

RAISING AWARENESS OF 23 AVOIDABLE DEATHS



Avoidable Deaths Network



VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

SENDAI FRAMEWORK

FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

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About Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN): ADN is a global-local membership network dedicated to reducing disaster deaths that are avoidable in low- and middle-income countries. ADN is a member of the Sendai Framework's Voluntary Commitment Platform and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Leading Edge Programme Networks and Partnerships Group.

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Avoidable Deaths

1. Maternal Deaths

52% of maternal deaths (in pregnancy, at or soon after childbirth) are attributable to three preventable causes – haemorrhage, sepsis, and hypertensive disorders. Another 28% of maternal mortality is attributable to non-obstetric causes such as malaria, HIV, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity. Still another 8% of maternal mortality is attributable to unsafe abortion (Every Woman Every Child, 2015). Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for around 70% of maternal deaths while Southern Asia accounted for around 16% (WHO, 2023).



Maternal deaths are avoidable!

Watch the Avoidable Deaths Network and COAL's [spoken word poetry](#) on avoidable maternal deaths.

2. Post-Partum Haemorrhage Death

The death of Mumtaz Mahal in 1631 from postpartum haemorrhage (PPH), commemorated by the construction of the Taj Mahal, remains a powerful historical illustration of maternal mortality. Yet nearly four centuries later, PPH continues to claim an estimated 70,000 maternal lives annually, accounting for roughly 25–30% of global maternal deaths, with approximately 80% occurring in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (World Health, 2023). Framed through the “avoidable deaths” lens articulated by Ray-Bennett (2025), PPH represents a paradigmatic example of mortality that is predictable, preventable, and treatable. Avoidable deaths can be conceptualized in two senses: first, through the avoidance of harmful factors within human control, and second, through early detection and timely treatment. In the context of PPH, mortality typically reflects failures across the well-established Three Delays Model: delay in decision to seek care (individual and sociocultural level), delay in reaching care (infrastructural and systemic barriers), and delay in receiving adequate care (facility-level deficiencies such as lack of uterotonics, blood products, or skilled personnel). Ray Bennet (2025) emphasizes, these are not random tragedies but markers of breakdowns in prevention, early detection, and effective treatment within the health system.

Deaths from post-partum haemorrhage are avoidable!

3. Unsafe Abortion Death

Around 45% of all abortions are unsafe of which 97% take place in developing countries with more than half taking place in South and Central Asia. Each year, 4.7-13.2% of maternal deaths can be attributed to unsafe abortion, which is a leading but preventable cause of maternal death and morbidity. Lack of access to safe, timely, affordable, non-discriminatory

and respectful abortion care leads many to resort to unsafe abortion. (WHO, 2023; WHO, 2021; Shaw, 2016; Singh and Maddow-Zimet, 2015).

Deaths from unsafe abortion and post-abortion complications are avoidable!

Learn more about Avoidable Deaths Network's [research](#) on avoidable unsafe abortion deaths.

4. Cervical Cancer Death

With an estimated 604,000 new cases and 342,000 deaths in 2020, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women globally. Persistent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection of the cervix if left untreated causes 95% of cervical cancers. The remaining 5% is attributing to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The highest rates of cervical cancer incidence and mortality are in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and South-East Asia (WHO, 2023).

Deaths from cervical cancer are avoidable!

5. Female Genital Mutilation Death

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a serious human rights violation and a major public health concern. The World Health Organization (2025) defines FGM as the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, or other injury to the female genital organs, for non-medical reasons. Globally, more than 230 million girls and women are living with the consequences of FGM across over 30 countries, predominantly in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia (WHO, 2025). Beyond prevalence figures, FGM is associated with significant mortality and morbidity. Ghosh et al. (2023) estimate that one girl dies approximately every 12 minutes from complications related to FGM, amounting to over 44,000 deaths annually, with the highest burden in Africa.



According to Ray Bennett's avoidable deaths framework (2025), mortality related to FGM represents an "unnecessary untimely death." These deaths are avoidable first through the prevention of harmful exposure namely; eliminating the practice itself and second through timely access to skilled medical care to manage complications such as haemorrhage, infection, and shock. It also clarifies accountability across three levels: individuals and families who consent to or perpetuate the practice; medical professionals who may perform or fail to adequately manage complications; and governments responsible for legislation, enforcement, education, and health system strengthening. In this sense, FGM-related deaths are not random cultural tragedies but system-linked failures of prevention, protection, and response (Ray-Benett, 2025).

Deaths from female genital mutilation are avoidable!

6. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Death

At least 1/7 homicides globally and more than 1/3 of female homicides are perpetrated by an intimate partner. This proportion is six times higher for female homicides than for male homicides. Violence of this nature represents the culmination of a long history of abuse.

It was found that women who experienced IPV during the COVID-19 pandemic has low levels of disaster resilience with the compounding stresses (Cannon et al., 2022).

Strategies to reduce intimate partner violence deaths include risk assessments at different points of care, support for women experiencing intimate partner violence and control of gun/weapon ownership for people with a history of violence (Stöckl et al., 2013).

Deaths from intimate partner violence deaths are avoidable!

7. Malaria Death

Malaria causes over one million deaths each year, in Africa with more than 250,000 children dying yearly from the disease in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adepoju, 2019). According to the WHO statistics in 2022, the region was home to 94% of all malaria cases and 95% of deaths. For African countries accounted for just over half of all malaria deaths worldwide: Nigeria (26.8%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12.3%), Uganda (5.1%) and Mozambique (4.2%). The most vulnerable groups are children, pregnant women, and non-immune individuals, as malaria is responsible for 11% and 30% of maternal and infant mortality (Thornton, 2020).



Deaths from malaria are avoidable!

8. Typhoid Death

Statistics from the WHO in 2019 estimated 9 million people get sick from Typhoid and 110,000 people die from it every year. Even if it is life-threatening, Typhoid is avoidable and treatable through antibiotics and vaccines. It is a public health problem in many developing countries of the African, Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asian and Western Pacific regions. Populations that lack access to safe water, adequate sanitation and children are at highest risk (WHO, 2023; 2018)

Deaths from typhoid are avoidable!

9. Tuberculosis (TB) Death

Even if it is curable and preventable, a total of 1.3 million people died from TB in 2022 (including 167,000 with HIV). An estimated 10.6 million fell ill with TB worldwide, which includes 5.8 million men, 3.5 million women and 1.3 million children. Even if TB is present in all countries and age groups, more than two-thirds of the global total is in Bangladesh, India,

Pakistan, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines. People with HIV, undernutrition, diabetes, alcohol use and smoking are at a higher risk of falling ill (WHO, 2023a; 2023b).

Deaths from tuberculosis are avoidable!

10. Cholera Death

From the estimated 2.86 million cases of Cholera annually, 95,000 deaths occur worldwide. Many cases are not being recorded due to limitations in surveillance systems (WHO, 2023). The global burden remains high. The countries with the highest rates of mortality are within the Sub-Saharan Africa except for India, Bangladesh, Haiti and Sudan. Sub Saharan Africa accounts for 60% of the global burden and South-East Asia accounts for 29% of the burden globally (Ali et al., 2015)

Deaths from cholera are avoidable!

11. Silicosis Death

In 2019, there were over 12,900 deaths worldwide due to silicosis. Middle-SDI countries had the highest numbers 5,500 of mortality in 2019, and the numbers have increased in low SDI countries by 0.32% while the high-SDI countries have shown a decrease in mortality. Palau, North Korea, Chile, China and Portugal were the top five countries for mortality in 2019. 95.72% of all deaths are in males with the mortality increasing with aging (Chen et al., 2022).

Deaths from silicosis are avoidable!

Watch the Avoidable Deaths Network and COAL's [spoken word poetry](#) on avoidable silicosis deaths.

12. Suicide Death from Mental Illnesses

Global suicide mortality rate amounts to 1.4% of all deaths worldwide. At least 90% of people who have died from suicide have suffered mental disorders. The risk of suicide has been estimated to be 5-8% for several mental disorders such as depression, alcoholism and schizophrenia with depression being the most common disorder among people who commit suicide (Brådvik, 2018). Launching prevention programs to encourage research, detection, treatment and management of people at risk with the supply of relevant social support and pharmacological interventions to reduce suicides from mental illnesses (Fu et al., 2023).

Deaths from suicides are avoidable!

13. Snakebite Envenomation Death



It is estimated that 5.4 million people worldwide are bitten by snakes each year with 1.8 to 2.7 million cases of envenoming. Globally 81 410 137 880 people die each year due to snake bites, and around three times as many amputations and other permanent disabilities are caused by snakebites annually. Less education agricultural workers and children are most affected and, it has been reported that bites by venomous can cause paralysis. Furthermore, in Asia up to two million people are envenomed by snakes each year, while in Africa there is estimated 435 000 to 580 000 bites annually that need treatment. The highest burden occurs in countries where health systems are weakest and medical resources sparse.

Deaths from snakebite envenoming are avoidable!

Learn more about Avoidable Deaths Network's [research](#) on avoidable snakebite deaths.

Watch the Avoidable Deaths Network and COAL's [spoken word poetry](#) on avoidable snakebite deaths.

14. Dog Bite Death

Rabies is estimated to cause 59,000 human deaths annually in over 150 countries, with 95% of cases occurring in Africa and Asia. The burden of disease is disproportionately borne by rural poor populations, with approximately half of cases attributable to children under 15 years of age. It is extremely important to do extensive washing of the wound with water and soap for at least 15 minutes and seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

Deaths from dog bite are avoidable!

15. Crocodile Bite Death

Historical records show that northern Australia has the highest number of crocodile attacks precisely between 1970 and 2014, there were 109 unprovoked attacks on humans. Furthermore, it has been reported from Korogwe District, Tanzania, 51 people were killed by the Nile crocodile over a period of 5-year period from 1990-1994. In Uganda Wildlife Authority reported that 30 workers were killed every year by crocodiles. Countless people also die from crocodile bites in the Sundarbans of India and Bangladesh.

Deaths from crocodile bites are avoidable!

16. Drowning Injury and Death

Drowning is the third cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths. There are an estimated 236000 annual drowning deaths worldwide. The global burden and death from drowning are rooted to low-and middle-income countries that accounts for over 90% of unintentional drowning deaths. Some of the ways to prevent drowning is covering wells, using barriers, fencing swimming pools, controlling access to water hazards (among others).



Deaths from drowning are avoidable!

Learn more about Avoidable Deaths Network's [research](#) on avoidable drowning deaths.

Watch the Avoidable Deaths Network and COAL's [spoken word poetry](#) on avoidable drowning deaths.

Watch the Avoidable Deaths Network's [account](#) of avoidable drowning deaths in Uganda.

17. Burns Injury and Death

Burns injury is a global public health concern, accounting for an estimated 180,000 deaths annually. The majority occur in low-middle-income countries and two thirds in the WHO African and South-East Asian Regions. In India, over 1 million people are moderately or severely burnt every year. Nearly 173,000 Bangladeshi children are moderately or severely burnt every year.

Deaths from burns are avoidable!

Learn more about avoidable burn deaths from Avoidable Deaths Network's [knowledge-exchange webinar](#).

18. Road Traffic Accident Death

It is estimated that approximately 1.19 million people die each year because of road traffic accidents. Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years. 92% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low-and middle-income countries. More than half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclist, and motorcyclist. Road traffic accidents cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product. To prevent deaths and injuries from road traffic and accidents WHO recommends designing interventions such as safer infrastructure and incorporating road safety features into transport planning, improving the safety features of vehicles, and enhancing post-crash of victims of road traffic crashes; enforcing laws relating to key risks, and raising public awareness.

Deaths from road traffic accidents are avoidable!

Find out about the Avoidable Deaths Network's [global campaign event](#) on avoidable road traffic accident deaths.

19. Well-Fall Death

In District Chiniot, Pakistan, agricultural well falls have been a persistent yet preventable cause of injuries and fatalities among farmers and livestock, with 286 incidents reported from 2013 to 2023. Previously, no protective measures were in place, leading to severe injuries such as 30 head trauma cases and 25 fractures cases, primarily affecting individuals aged 11–30. The highest number of these incidents occurred in 2023, nearing 70 cases, with Tehsil Chiniot being the most affected area. Alarmingly, 16 people lost their lives, and around 80 victims required hospitalization.

Additionally, animal-related incidents have also shown a growing trend, with nearly 50 cases reported in 2023 alone. This toll surpasses human-related falls in most years, leading to significant economic losses for farmers. However, responding to the fatal Well-Fall recurring incidents, Punjab Emergency Service Chiniot launched a community-led initiative in 2017 to construct 2.5 to 3-foot-high safety walls around tube wells. Without government funding, over 1,411 wells were secured through community mobilization, significantly reducing incidents and financial losses.

The local farmers were sensitized to the gravity of this challenge, and they were convinced that these Well-Fall Deaths Were Avoidable Deaths. They generously contributed resources for construction of these simple and cost-effective structures. Since the implementation of this initiative, no fall-related deaths have been reported at protected wells, proving that such tragedies were entirely avoidable. This innovative intervention underscores the significance of community-driven solutions in rural disaster risk reduction.

Deaths from well-fall are avoidable!

Learn more about avoidable well-fall deaths from Avoidable Deaths Network's [Regional Coordinator](#).

20. Crowd Crush Death

Crowd disasters remain a major global public health hazard, with recent tragedies like the Itaewon incident resulting in 158 deaths (Shin & Kim, 2026) and the 2015 Hajj pilgrimage causing over 2,000 fatalities (Yang et al., 2024). The primary cause of mortality in these events is compressive asphyxia (Chang et al., 2024), where intense pressure from a tightly packed crowd restricts chest excursion and prevents victims from breathing (Yang et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2024). These disasters are frequently the result of systemic failures in managing crowd dynamics (Sieben & Seyfried, 2023); at critical densities of approximately seven persons per square meter, the crowd begins to act like a fluid mass, experiencing crowd turbulence and transversal waves that cause individuals to lose their balance, fall into gaps, and become wedged in fatal piles (Sieben & Seyfried, 2023; Yang et al., 2024).



Strategies to prevent crowd crush deaths include comprehensive pre-event planning (Sharma et al., 2023), the use of video monitoring and simulation models to detect pressure build-up early (Sharma et al., 2023), and the implementation of one-way pedestrian paths to eliminate

dangerous counterflows at bottlenecks (Sharma et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024). Effective disaster risk governance requires robust safety legislation, such as Special Acts for victim support and truth ascertainment, as well as the establishment of official communication channels and rights-based management systems that prioritize the safety and participation of the victims (Shin & Kim, 2026).

Deaths from crowd crushes are avoidable!

21. Scavenging Death

Due to inhalation of poisonous gases inside sewer lines or septic tanks, sewage workers die in India. These deaths are avoidable deaths. The noxious gas is fatal resulting in an instant death (Kumar et al., 2016). Year 2019 recorded the highest number of scavenging deaths at 110 (George & Sarvanan, 2019). Further, 80% of the workers die before age 60 due to work-related health problems and the number keeps increasing (Kumar et al., 2016). The rise of scavenger deaths is the lack of basic awareness and improper knowledge of workers while working. Technological safety precautions and raising awareness are suggested to cease the death rate (George & Sarvanan, 2019; Kumar et al., 2016) .

Deaths from scavenging are avoidable!

22. Lightning Death

From 2006 through 2021, there were 444 lightning strike deaths in the US. The average age of a person struck by lightning is 37 years. Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia have 4 billion lightning threats.

Deaths from lightning are avoidable!

Learn more about the [Lightening Resilient India Campaign](#) led by our collaborator CROPC.



23. Hunger and Starvation Death

Food insecurity remains a global public health concern worldwide, 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021. People affected by hunger increased in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021, to 9.8%. This compares with 8% in 2019 and 9.3% in 2020. Around 2.3 billion people in the world (29.3%) were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021 – 350 million more compared to before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. 600 million people are projected to be chronically undernourished by 2030. A third of rural adults experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2022, compared to 28.8% in peri-urban and 26% in urban areas.

Deaths from hunger and starvation are avoidable!

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