



COHORT STUDY, DESIGN AND PRACTICE

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Cohorts – what, how and then?

- Cohort study is to follow a **defined group of people through time** to see what happens to their health
- You have to look for the **same** things (indicators) over and over again
- You have to register what **changes** in their context, abilities and attitudes (life-style and life-conditions)
- If an active intervention takes place, you must monitor what impact it has on health, life-style and life-conditions
- Draw **new knowledge** – make **improvements/adjustments** at any movement in time
- You should never stop!

A (historical) example: Tuberculosis

- All patients diagnosed within a given period (e.g. one year)
- Split in categories (ss+/-, EPTB, retreatment)
- Record progress (sputum smear at 2 and 5 months)
- Record treatment outcome (cure, success, lost, failure, dead, transferred out).....after 2(?) years

What are the preconditions?

- Undisputable **identity** to be recognized
- **Stable** population
- **Positive interaction** with the cohort (gain and understanding)
- **Constant management** of diagnosis, treatment and recording / well defined changes
- **Stable resources**

What can we gain?

- **Impact** of health services under standard conditions
- **Impact** of changes in health delivery
- **Impact** on health by changing social, physical and economical context

- Make health services **accountable**
- Make health research **accountable**
- Make politicians **accountable**

- Make WHO **accountable**

How advanced should it be?

- The cost is directly proportional to your ambitions
- The lowest ambition is to count people (census) age, sex, household size, location
- An automatic «ground level» for health is DHIS2
- + health facilities and physical access (**GIS**)
- + physical context (whether, landscape, soil ...)
- + education (MoE etc)
- + household economy (Google maps ++?)
- + social indicators (ethnicity, religion, profession ...)
- + lifestyle factors (physical exercise, social activity, drugs/alcohol, diet...)

Bottom line

- Community participation
- Data management
- Publication

