

Introduction

World Health Statistics 2009 contains WHO's annual compilation of data from its 193 Member States, and includes a summary of progress towards the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets. This edition also contains a new section on reported cases of selected infectious diseases.

The contents of this book have been collated from publications and databases produced and maintained by WHO's technical programmes and regional offices. Indicators have been included on the basis of their relevance to global health, the availability and quality of the data and the reliability and comparability of estimates. This set of indicators provides a comprehensive summary of the current status of national health and health systems, including: mortality and burden of disease, causes of death, reported infectious diseases, health service coverage, risk factors, health systems resources, health expenditures, inequities and demographic and socioeconomic statistics.

The section on inequities presents statistics on the distribution of selected health outcomes and interventions within countries, disaggregated by sex, age, urban and rural settings, wealth and educational level. Such statistics are primarily derived from analyses of household surveys and are currently available only for a limited number of countries.

All statistics have been cleared, in consultation with Member States, as WHO's official figures, unless otherwise stated. The estimates published here should, however, still be regarded as best estimates made by WHO rather than the official view of Member States.

As the demand for timely, reliable and comparable health statistics continues to increase, so does the necessity to communicate clearly the quality and limitations of these statistics. An online version of this publication and metadata describing the sources, estimation methods and the quality of estimates is available at <http://www.who.int/statistics>. The online version will be regularly updated as new data become available during 2009.

WHO presents *World Health Statistics 2009* as an integral part of its ongoing effort to inform better measures of population health and national health systems.