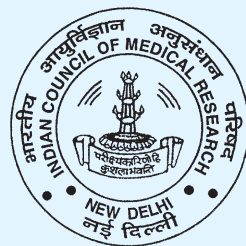


# **Study on Causes of Death by Verbal Autopsy in India**



**Indian Council of Medical Research  
Ansari Nagar, New Delhi**

**2009**

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## FOREWORD

Information on causes of death has been of paramount importance both for the policy makers and researchers alike. Such information has however, been sketchy in the developing world including India. The existing reporting system of causes of death in India needed improvement in terms coverage of death reporting, minimal use of residual categories such as unclassifiable or ill-defined conditions, systematic screening of causes of death reports, and timeliness of publication of reports. In this respect, Indian Council of Medical Research undertook a study on causes of death by verbal autopsy through its Division of Non-communicable Diseases. It constituted a task force with renowned experts of the field in the country to provide guidance for the methodology and its evolution. The survey was conducted in some selected states namely Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The present report is the outcome of the above effort and I would like to thank all those who were involved in the study particularly the members of the task force and my predecessor Dr. N.K. Ganguly for his inspiration and encouragements to the team.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Bela Shah, Head, Division of Non-Communicable Diseases for her leadership to the study, and Dr. Arvind Pandey, National Institute of Medical Statistics, New Delhi for his willing support towards planning, training and implementation of the project and in preparation of the consolidated report of all five States together. I hope that the data provided will be of great help to policy makers and programme managers to strengthen data collection process and towards planning of programme activities, including intervention.

(Dr. V.M. Katoch)



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## PREFACE

Reliable data on causes of death is essential for meaningful planning of health care and allocation of resources. In response to such pressing need, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) initiated a cause of death study by verbal autopsy as a task force project through its Division of Non-communicable Diseases. The expert group under the task force discussed possible ways to collect information on causes of deaths and opined to adopt verbal autopsy method for the purpose. It was also suggested that for verbal autopsies to be comparable, they need to be based on similar interviews and the cause of death needs to be arrived at in the same way in all cases. Accordingly, a study was planned to assess probable causes of deaths in male and female population in selected states, namely, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, representing different regions of India. The present report describes the process including methodology, collection of data and major findings of the study. Dr. Megha Chandra Singh, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, extended his unstinted support as a core medical scientist throughout the study, and helped its smooth implementation. We would like to thank him along with all the members of the task force namely, Dr. Padam Singh, Addl. DG, ICMR; Dr. Rajesh Kumar, PGIMER, Chandigarh; Dr. H.P.S. Sachdev, Sitaram Bhartiya Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi; Dr. J.K. Banthia, Registrar General India, New Delhi; Dr. Arvind Pandey, NIMS, New Delhi; Dr. J. Mahanta, RMRC, Dibrugarh; Dr. M.D. Gupte, NIE, Chennai; Dr. C.P. Puri, NIRRH, Mumbai. We also express our gratitude to Dr. N. K. Ganguly, the then DG, ICMR, for his encouragements to take up the study. Dr. Geeta Menon, Division of NCD, ICMR, New Delhi facilitated the overall coordination of the study.

Our sincere thanks are due to Dr. B.N. Bhattacharya, ISI, Kolkata; Dr. D. Sahu and Mr. B.K. Gulati, NIMS, New Delhi for their willing cooperation and hard work they put in to prepare the consolidated report of all five States together. Our gratitude is also due to all the people who extended their cooperation and time for participation in the study. It is hoped that the data provided will be of help to both researchers and the policy makers and will improve and strengthen the cause of death reporting system in India.

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# CONTENTS

	Page No
Foreword	
Preface	
<b>1. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 The Verbal Autopsy	2
2.1.1 Study Instruments	2
2.1.2 Validation of Study Instruments	5
2.2 Survey Design and Implementation of the Main Survey	6
2.3 Data Collection	7
2.3.1 Sample Weight and Standardization	8
2.4 Data Quality Assessment and Adjustment	10
<b>3. Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of Death</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4. Causes of Death</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Causes of Infant Deaths	16
4.2 Causes of Child Deaths	17
4.2.1 Child deaths 1-4 years	17
4.2.2 Child deaths in 5-14 years	18
4.3 Causes of Adult Deaths	20
4.4 Causes of Elderly (Age 60+) Deaths	21
4.5 Stillbirths and Maternal Deaths	23
4.5.1 Causes of Still Births	23
4.5.2 Causes of Maternal Deaths	23
<b>5. Leading Causes of Death</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1 Leading Causes of Infant Deaths	26
5.2 Leading Causes of Child Deaths	27
5.3 Leading Causes of Adult Deaths	28
<b>6. Classification of Deaths due to Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases</b>	<b>30</b>
6.1 Cause Group by Sex and Place of Residence	30

6.2	Age-Sex Distribution of Deaths by Cause Group	32
6.3	Cause Group by Socio-economic Indicators	34
7.	<b>Conclusion</b>	37
8.	<b>References</b>	38
9.	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Appendix A : Tables (1-17)</b>	41
	<b>Appendix B:</b> Guidelines for Determining Cause of Death	95
	<b>Appendix C:</b> Questionnaires	115

## List of Tables

	Page No.	
Table 1	Number of deaths by age at death, sex and place of residence in five selected states, 2003	41
Table 2	Percent distribution of estimated deaths by age at death according to sex, and ratio of male to female deaths from COD and SRS in five selected states, 2003	42
Table 3	Number of infant deaths by age and place of residence; estimated percent of infant deaths by age, and percent of infant deaths to total deaths from COD and SRS in five selected states, 2003	43
Table 4	Number of still births and early neonatal deaths by sex according to place of residence in five selected states, 2003	44
Table 5a	Percent distribution of estimated infant deaths by sex, according to selected socio-economic characteristics in five selected states, 2003	44
Table 5b	Percent distribution of estimated child deaths age 1-4 years by sex according to selected socio-economic characteristics in five selected states, 2003	45
Table 5c	Percent distribution of estimated child deaths age 5-14 years by sex according to selected socio-economic characteristics in five selected states, 2003	45
Table 5d	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of persons age 15-59 years by sex according to selected socio-economic characteristics in five selected states, 2003	46
Table 5e	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of persons age 60 years and above by sex according to selected socio-economic characteristics in five selected states, 2003	47
Table 6a	Percentage distribution of estimated Infant deaths by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	48
Table 6b	Percentage distribution of estimated child deaths age 1-4 years by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	48
Table 6c	Percentage distribution of estimated children deaths age 5-14 years by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	49

Table 6d	Percentage distribution of estimated deaths of persons age 15-59 years by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	50
Table 6e	Percentage distribution of estimated deaths of persons age 60 years and above by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	51
Table 6f	Percentage distribution of estimated deaths by place of death according to selected background characteristics in five selected states, 2003	52
Table 7	Distribution of still births by selected socio-economic characteristics, 2003	53
Table 8a	Estimated percent distribution of male deaths by major groups of causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	54
Table 8b	Estimated percent distribution of female deaths by major groups of causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	55
Table 8c	Estimated percent distribution of persons deaths by major groups of causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	56
Table 9a	Percent distribution of estimated male and female infant deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	57
Table 9b	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of male and female children age 1-4 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	58
Table 9c	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of male and female children age 5-14 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	59
Table 9d	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 15-44 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	60
Table 9e	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 45-59 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	61
Table 9f	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 60 years and above by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	62

Table 10a	Percent distribution of estimated male and female infant deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	63
Table 10b	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of male and female children age 1-4 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	64
Table 10c	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 5-14 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	65
Table 10d	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 15-44 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	66
Table 10e	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 45-59 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	67
Table 10f	Percent distribution of estimated male and female deaths age 60 years and above by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in rural areas of five selected states, 2003	68
Table 11	Percent distribution of still births by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	69
Table 12	Percent distribution of maternal deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	70
Table 13a	Leading causes of infant deaths according to sex in five selected states, 2003	71
Table 13b	Leading causes of child death age 1-4 years according to sex in five selected states, 2003	74
Table 13c	Leading causes of death of children 5-14 years according to sex in five selected states, 2003	77
Table 13d	Leading causes of adult death age 15-44 years according to sex in five selected states, 2003	80
Table 13e	Leading causes of adult death age 45-59 years according to sex in five selected states, 2003	83

Table 13f	Leading causes of old age death age 60 years and above according to sex in five selected states, 2003	86
Table 14	Distribution of deaths by group of cause (Communicable, non-communicable, injury and other) according to residence and sex in five selected states, 2003	89
Table 15	Percent distribution of deaths for cause group (Communicable, non-communicable, injury and other) by age group in five selected states, 2003	91
Table 16	Percent distribution of deaths for cause group (Communicable, non-communicable, injury and other) by facility index in five selected states, 2003	93
Table 17	Percent distribution of deaths for cause group (Communicable, non-communicable, injury and other) by education in five selected states, 2003	94

## List of Figures

	Page No.	
Figure 1	Percentage distribution of estimated deaths by place of death in five states, 2003	12
Figure 2a	Estimated percent distribution of person deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	15
Figure 2b	Estimated percent distribution of male deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	15
Figure 2c	Estimated percent distribution of female deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	15
Figure 3a	Percent distribution of estimated male infant deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	16
Figure 3b	Percent distribution of estimated female infant deaths by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	17
Figure 4a	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of male children age 1-4 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	18
Figure 4b	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of female children age 1-4 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	18
Figure 5a	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of male children age 5-14 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	19
Figure 5b	Percent distribution of estimated deaths of female children age 5-14 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	19
Figure 6a	Percent distribution of estimated male deaths age 15-44 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	20
Figure 6b	Percent distribution of estimated female deaths age 15-44 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	20

Figure 7a	Percent distribution of estimated male deaths age 45-59 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	21
Figure 7b	Percent distribution of estimated female deaths age 45-59 years by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	21
Figure 8a	Percent distribution of estimated male deaths age 60 years and above by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	22
Figure 8b	Percent distribution of estimated female deaths age 60 years and above by causes of death (ICD10 classification) in five selected states, 2003	22
Figure 9a	Percentage distribution of deaths by group of cause for Male in five selected states, 2003	31
Figure 9b	Percentage distribution of deaths by group of cause for Female in five selected states, 2003	31
Figure 10a	Estimated percent of male death due to communicable, non-communicable & injuries according to age group in five selected states, 2003	32
Figure 10b	Estimated percent of female death due to communicable, non-communicable & injuries according to age group in five selected states, 2003	33
Figure 11	Estimated percent of death of persons due to communicable, non-communicable & injuries according to facility index in five selected states, 2003	35
Figure 12	Estimated percent of death of persons age 15+ due to communicable, non-communicable & injuries according to education level in five selected states, 2003	36