



PAHO/WHO STEPwise approach to noncommunicable disease (NCD) risk factor surveillance (STEPS)

The PAHO/WHO recommended tool for surveillance of noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors

What is STEPS?

The PAHO/WHO STEPwise approach to NCD risk factor surveillance (STEPS) is a **simple, sequential, standardized** method for collecting, analysing and disseminating data on key NCD risk factors in countries. STEPS is a **household survey** which gathers information on risk factors through a face-to-face interview (step 1), simple physical measurements (step 2), and collection of urine and blood samples for biochemical analysis (step 3).

Objective

STEPS helps health services plan public health priorities and **monitors and evaluates population-wide interventions**. It is designed to help countries **build and strengthen their capacity** to conduct surveillance. STEPS captures 11 of the 25 indicators outlined in the NCD Global Monitoring Framework relating to 7 of the 9 global targets.

Methodology

Target population: non-institutionalized adults aged 18 to 69 years old.

Instrument: it covers key modifiable risk factors: tobacco use, alcohol use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, as well as key biological risk factors: overweight and obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose, and abnormal blood lipids.

Mode: computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) in households. Interviewers collect and record data in Android devices.

Sampling: scientifically selected sample representative of target population. Random selection of an individual aged 18 to 69 years within each household.

Periodicity: surveillance involves commitment to data collection on an ongoing, repeated basis. Ideally, countries should repeat STEPS approximately every 5 years, depending on resources.

Implementation

Ethical approval: surveillance should adhere to the [WHO Guidelines on Ethical Issues in Public Health Surveillance](#). The

implementation plan should be submitted to the local research ethics committee and PAHO's committee to confirm it is not human subjects research and is therefore exempt from ethics review. For further information: [Ethical issues in Public Health Surveillance: the Pan American STEPS Survey for the Surveillance of Noncommunicable Diseases and Risk Factors](#).

Training: ensures that fieldworkers understand the instrument, utilize standard data collection procedures, and adhere to quality assurance protocols.

Data collection timeframe: 2-3 months.

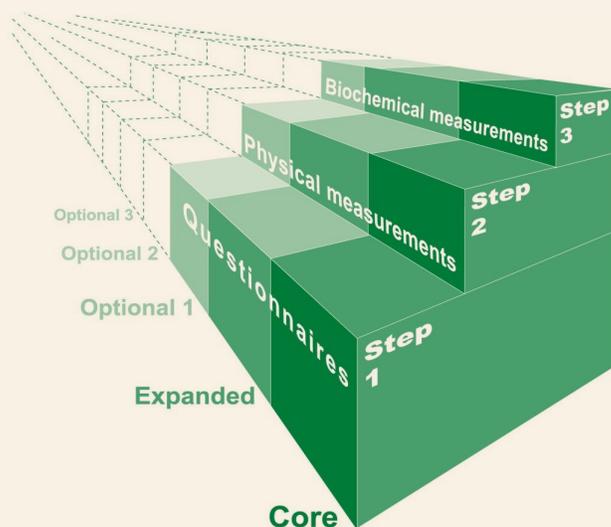
Data sharing and dissemination

There are a number of resources available to assist countries in presenting the results of their survey, such as the STEPS fact sheet, data book and analysis code.

STEPS data are owned by the Ministry of Health or the official country-level agency conducting or sponsoring the survey. In the interest of advancing public health knowledge, PAHO/WHO encourages countries to make datasets and reports from STEPS surveys available in the public domain after a defined period of time after completion of the survey.

Partners

Ministries or Departments of Health
National Statistical Offices
PAHO/WHO



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