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Ali H Mokdad

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington, USA

The global burden of disease: The status of 188 countries, 1990-2013

The Global Burden of Disease 2013 (GBD) is a systematic, scientific effort to quantify the comparative magnitude of health loss from all major diseases, injuries, and risk factors by age, sex, and population and over time for 188 countries from 1990 to present. It covers 306 diseases and injuries, 2,337 sequelae, and 76 risk factors. In addition to the traditional health metrics such as disease and injury prevalence and incidence, death numbers and rates, GBD provides Years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs) – count the number of years lost at each age compared to a reference life expectancy of 86 at birth, Years lived with disability (YLDs) – for a cause in an age-sex group equals the prevalence of the condition times the disability weight for that condition and Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) – are the sum of YLLs and YLDs and are an overall metric of the burden of disease. Global life expectancy for both sexes increased from 65.3 years in 1990, to 71.5 years in 2013, while the number of deaths increased from 47.5 million to 54.9 million over the same interval for women aged 25–39 years and older than 75 years and for men aged 20–49 years and 65 years and older. YLDs for both sexes increased from 537.6 million in 1990 to 764.8 million in 2013, while the age-standardized rate decreased from 114.87 to 110.31 per 1,000 people between 1990 and 2013. At the global level, the most important contributors to the overall burden were high blood pressure, smoking, high blood glucose, and diet. Strategies and policies to improve the health of populations should be guided by the comparative importance of health loss arising from exposure to major risk factors, whatever their position in the causal chain.

Biography

Ali Mokdad, PhD, is Director of Middle Eastern Initiatives and Professor of Global Health at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington. He started his career at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990. He has published more than 300 articles and numerous reports and received several awards, including the Global Health Achievement Award for his work in Banda Aceh after the tsunami, the Department of Health and Human Services Honor Award for his work on flu monitoring, and the Shepard Award for outstanding scientific contribution to public health.

mokdaa@uw.edu

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