

Dropping Key Targets on NCDs places Future Health of the World's Ageing Population at Risk

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Wednesday 4 April - The theme of this year's World Health Day is healthy ageing. With data showing that the major causes of premature death and years lost to disability in people aged 60 years and over are non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the NCD Alliance* says that dropping key targets on NCDs will put the health of the world's ageing population at risk.

Data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that the major causes of premature death and years lost to disability in older people in both high-income countries (HIC) and low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are NCDs such as heart disease, cancers, diabetes, stroke, dementia, visual disorders and chronic respiratory disease. Furthermore, NCDs are the leading cause of death in the world, causing 60% of all deaths. In HIC, up to 90% of deaths are caused by NCDs, while in most LMICs, NCDs are also the leading cause of death.

In September, 2011, world leaders gathered at the first ever United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs in New York. The Political Declaration adopted at the meeting set out a road map for development of targets and a monitoring framework, with a requirement to make significant progress by the end of 2012. The first discussion paper released by WHO, in late 2011, featured 10 targets including an overarching goal to reduce NCD mortality by 25% by 2025 and to improve access to multidrug therapy for those at risk of heart attack and stroke. However, alarmingly, the second WHO discussion paper released on March 22 has cut the proposed targets to just five. This lack of commitment to action on NCDs will place the health of the world's ageing population at risk.

Read full press release below.

Post Date: Tuesday, 10 abril, 2012



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Published on NCD Alliance (<https://old.ncdalliance.org>)

Source URL: <https://old.ncdalliance.org/es/node/3655>

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