

# Countries have a long way to go to reduce the burden of non-communicable disease

September 25 2015

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A new method published in the *Lancet* of monitoring countries' performance in reducing the burden of NCD (non-communicable disease), shows that many countries have a long way to go to reduce suffering and deaths from NCD.

Scores to measure performance across four areas: governance, risk factors, surveillance/research, and health system response were gathered from 23 mostly low- and middle- income countries (including China and India). Of these 92 scores, 56 were below 50% and 23 were below 25%. Countries fare poorly in reducing the risk factors (tobacco use, poor diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol) that feed the pipeline of NCD. Most are sub-par in researching local responses to NCD and measuring levels of disease and risk factors.

- Governance - establishing teams, plans, and policies to reduce NCD burden—is key to addressing the rising challenge of NCD. The Scorecard shows improvement in most countries.
- Generally, the poorer the country the weaker the response to NCD, although there is considerable variation; in some lower income countries, notably India, Kenya and Bangladesh, there are steps toward addressing the [risk factors](#).

"Although all countries have made improvement in their performance to prevent and control NCD, most lower- and middle- income countries have lots of work to do to reduce suffering and deaths from NCD" said Ana Victoria Roman, PhD from the Institute of Nutrition of Central

America and Panama (INCAP), who led the project. "With the addition of this new tool, countries will now have the ability to see how various sectors in their country are addressing NCDs and to learn from other nations how to tackle NCD."

The NCD Scorecard was developed from the United Nations political declaration after the High Level meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in 2011, following extensive consultation with global experts by a team from GRAND South—a network of 11 centres conducting research, building capacity, and advising on policy in relation to NCD in low- and middle- income countries. Scores were gathered in each country for 51 indicators from representatives of government, non- governmental organisations, academia, and the private sector. "It is encouraging that representatives across sectors broadly agree about the status of NCD intervention within their country, which is reflected in the scores," Ana Victoria Roman notes.

Full results for all indicators for each country are available on an open website, and reports on each country identify areas where countries are doing well, and priorities for action.

"Accountability is an important driver for political progress. Independent monitoring initiatives by academia and civil society, such as this NCD Scorecard, will help ensure governments keep to their promises made at the UN on NCDs. The results reinforce that progress on NCDs at the national level has been patchy and uneven, a message that was central to the UN High-Level Review on NCDs last July", said Katie Dain, Executive Director of the NCD Alliance.

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detailed information available on each country. Many actions are needed to reduce the burden of NCD, and the Scorecard results will help countries identify the gaps to be filled," said Sir George Alleyne, former director of PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), and chair of the International Policy Advisory Group that advised the GRAND South team.

Provided by C3 Collaborating for Health

Citation: Countries have a long way to go to reduce the burden of non-communicable disease (2015, September 25) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-countries-burden-non-communicable-disease.html>

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