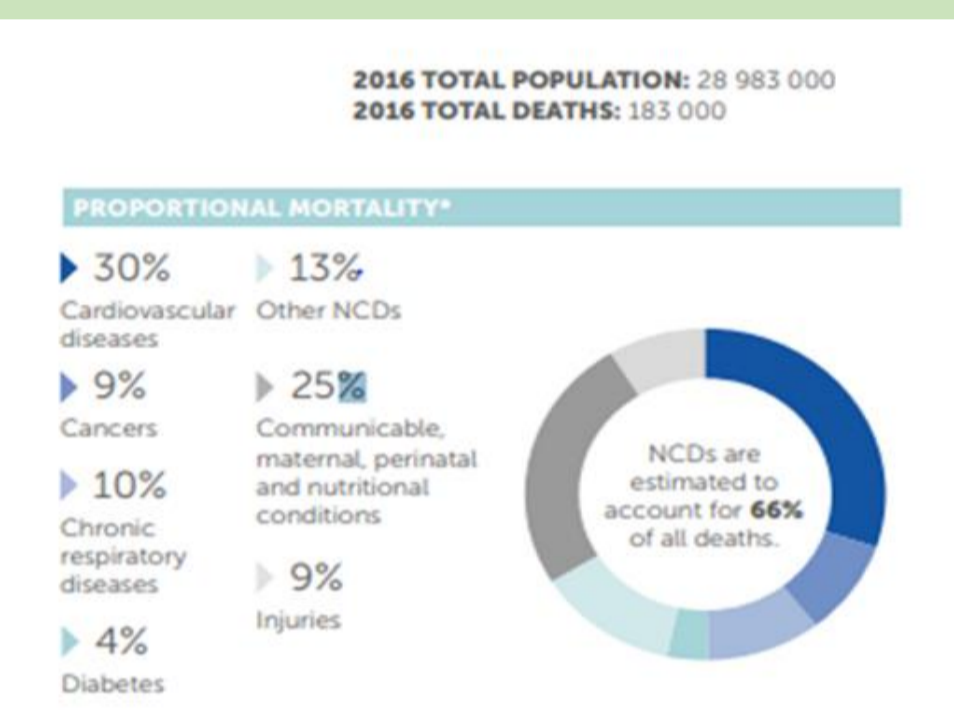


The Political Economy of the Determinants of NCDs: Accelerating Actions for Prevention

Introduction

Deaths due to NCDs increased from 51% of all deaths in the country in 2010 to 66% in 2018. Out of 59.7% of total OOP spending on the diseases/health categories, as much as half of it was spent on the NCDs (Nepal National Health Accounts 2012/13-2015/16). The increasing burden of NCDs poses a huge challenge to Nepal's health and development agenda. With demographic, epidemiological and nutritional transition occurring at a rapid pace, it is expected that the NCD epidemic will rise, posing a significant challenge to achieve sustainable development goals and "25 by 25" target for NCDs.



WHO Country Profile 2018

Recognizing NCDs as one of the major challenges of development in the 21st century, the first High-Level Committee Meeting in 2011, provided an unprecedented opportunity to prioritize NCDs and secure commitment from Heads of State and government for concerted actions. Nepal, a signatory to the Political Declaration developed a comprehensive Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2014-2020. The action plan is the guiding document for implementation of NCD related activities under the aegis of Chief Secretary, chair of the High-Level Committee (HLC). In the past, at policy, program and Institutional level, NCDs with the exception of FCTC, was non-existent in Nepal's general health policies and programs. But this is not the case now. Efforts have been made by the government at policy and programmatic level. Current provision of 90% tobacco health warnings, is one of the highest in the world.

Objectives of the High-level Committee Meeting

- To provide cabinet level policy direction for NCD prevention and control
- To ensure that activities of NCD action plan is reflected in the annual budget and work plans of key Line Ministries
- To develop a mechanism to leverage multisectoral partnership between Line Ministries, Civil Society Organizations, UN Country Teams and Development Banks for effective multisectoral response for NCD prevention and control in line with the MSAP 2014 -2020

Methodology

The HLC is chaired by Chief Secretary with Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) as member secretary and participation of Secretaries of Line Ministries. The first HLC meeting was held in 2016 followed by number of technical meetings and HLC meeting in 2018.

• Mr. Mahendra Shrestha (mahendrashrestha76@gmail.com) • Dr Md Khurshid Alam Hyder(hyderk@who.int) • Dr Lonim Prasai Dixit (dixitl@who.int)



Some key prioritized action areas of concerned Line Ministries is tabled at the HLC. Prior to the meeting, an assessment is done to review progress on the implementation.

Some key achievements of Line Ministries are: Tobacco Products Control and Regulatory Act, Ministry

of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; National Policy on Regulation and Control of Alcohol 2017, Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Education has tabled Right Based Education Bill with NCDs issues; National Action Plan for Electric Mobility, Ministry of Forest and Environment; Nepal Health Tax fund, Ministry of Finance; Nepal Traffic Police started No drink driving initiative; Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration has allocated budget for NCD campaigns at provincial and local level. MoHP has made basic NCD services available at primary health care level through Package of Essential Noncommunicable (PEN) diseases intervention. Nepal Public Health Act 2018 has incorporated clause related to creation of healthy urban settings, vulnerable road users, ban of advertisement and promotion of tobacco, alcohol and health harmful products. Decisions on way forward are:



- The action points of Line Ministries are budgeted and included in the annual work plan.
- Appoint NCD focal person in PMO and Line Ministries.
- Review MSAP in view of the federal structure

Policy Recommendation

The four strategic policy priorities are:

1. Leadership, Advocacy, Partnership to accelerate and scale up national multisectoral response and address the underlying social determinants of health
2. Health promotion and risk reduction coupled with legislative, fiscal measures and setting-based approaches beyond the health system, with focus on major risk factors
3. Health system strengthening for early detection and management of NCDs and its risk factors through integration in the health system
4. Surveillance, monitoring and evaluation and research for evidence-based policy directions to minimize NCD related morbidity and mortality

Conclusion

It is crucial to garner political and multisectoral support, prioritize Best Buys and increase investment on NCDs to reduce the risk of morbidity and mortality. The new federal structure provides opportunity to accelerate the implementation and make progress in the set national targets.