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Are well functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems associated with better health outcomes?

In this Series paper, we examine whether well functioning civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems are associated with improved population health outcomes. We present a conceptual model connecting CRVS to wellbeing, and describe an ecological association between CRVS and health outcomes. The conceptual model posits that the legal identity that civil registration provides to individuals is key to access entitlements and services. Vital statistics produced by CRVS systems provide essential information for public health policy and prevention. These outcomes benefit individuals and societies, including improved health. We use marginal linear models and lag-lead analysis to measure ecological associations between a composite metric of CRVS performance and three health outcomes. Results are consistent with the conceptual model: improved CRVS performance coincides with improved health outcomes worldwide in a temporally consistent manner. Investment to strengthen CRVS systems is not only an important goal for individuals and societies, but also a development imperative that is good for health.