

**Week 5: Unit
5: Lecture 1
Health
Indicators
Definition
and
Classification
By Hana
Taha, PhD**





**"Not everything
that counts can
be counted, and
not everything
that can be
counted counts."**

- Albert Einstein



Learning objectives:

- Define relevant health indicators
- Understand the characteristics of good indicators
- Identify the types, classifications and the factors to consider when setting indicators
- Discuss the most important health indicators that are widely used globally



Indicator

- We use indicators in our daily life without realizing that.
- They are the clues or markers of our progress towards our goal and how much things are changing over time.
- With the goal of good health in mind, think of an indicator as “...*a measure that helps quantify the achievement of a goal.*”

Mark Friedman



Health Indicator is

- **Measure** (calculation of a value)...
- **Variable** (its value changes)...
- An indicator is a variable that measures health status, or one aspect of a health intervention, program, or project.



Health

- Health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental & social wellbeing, and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity”
- Health measurement can be conducted by measuring the consequences of ill-health (morbidity, mortality) & economic, social factors that influence health.



Health Indicator is

- A measure that helps quantify the progress towards or the achievement of health as a goal.
- Health indicators are essential for comparing health status
 - over time (trends)
 - geographic areas
 - groups of people



Why do we need health indicators

- Measurement of health status in a certain community or country.
- Compare health status of one community with another within the same country or globally.
- Compare health status of different areas or groups of people over time.
- Assessment of health care needs to allocate human and non-human resources based on the needs.
- Monitoring and evaluation of health services, activities, and programs.

What is the Rationale for Health Indicators in health interventions?

- Indicators are vital in health interventions because, when collected and used regularly, they can:
- Provide a reference point for health intervention planning, management, and reporting
- Allow managers of health interventions to assess trends and identify problems
- Act as early warning signals for corrective action



What is the Rationale for Health Indicators in health interventions?

Health indicators are meant to assess:

- *Health indicators are meant to assess **Performance**:*
the effective or efficient performance of a program or activity.
 - *Example: “Percentage of health facilities that reached their coverage targets for DPT third dose vaccination ”*



What is the Rationale for Health Indicators in health interventions? Health indicators are meant to assess:

➤ *Health indicators are meant to assess*

Achievement: the successful accomplishments of an activity or a program

- *Example:* “Percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women who received antiretroviral drugs”



What is the Rationale for Health Indicators in health interventions? Health indicators are meant to assess:

➤ *Health indicators are meant to assess*

Accountability: responsibility for performance and/or achievements of an activity, project, or program

- *Example:* “Percentage of clinics complying with national guidelines for TB management”



Classification of health indicators **by four** **health domains**

- 1. Health status** (mortality by age and sex, mortality by cause, morbidity and fertility)
- 2. Risk factors** (nutrition, infections, environmental risk factors, non-communicable disease risk factors, and injuries)
- 3. Service coverage** (reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent, immunization, HIV, HIV/TB, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases, screening and preventive care, and mental health)
- 4. Health systems** (quality and safety of care, access, health workforce, health information, health financing, and health security).



Health Indicators examples according to domains:

- **Health status: examples**

- Life expectancy at birth
- Malaria mortality rate

- **Risk factors: examples**

- Children under 5 years of age who are stunted
- Population using safely managed sanitation services

- **Service coverage: examples**

- Antenatal coverage
- Tuberculosis case detection rate

- **Health systems: examples**

- Hospital bed density (Number of beds per 1000 persons)
- Total current expenditures on health (% of gross domestic product)



Another way of classifying Health Indicators

- The World Health Organization's **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review framework** organizes health indicators in four components:

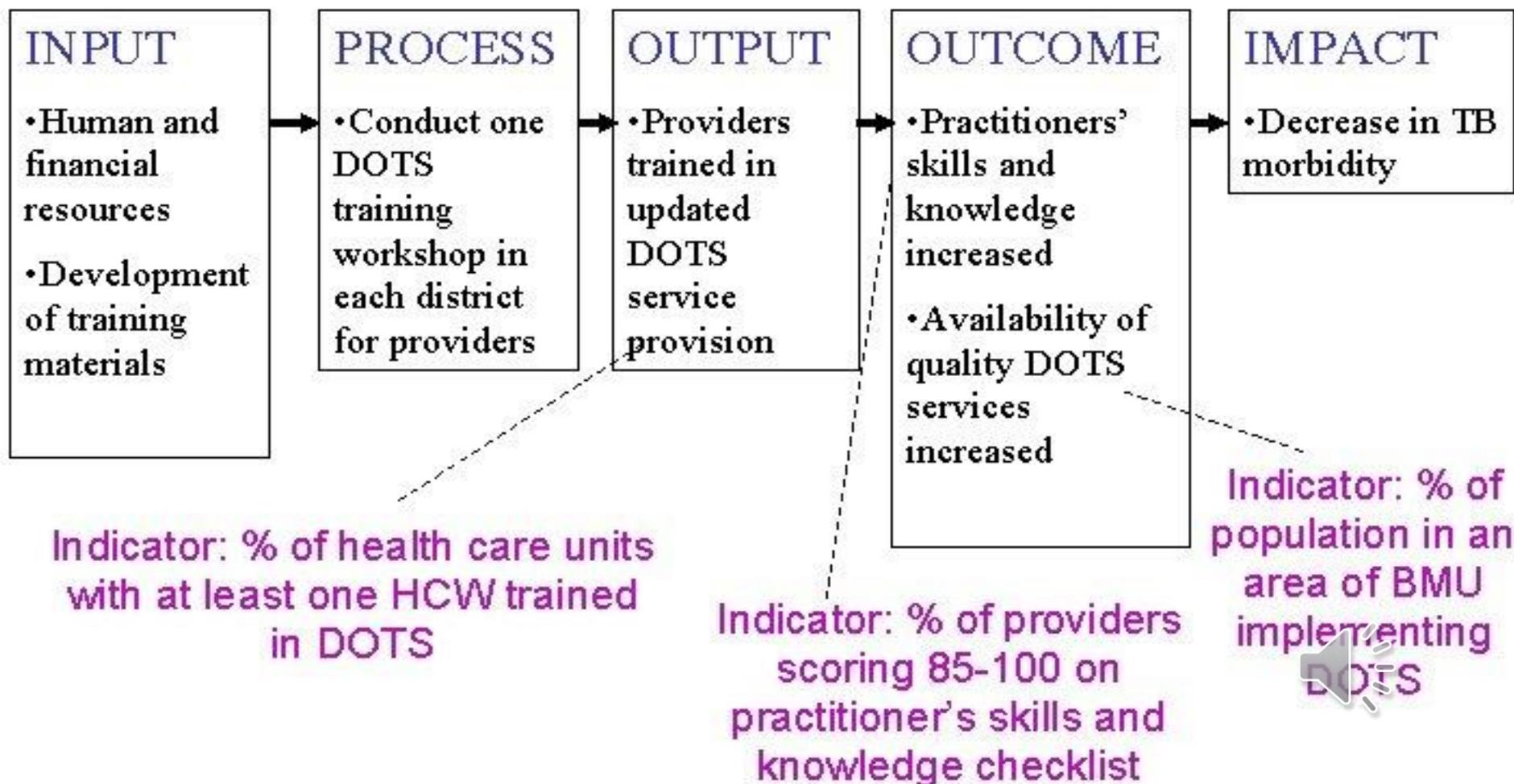


WHO Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Framework classification of indicators

- Indicators of inputs and processes are broad, affecting many parts of health services.
- Indicators of outputs and outcomes tend to be quite specific to a particular health program intervention or activity.
- Impact indicators: Important to provide a snapshot of the health status of a population but are slower to respond to policy, program, and practice changes.



Model → Indicators



What Makes a health Indicator “SMART” ?

- **Specific** : Indicator is clear, precise, detailed, focused, and well defined in clear terms and documented in an Indicator Reference Sheet
- **Measurable**: Indicator is quantifiable, and it tells how many or how much and can be measured with identified measurement sources
- **Agreed upon**: Stakeholders assigned to a specific program should agree that the indicator is relevant
- **Relevant** : Indicator generates data that can answer the performance assessment question of interest.
- **Timebound**: Indicator specifies time frame of what it is measuring



Examples: Relevant indicators

Example: Childhood vaccines program

Indicator: % of infants receiving measles vaccine (coverage)

Example: Program to increase access to Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS) for childhood diarrhea through community health workers

Indicator: # of ORS packets distributed in past month by community health workers.



Indicator Reference Sheet

Minimum Information

- Description
- Plan for data collection
- Plan for data analysis
- Plan for data quality check
- Performance table





Thank
You

FOR
LISTENING

