World Mortality Report 2011

This report describes levels and trends in life expectancy at birth, child mortality and mortality in adulthood for the world’s major regions and development groups. Trends are estimated for 1950 to the present and projected to 2100. Special sections of the report describe mortality due to HIV/AIDS, the contributions of mortality decline in different age groups to overall changes in life expectancy, and the importance of period versus cohort distinctions in assessments of the average length of life. Among the findings highlighted in the report are that global life expectancy increased from 48 years in 1950-1955 to 69 years in 2010-2015, mainly due to decreases in child mortality over that period. Future gains are projected to come primarily from reductions in adult mortality. The report also describes the impact of AIDS on longevity: 15 African countries had life expectancy reductions of 5 or more years due to AIDS.

Population Ageing and the Non-communicable Diseases

This fact sheet explains the implications of current and future trends in population ageing for the burden of mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Analyses demonstrate that with no changes in age-specific NCD death rates, the annual number of NCD deaths in Africa would grow from 3.7 million in 2008 to close to 14 million in 2050. About 45 per cent of that increase would be due to population growth, while the remaining 55 per cent would be due to the ageing of the population. In Eastern Europe, where exceptionally low fertility is projected to lead to declining population size, population ageing would account for all of the 54 per cent increase in NCD deaths by 2050.

Towards Global Equity in Longevity

This fact sheet summarizes the results of analyses from the Changing Levels and Trends in Mortality (2012) report. It illustrates how as life expectancy increases, the communicable diseases account for a declining share of the gaps in longevity, while the share that is due to non-communicable diseases grows. It identifies the causes of death that need to be addressed – such as HIV/AIDS, pneumonia, diarrhoeal diseases, and NCDs – in order for developing regions to achieve the longevity presently observed among the world’s longest-lived populations.
Sex Differentials in Childhood Mortality
This report is the first global review of sex differentials in infant and child mortality produced by the United Nations in over a decade. The results of this study highlight the importance of estimating childhood mortality rates separately by sex. In many areas of the world, advances in survival appear to be accruing relatively equitably to girls and boys. In many of the less developed regions, girls’ past disadvantage in mortality at ages 1-4 appears to be easing. However, this is not universally the case. In China and India there is evidence that girls are not benefiting as much as boys from the national trends of mortality decline. On the other hand, several countries had findings suggesting a greater than expected degree of male disadvantage in survival during infancy.

Changing Levels and Trends in Mortality: the role of patterns of death by cause
This report aims to describe global and regional levels and trends in life expectancy at birth and assess the contribution of various major causes of death to differences in survival between populations. The report provides a detailed analysis of the sex- and age-patterns of mortality that produce regional trends and differences in the levels of life expectancy at birth. In addition, the report contains a decomposition analysis to pinpoint the specific causes of death that are responsible for deficits in survival among populations of selected regions compared to the longest-lived populations in the world. It highlights how the “double burden” of communicable and non-communicable disease mortality is responsible for the survival disadvantages experienced by many of the populations of the world’s less developed regions.

Expert Group Meeting (Report)
The Population Division organized an expert group meeting on the subject “Mortality crises: conflicts, violence, famine, natural disasters and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases” in New York on 14 and 15 November 2011. The main objective of the meeting was to review the state of the art with regard to evidence and understanding of crises that cause significant rises in mortality levels and to initiate a discussion on how current knowledge on this issue can inform the preparation of the United Nations mortality estimates. The expert group meeting also considered trends in mortality from non-communicable diseases with the objective of informing assumptions about future mortality trends. The report of the meeting provides an overview of the different presentations and the main findings.

Also available in other formats:
World Mortality 2011 (wall chart) (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.11.XIII.9)