

The Global Health Activities of

CDC'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS (NCHS)

The focus of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) global program is to enhance the collection of public health data in other countries, to improve the comparability of health data across countries, and to apply lessons learned in other nations to improve surveillance and data collection in the United States. NCHS works closely with WHO on international health statistics activities, serving as the North American Collaborating Center for the International Classification of Diseases. As part of the U.S.-Russia collaboration, NCHS works with Russian colleagues on the improvement, analysis and diffusion of Russian health information. Collaboration with Mexican counterparts ensures the collection and diffusion of health data from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. A particular focus of the NCHS global program has been the promotion of multinational scientific collaborations on various public health topics, collectively known as International Collaborative Efforts (ICEs).

Examples of how NCHS contributes to CDC's global health objectives in each of five strategic areas are provided below.

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE

An important part of the NCHS global mission is to improve the collection, analysis, and diffusion of health data in other countries. Staff of NCHS's Health Interview Survey, with financial assistance from the World Bank, are assisting the Hungarian Ministry of Health in conducting a national health interview survey in Hungary. NCHS staff, as part of the U.S.-Russia Health Committee, have worked with the Russian Ministry of Health to analyze vital statistics and other health data to identify factors underlying the dramatic rise in mortality in Russia since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Health and Nutrition Examination Survey staff assisted Pakistan's Ministry of Health in the design and execution of a national health examination survey. The ICE on Injury Statistics brings together international experts on the collection and analysis of injury data to identify new data collection techniques and methods of analysis useful for improving the quality of injury data in the United States as well as in other countries.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

As part of its commitment to technical cooperation, NCHS has assisted other countries in the development or improvement of a national capacity for health data collection. In many developing countries, this assistance has focused on national civil registration/vital statistics systems. The ICE on Automating Mortality Statistics has facilitated the development of automated coding systems for cause of death data in both developed and developing countries. NCHS also has provided training on the use of the International Classification of Diseases for the coding of morbidity and mortality data to coders from other countries. In addition, NCHS has actively assisted numerous countries with the execution of large-scale health surveys – including Egypt, Pakistan, Hungary, Portugal, and others – and has provided consultation, survey materials, and general survey information to many other countries considering national health surveys.





DISEASE AND INJURY PREVENTION AND CONTROL

NCHS serves as a major partner in the national Healthy People 2010 program, providing health data from its own and other data sources for the measurement of progress towards national health objectives. In collaboration with the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and with funding from USAID, NCHS is assisting Egypt's Ministry of Health in the development of a similar program, known as "Healthy Egyptians." On the U.S.-Mexico border, NCHS is working with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission to implement a binational health promotion project known as the "Healthy Border Program." NCHS staff also have held exploratory meetings with the InterAmerican Development Bank regarding the establishment of similar Healthy People programs in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay.

APPLIED RESEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE HEALTH POLICIES

The NCHS program of international collaboration promotes applied research on a variety of health statistics topics that are relevant to the United States and other countries. This program has facilitated collaborative research on the measurement of perinatal and infant mortality, international differences in health and health care of the elderly, and injury morbidity and mortality. Participants have included scientists from NCHS, other parts of CDC and DHHS, as well as government and university researchers from a variety of industrialized countries. NCHS also has disseminated survey methodologies to many countries. For example, the ICE on Automating Mortality Statistics has worked to disseminate automated coding systems to other nations.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

NCHS promotes the exchange of information by actively providing reports, data, and information on survey methodology to a wide range of foreign partners and colleagues. Another important source of global information exchange has been the NCHS program of international collaboration on various health statistics topics. NCHS staff have worked with ministries of health in other countries to apply survey methodologies successfully developed or used for many years at NCHS. For example, health examination surveys in both Egypt and Pakistan have been designed and conducted with assistance from NCHS staff. With financial assistance from the World Bank, NCHS currently is assisting Hungary's Ministry of Health with a national health interview survey. NCHS produces a biennial report, the *International Health Data Reference Guide*, that summarizes the availability of international health data from 35 countries.

WHO COLLABORATING CENTERS

- ▶ *WHO Collaborating Center for Classification of Diseases for North America*



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