 population
- Age-standardized mortality rate by cause per 100 000 population
- Distribution of years of life lost by broader causes (%)
- Distribution of causes of death among children aged <5 years (%)

Morbidity

- Prevalence of tuberculosis per 100 000 population
- Incidence of tuberculosis per 100 000 population per year
- Prevalence of HIV among adults aged ≥15 years per 100 000 population
- Number of confirmed cases of poliomyelitis
Health service coverage

- Antenatal care coverage (%)
- Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)
- Births by caesarean section (%)
- Immunization coverage among one-year-olds (%)
- Children aged 6–59 months who received vitamin A supplementation (%)
- Children aged <5 years sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets (%)
- Children aged <5 years who received any antimalarial treatment for fever (%)
- Children aged <5 years with ARI symptoms taken to facility (%)
- Children aged <5 years with diarrhoea receiving ORT (%)
- Contraceptive prevalence (%)
- Women who have had PAP smear (%)
- Women who have had mammography (%)
- Antiretroviral therapy coverage among HIV-infected pregnant women for PMTCT (%)
- Antiretroviral therapy coverage among people with advanced HIV infection (%)
- Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS (%)
- Tuberculosis treatment success under DOTS (%)

Risk factors

- Access to improved drinking-water sources (%)
- Access to improved sanitation (%)
- Population using solid fuels (%)
- Low birth weight newborns (%)
- Children aged <5 years stunted for age (%)
- Children aged <5 years underweight for age (%)
- Children aged <5 years overweight for age (%)
- Adults aged ≥15 years who are obese (%)
- Per capita recorded alcohol consumption (litres of pure alcohol) among adults (≥15 years)
- Prevalence of current tobacco use among adults (≥15 years) (%)
- Prevalence of current tobacco use among adolescents (13–15 years) (%)
- Prevalence of condom use by young people (15–24 years) at higher risk sex (%)

Health systems resources

Health workforce and hospital beds

- Number of physicians and density per 10 000 population
- Number of nursing and midwifery personnel and density per 10 000 population
- Number of dentistry personnel and density per 10 000 population
- Number of pharmaceutical personnel and density per 10 000 population
- Number of environment and public health workers and density per 10 000 population
- Number of community and traditional health workers and density per 10 000 population
- Number of laboratory health workers and density per 10 000 population
Number of other health service providers and density per 10,000 population
Ratio of nurses and midwives to physicians
Ratio of health management and support workers to health service providers
Hospital beds per 10,000 population

**Health expenditure**

Total expenditure on health as a percentage of gross domestic product
General government expenditure on health as a percentage of total expenditure on health
Private expenditure on health as a percentage of total expenditure on health
General government expenditure on health as a percentage of total government expenditure
External resources for health as a percentage of total expenditure on health
Social security expenditure on health as a percentage of general government expenditure on health
Out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of private expenditure on health
Private prepaid plans as a percentage of private expenditure on health
Per capita total expenditure on health at average exchange rate (US$)
Per capita total expenditure on health (PPP int. $)
Per capita government expenditure on health at average exchange rate (US$)
Per capita government expenditure on health (PPP int. $)

**Inequities in health care and health outcome**

Inequalities in skilled birth attendance
Inequalities in measles immunization coverage
Inequalities in under-5 mortality (probability of dying by age 5 per 1,000 live births)

**Demographic and socioeconomic statistics**

Population: total (’000s)
Population: median age (years)
Population: under 15 (%) 
Population: over 60 (%) 
Annual population growth rate (%)
Population in urban areas (%)
Registration coverage (%): births and deaths
Total fertility rate (per woman)
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 women)
Adult literacy rate (%)
Net primary school enrolment ratio (%)
Gross national income per capita (PPP int. $)
Population living on <$1 a day (%, PPP int. $)

**Footnotes and explanatory notes**
Introduction

*World Health Statistics 2008* presents the most recent available health statistics for WHO’s 193 Member States. This fourth edition includes 10 highlights of health statistics as well as data on an expanded set of over 70 key health indicators. The indicators were selected on the basis of their relevance to global health monitoring and considerations of data availability, accuracy and comparability among Member States.

This publication is in two parts. Part 1 presents 10 topical highlights based on recent publications or results of new analyses of existing data. Part 2 presents key health indicators in the form of six tables for all WHO Member States: mortality and burden of disease; health service coverage; risk factors; health systems resources; inequities in health care coverage and health outcome; and basic demographic and socioeconomic statistics. This edition includes, for the first time, data on trends where the statistics are available and of acceptable quality.

*World Health Statistics 2008* has been collated from publications and databases produced by WHO’s technical programmes and regional offices, as well as from publicly accessible databases. The data on inequalities in health care coverage and health outcome are primarily derived from analyses of household surveys and are available only for a limited number of countries. It is anticipated that the number of countries reporting disaggregated data will increase during the next few years. Nevertheless, even in their current limited form, the data will be useful for the global public health community.

In estimating country indicators based on different data sources, regional offices and technical programmes apply peer-reviewed methods and consult with experts around the world. To maximize the accessibility, accuracy, comparability and transparency of health statistics, the technical programmes and regional offices also work closely with Member States through an interactive process of data collection, compilation, quality assessment and estimation. All statistics presented in this publication have, unless otherwise stated, been cleared as WHO’s official figures in consultation with Member States. Nevertheless, the estimates published here should still be regarded as best estimates made by WHO rather than the official statistics of Member States, which may use alternative rigorous procedures.

More detailed information, including a compendium of statistics and an online version of this publication, is available from WHO’s Statistical Information System (http://www.who.int/statistics). This will be regularly updated as new data become available. The web site, which has now been revised with new features and a new look to better meet users’ needs, will allow data to be displayed in different formats such as tables, maps and graphs. It also provides, wherever possible, metadata describing the sources of data, estimation methods and quality assessment. Careful scrutiny and use of the statistics presented in this report should contribute to progressively better measurement of relevant indicators of population health and health systems.