

Improvement of the German cause of death statistics by electronic data recording and evaluation of multiple-cause-of-death data

Abstract

Today, current and accurate information about the health status of a population plays an increasingly important role for political decisions. One of the central sources for German health behaviour and mortality pattern is the German cause of death statistics. Data for the German cause of death statistics mainly result from the information written in the death certificates. The processing of these paper-based forms is currently delayed for weeks or months and often insufficient due to unreadability or missing of necessary information. In order to improve the quality of cause of death information and provide more up-to-date data for the German cause of death statistics, we will establish and test a mobile application for electronic death certificates. With appropriate electronic data recording, the documentation and processing of the German death certificate could proceed more precisely and quickly.

Furthermore, we want to expand the current underlying-cause-of-death approach for German cause of death statistics. In the future, analysis of mortality data should include both underlying and contributing causes of death. This multiple-cause-of-death approach is a more suitable measure to evaluate all morbid conditions that are leading to death. Especially for aging societies such as Germany, analysis of multiple-cause-of-death data can shed more light on the importance of degenerative or man-made diseases on mortality pattern.

Keywords cause of death statistics, mobile application for electronic death certificates, multiple causes of death