Health and the SDGs
2021 | Saudi Arabia

Universal health coverage

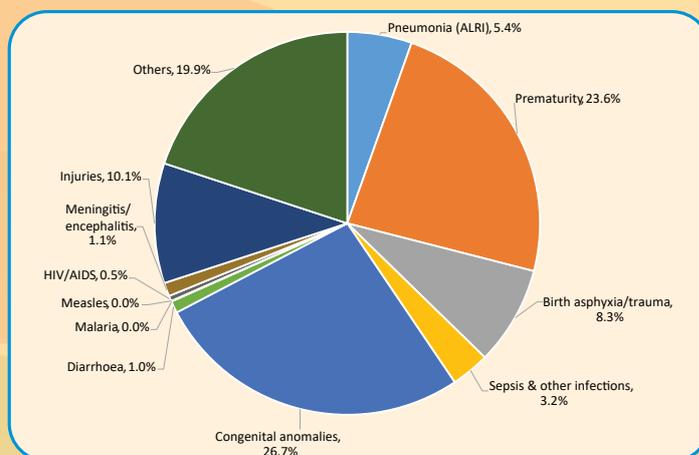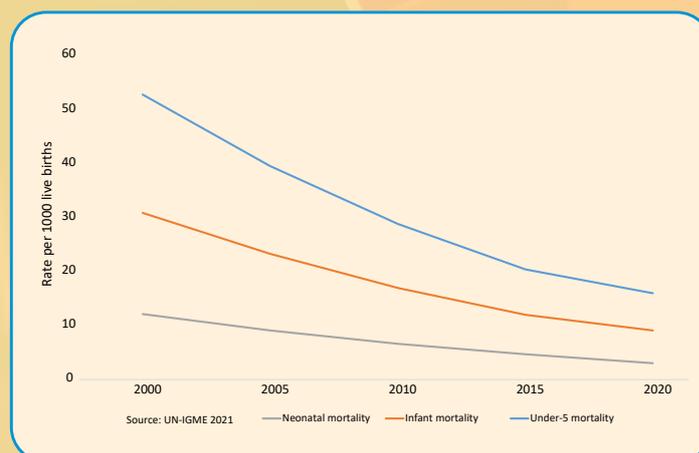|	
UHC service coverage index (2021)	74.0
Primary health care facilities per 10 000 population (2021)	0.6
Hospital beds per 10 000 population (2021)	22.6
Demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods (%) (2021)	46.6
Antenatal care visits (4+ visits) (2019)	79.7
Measles immunization coverage among 1-year olds (%) (2021)	98.0
Tuberculosis treatment coverage rate (2021)	87.0
DTP3-containing vaccine/pentavalent coverage among 1-year olds (%) (2021)	97.0
Out-of-pocket expenditure as percentage of current health expenditure (2021)	11.0
Domestic general government health expenditure as % of general government expenditure (2021)	12.0

Selected determinants of health

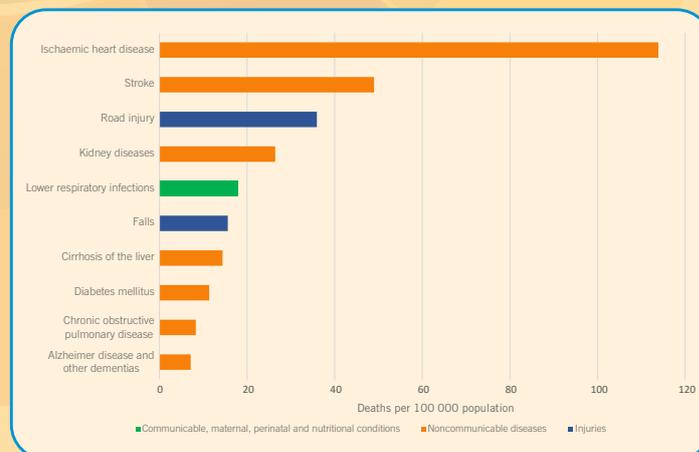|	
Population living in urban areas (%) (2019)	86.0
Annual GDP growth (%) (2021)	3.2
Population growth rate (%) (2020)	2.4
Children aged < 5 years with pneumonia symptoms taken to a health care provider (%) (2018)	...

Distribution of causes of death among children aged < 5 years (%)

Pneumonia (ALRI), 5.4%
Prematurity, 23.6%
Others, 19.9%
Injuries, 10.1%
Meningitis/encephalitis, 1.1%
HIV/AIDS, 0.5%
Measles, 0.0%
Malaria, 0.0%
Diarrhoea, 1.0%
Birth asphyxia/trauma, 8.3%
Sepsis & other infections, 3.2%
Congenital anomalies, 26.7%

Neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality rates per 1000 live births

Source: UN-IGME 2021 — Neonatal mortality — Infant mortality — Under-5 mortality

Top 10 causes of death for both sexes and all ages (2019)

Ischaemic heart disease
Stroke
Road injury
Kidney diseases
Lower respiratory infections
Falls
Cirrhosis of the liver
Diabetes mellitus
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
Alzheimer disease and other dementias

Deaths per 100 000 population

Communicable, maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions | Noncommunicable diseases | Injuries

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Eastern Mediterranean

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Selected health-related SDG indicators

1 NO POVERTY

Population below the international poverty line (%)		...
Proportion of employed population below the international poverty line 15+ (%) (ILO modelled estimate, 2019)	Male	0.0
	Female	0.0

2 ZERO HUNGER

Children under 5 (%) who are (2020)

stunted	7.1
wasted	3.3
overweight	8.3

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Literacy rate (15–24 years) (2020) (%)	Total	100.0
	Male	100.0
	Female	99.0
Net primary school enrolment ratio per 100 school-age children (2019)	Total ratio	96.0
	Male ratio	96.0
	Female ratio	65.0

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technologies at the household level (%) (WHO Global Health Observatory, 2020)	100.0

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%) (World Health Statistics, year)	...
Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%) (World Health Statistics, 2020)	59.0

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Unemployment rate (15+ years) (%) (ILO estimate, 2021)	Total	6.6
	Male	3.5
	Female	17.3

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) (µg/m³) (WHO Global Health Observatory,2019)	Total	57.1
	Urban	60.7

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Estimates of rate of homicides (per 100 000 population) (WHO Global Health Observatory, 2019)	1.9

Key health indicators

Indicator	Male	Female	Total
Life expectancy at birth in years (2019)	73.1	76.1	74.3
Healthy life expectancy (HALE) at birth (years) (2019)	63.8	64.4	64.0
Healthy life expectancy (HALE) at 60 (years) (2019)	13.8	14.4	14.0
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100 000 live births) (UN-MMEIG 2020 estimate)	—	—	16.0
Neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births) (UN-IGME 2021 estimate)	…	…	3.2
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births) (UN-IGME 2021 estimate)	5.6	5.8	5.7
Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births) (UN-IGME 2021 estimate)	6.8	6.5	6.7
Tobacco use among persons 15+ years (%) (2019)	26.7	2.1	14.4
Overweight (18+ years) (%) (2019)	…	…	36.2
Obesity (18+ years) (%) (2019)	…	…	22.0
Raised blood pressure among persons 18+ years (%) (2019)	…	…	24.5
Raised blood glucose among persons 18+ years (%) (2019)	…	…	16.7
Raised cholesterol among persons 18+ years (%) (year)	42.3	42.9	42.6
Mortality between exact ages 30 and 70 from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (%) (2019)	22.4	18.4	20.9
Cancer incidence per 100 000 (2021)	89.0	111.9	96.4

Universal health coverage (UHC) means provision of quality services to everybody without discrimination of any kind and without exposing people to financial hardship. UHC is one of the targets of SDG 3, and attaining UHC will also contribute directly or indirectly to achieving the other SDGs. Achieving UHC means ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages with explicit affirmative action for vulnerable populations including refugees and migrants. Thus, disaggregated data will be necessary to assess and address inequities in health. UHC requires intersectoral action. All countries can and must advance towards UHC by 2030, if not earlier.

Availability of data for each SDG 3 indicator: no data, one and at least two data points, 2014–2019
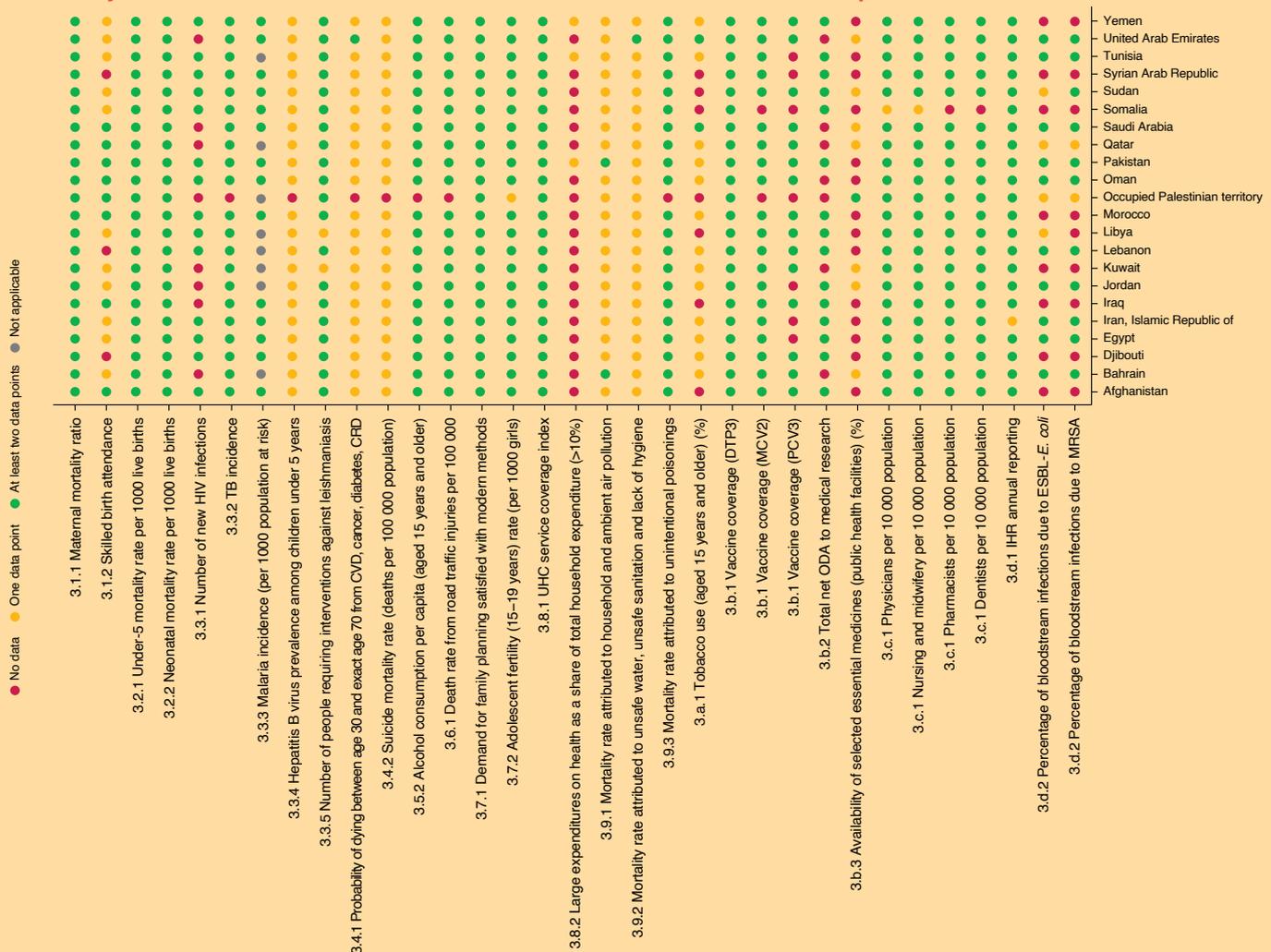
Source: Progress on the health-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020. Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; 2022.

Voluntary National Review

Completed in 2018: https://hlpf.un.org/countries/saudi-arabia/voluntary-national-review-2018

Completed in 2023: https://hlpf.un.org/countries/saudi-arabia/voluntary-national-reviews-2023

National Focal Point for 2030 Agenda

National Focal Point in the Ministry of Health for health-related SDGs

Dr Arwa Mohammed Alameen, Director-General, General Directorate of Statistics and Health Information, Ministry of Health

1. Summarize efforts at the national level in setting targets for health-related SDGs.

The alignment of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 with the 2030 Agenda reflects the high-level incorporation of the SDGs into national strategic plans and initiatives. The Ministry of Economy and Planning has established a dedicated steering committee with membership from 18 government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, to oversee implementation of the SDGs. An SDG policy framework is applied by working groups of the steering committee, dedicated to different SDGs, who develop policy recommendations to address challenges and improve progress. The National Transformation Program 2020, involving over 24 governmental bodies, was an important milestone towards achieving the SDG targets.

2. How is Saudi Arabia incorporating SDG 3 targets in health policy, strategy and planning?

The Ministry of Health incorporates SDG 3 targets in its main strategic health goals, including on access to health services, the quality of health services, health promotion and risk prevention, and road traffic safety. The Ministry refers to the targets for SDG 3 and the other health-related SDGs when developing its health reform plans. Saudi Arabia is currently implementing health financing reforms to improve access to quality health services, with specific attention to low-income groups.

3. Are there any major partnerships in Saudi Arabia for advancing the health-related SDGs?

There is considerable high-level inter-ministerial collaboration for achieving the strategic objectives of Vision 2030 related to health through a Health in all Policies approach, involving the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, and General Authority for Statistics. There are also partnerships with international agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and the World Bank for technical support to advance the 2030 Agenda.

4. Describe a success story or an opportunity for strengthening the health system for COVID-19 that supports efforts towards achieving one or more of the SDG health-related targets.

Saudi Arabia's successful response to COVID-19 pandemic drew on the country's long experience of health service delivery and the management of visitors and mass religious gatherings at the holy sites during Haj and Umrah. The implementation of the "smart" early warning and disaster management system during the pandemic was effective and cost-efficient. Equity in service provision was ensured at all phases of the response.