

Identifying health issues and resource gaps of marginalized populations in Sri Lanka: Bridging the gaps with evidence

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Introduction

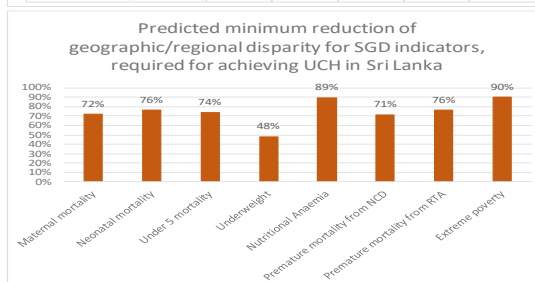
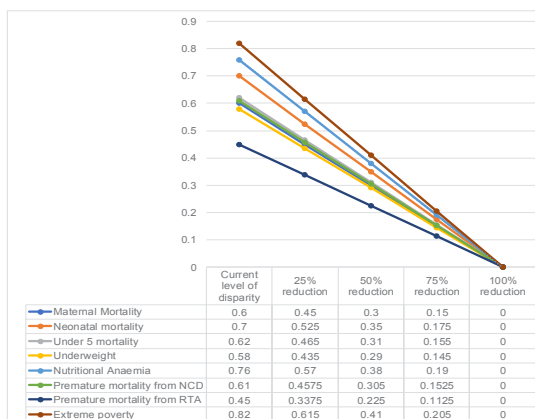
- The national performance in health appears satisfactory in Sri Lanka due to the country's significant achievements in most basic health indicators such as life expectancy at birth, maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate.
- However, it has been observed that regional disparities are quite significant with some populations being especially vulnerable.
- This blocks the country's trajectory towards achieving universal health coverage. Thus it is important to model the impact of such disparities on the country's potential to achieve universal health coverage, and derive region/district specific targets for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Methods

- A prediction model was developed using multiple data sources including Demographic and Health Survey and Annual Health Bulletin.
- Key gaps and unmet health needs of vulnerable populations were identified based on the geographic location.
- A standardized factor (range 0 to 1) was derived for the current levels of regional disparity, for each selected indicator.
- The impact of focusing on each indicator, on the country's potential to achieve universal health coverage was modelled across a hypothetically determined spectrum of disparity reduction.
- A minimum required level of correction compatible with achieving UHC was predicted for each disparity.

Results

Graphical display of estimated baseline disparity and possible spectrum of reduction for selected SDG indicators, among different population subgroups in Sri Lanka



Conclusions

- The model predicted a target for each indicator at regional/district level, considering the baseline values of each indicator.
- The model also predicted that the impact of regional disparities are extravagant that it is impossible for Sri Lanka to achieve UHC, without addressing them.
- Targets for achieving sustainable development goals should be derived at regional/district level.
- Immediate rectification of physical and human resource allocation policies in Sri Lanka is recommended, targeting to address regional disparities.

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