

The Reporting of HIV/AIDS Deaths in South Africa

Gomolemo Teo*

Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliqué (ENSEA), Côte D'Ivoire

Statistics South Africa, South Africa

Pretoria, South Africa goteo26@gmail.com

In South Africa HIV/AIDS is a prominent health concern. South Africa has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world hence HIV/AIDS is not the leading underlying cause of death. Various studies in South Africa have shown that doctors are hesitant to state HIV/AIDS as the cause of death on the death certificate because of the concerns of loss of funeral policies or life insurance benefits and maintenance of confidentiality. However under-registration and misclassification of deaths makes it difficult to estimate the actual number of deaths due to HIV/AIDS. As an emerging country South Africa looks at improving and having well-functioning health systems and this endeavour can only be achieved through good quality of vital statistics. This presentation will describe the causes potentially containing misclassified HIV/AIDS deaths, by identifying causes of death with significant percentage increases over the period and by identifying the causes displaying the characteristics HIV/AIDS patterns over time. HIV/AIDS mortality rates show a distinct age pattern with increasing mortality of young adults and young children. The commonly reported underlying causes of death display a trend seen in the HIV/AIDS death rates i.e. a rapid increase in young adult and young children ages suggesting that HIV/AIDS is often not reported as the underlying cause of death but rather an immediate cause of death or not mentioned at all.

Key words: Misclassification, causes of death, vital statistics, registration