

Causes of death in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Muhimbili Medical Centre, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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Abstract:

This paper is based on the findings of a study conducted in Dar es Salaam in 1993. The objective of the study was to investigate causes of death in sub-Saharan Africa, and Tanzania was taken as a case study. Data were collected from the Medical Records Department, Muhimbili Medical Centre, Dar es Salaam, the largest hospital in Tanzania. It is a referral hospital, admitting patients from regional hospitals all over the country. 10 major killer diseases were identified for infants, children and adults. Death records for the year 1989 were used in the survey. This is the year that had the latest complete record of deaths at the center when the survey was conducted. The first part of the paper is an introduction that presents "the concept of death" as spelled out by the WHO. The second part forms the thrust of the paper. It presents and discusses the causes of death for each category, including a brief presentation on maternal mortality. The third part gives some conclusions while the last one presents recommendations aimed at reducing the number of deaths in the sub-Saharan Africa.