

GORILLA CONFERENCE SPECIAL SESSION

Title:	Let's Talk About Avoidable Deaths: Views from Multiple Sectors
Chairs:	Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett, Dr Hideyuki Shiroshita and Dr Yazidh Bamutaze
Date:	4 December 2020
Time:	11.00 am – 1.30 pm (GMT)
Mode of Delivery:	Virtual

Description of the Special Session

The Special Session titled ‘**Let's Talk About Avoidable Deaths: Views from Multiple Sectors,**’ aims to raise the visibility of avoidable deaths in the context of disasters and sustainable development.

Avoidable deaths are those deaths, which are amenable and/or preventable – as each death is counted only once (Cooke, 2019). Amenable deaths are treatable deaths and can be “avoided through timely and effective healthcare interventions, including secondary prevention and treatment” (ONS, 2020). Preventable deaths can be “avoided through effective public health and primary prevention interventions” (ONS, 2020). The Avoidable Deaths Network firmly believes that both amenable and preventable deaths can be further avoided through effective risk governance, which involves (although is not limited to) risk communication, coordination, collaboration and cooperation between the government and the general public; between governmental departments; and between the government and civil societies and multilateral organisations – among others.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 138,293 deaths out of 616,014 were considered avoidable deaths in the UK in 2018. This correlates to 22% of all deaths (ONS, 2020). According to the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, ~27,000 (an age-standardised rate of 105 deaths per 100,000 people) potential avoidable deaths occurred in 2016 in Australia (AIHW, 2018). According to the Dun and Bradstreet Corporation, ‘the preventable (amenable) mortality rate for India’ was around 1900 deaths per million people in 2019. This is an estimated 2.4 million people, which is twice as high as Thailand, Sri Lanka and even China (Singh, 2019). These statistics indicate avoidable deaths contribute significantly to the burden of deaths. As such, avoidable deaths deserve high priority from governmental and non-governmental organisations, especially in developing countries, where the concept of avoidable deaths is less widely known.

Avoidable death can be considered a positive concept. It advocates that needless deaths, which occur every day globally, can be avoided through effective and timely interventions, early preparedness, early warning systems, effective governance - among other measures. Although the concept of avoidable deaths has its origin in the health sector, it is applicable in other sectors, including disaster management and sustainable development. This Special Session at the ‘International Conference on Geographical Science for Resilient Communities, Ecosystems and Livelihoods under Global Environmental Change’ (G.O.R.I.L.L.A) on 4 December 2020 will explore the multi-disciplinary appeal and application of avoidable deaths caused by the

natural world (e.g. snake bites) and human-made systems (e.g. premature deaths, maternal deaths during disasters) (IFRC, 2014).

Our esteemed speakers are academics, researchers and practitioners from public health, disaster management, disaster risk resilience, and humanitarian sectors, and will cover deaths resulting from conditions such as snakebites, malaria, tobacco and alcohol consumption and deaths during disasters. They will also shed light on the way the number of avoidable deaths can be reduced, and how avoidable deaths can be integrated into the UN's Sustainable Development Goals especially for the Targets 1.5, 3.8, 11.5 and 13.1.

This Special Session is suitable for disaster responders, students, academics, researchers, policymakers, opinion formers, and practitioners interested in avoidable deaths, UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction's Goal A and B, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Organisers

The Special Session is organised by the Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN) in collaboration with Makerere University. ADN is a global network dedicated to finding theoretical and practical solutions to reducing disaster deaths and injuries for sustainable development in the low-and middle-income countries. ADN is a joint enterprise between University of Leicester in the UK and Kansai University in Japan. To learn more about ADN, please visit our website: <http://www.avoidable-deaths.net/>

References

AIHW (Australian Institute for Health and Welfare). (2018) *Australia's health 2018*. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/australias-health-2018/contents/indicators-of-australias-health/potentially-avoidable-deaths> (Accessed on: 6 November 2020)

Cooke, A. (2019) *Avoidable mortality in the UK: 2017*. Available at: <https://backup.ons.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/02/Avoidable-mortality-in-the-UK-2017.pdf> (Accessed on: 6 November 2020)

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (2014) *World Disasters Report 2014: Focus on culture and risk*. Available at: <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201410/WDR%202014.pdf> (Downloaded on: 11 November 2020)

ONS (Office for National Statistics). (2020) *Avoidable mortality in the UK: 2018*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/avoidablemortalityinenglandandwales/2018> (Accessed on: 6 November 2020)

Singh, A. (2019) *Building an Inclusive and Equitable Healthcare system in India*. Available at: <https://www.dnb.co.in/perspective/thought-leadership/building-an-inclusive-and-equitable-healthcare-system-in-india> (Accessed on: 6 November 2020)