

Biometric and biomarkers in Low and Middle Income Countries: old tales for new data

Tiziana Leone, LSE

t.leone@lse.ac.uk

@tizianaleone

Low and Middle Income countries (LMICs) are facing unprecedented levels of ageing given improvements in life expectancy and standard of living. Over the last decade, a massive increase in data collection has occurred in the health sector. More longitudinal data are available than ever before with biometric and biomarkers (e.g.: weight, height, cholesterol level) measures being collected at fast speed. However, there has been relatively little progress in data analysis and application despite a rapid rise in data production. This often leads to approximations on the conclusions being made on possible trends and correlations of risk factors as well as levels of health where we rely on High Income Countries' (HICs) experiences. This is happening at the same time as we know many measures do not work with the same benchmarks across different ethnic groups. There is a need to test the benefits of these largely unexplored data in order to amplify and encourage the lifecourse approach to ageing in low resource settings.

This flashtalk will highlight new and upcoming datasources, their challenges and caution tales on the use of biometric and biomarker information in LMICs. Using Demographic and Health Surveys, Survey of Ageing, Indonesian, Indian, Malawian longitudinal data, I will discuss future research challenges and opportunities in the analysis of the impact of lifecourse events on health later in life. The focus will be in BMI, allostatic load, grip strength and diabetes among others. This talk is set within a wider work on the importance of collecting and analysing more longitudinal health information for policy making in health and social care in low resource settings.