

GBD 2015 Policy report highlights

- The world is in the midst of an epidemiological transition. As countries increase their levels of development, their communicable disease burdens are declining and their life expectancies are rising. This transition is affecting disease burden, disability burden, and health risk factor exposure in complicated ways.
- While development drives many positive changes in health outcomes, certain diseases (such as chronic kidney disease) and risk factors (such as obesity) tend to worsen with development.
- Development drives, but does not determine, health. While more developed countries tend to be healthier than less developed ones, some countries are much healthier than expected given their level of development, such as Ethiopia, China, and Spain.
- From 1990 to 2015, child and maternal mortality declined substantially. In particular, the international community's focus on child survival appears to be reaping rewards, since child mortality in 2015 was lower than expected given current levels of development.
- The burden of communicable diseases declined from 1990 to 2015, with the bulk of that achievement being driven by reductions in the burden of malaria and HIV/AIDS since 2005.
- Overall, the magnitude of the burden of non-communicable causes of disease and injury is rising. The burden of some non-communicable diseases has declined, but generally not quickly enough to overtake rates of population growth.
- The rate of burden from nonfatal causes of disease and injury was flat from 1990 to 2015. As populations grow and increase in average age, however, the total burden of disability is rising quickly.

- Exposure to poor sanitation, indoor air pollution, and childhood undernutrition has dropped, resulting in dramatic declines in the burden of diarrhea and pneumonia in children.
- Exposure to several risk factors linked to development increased markedly – placing them among the most pressing targets for intervention – from 1990 to 2015. These include obesity/overweight, high blood sugar, ambient air pollution, and drug use.