



Stagnation or Growth? Algeria's development pathway to 2040

Health

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Health

Free healthcare was introduced in Algeria in 1974. In 1984, the government introduced reforms that shifted the health system from a curative to a preventive one more suited to its then youthful population with high levels of communicable diseases. The results were impressive. For example, compared to 1970, when the infant mortality rate was 106 per 1 000 live births, by 1990 it had fallen to just 41. In 2020, Algeria's infant mortality rate is estimated at roughly 22 and by 2040 it is forecast to drop to 17 deaths per 1 000 live births.

Under current policies, Algeria will not achieve the aspirational objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five by 2030.

Although the country has continued to invest in its health sector, it faces considerable pressure as its ageing population needs inherently more expensive care for NCDs. This is complicated by a shortage of healthcare professionals and social inequalities in the country.[1]

Currently, life expectancy at birth in Algeria is estimated at 77.6 years. By 2040 it is projected to reach 80—significantly higher than that for OLMICs, UMICs and Africa.

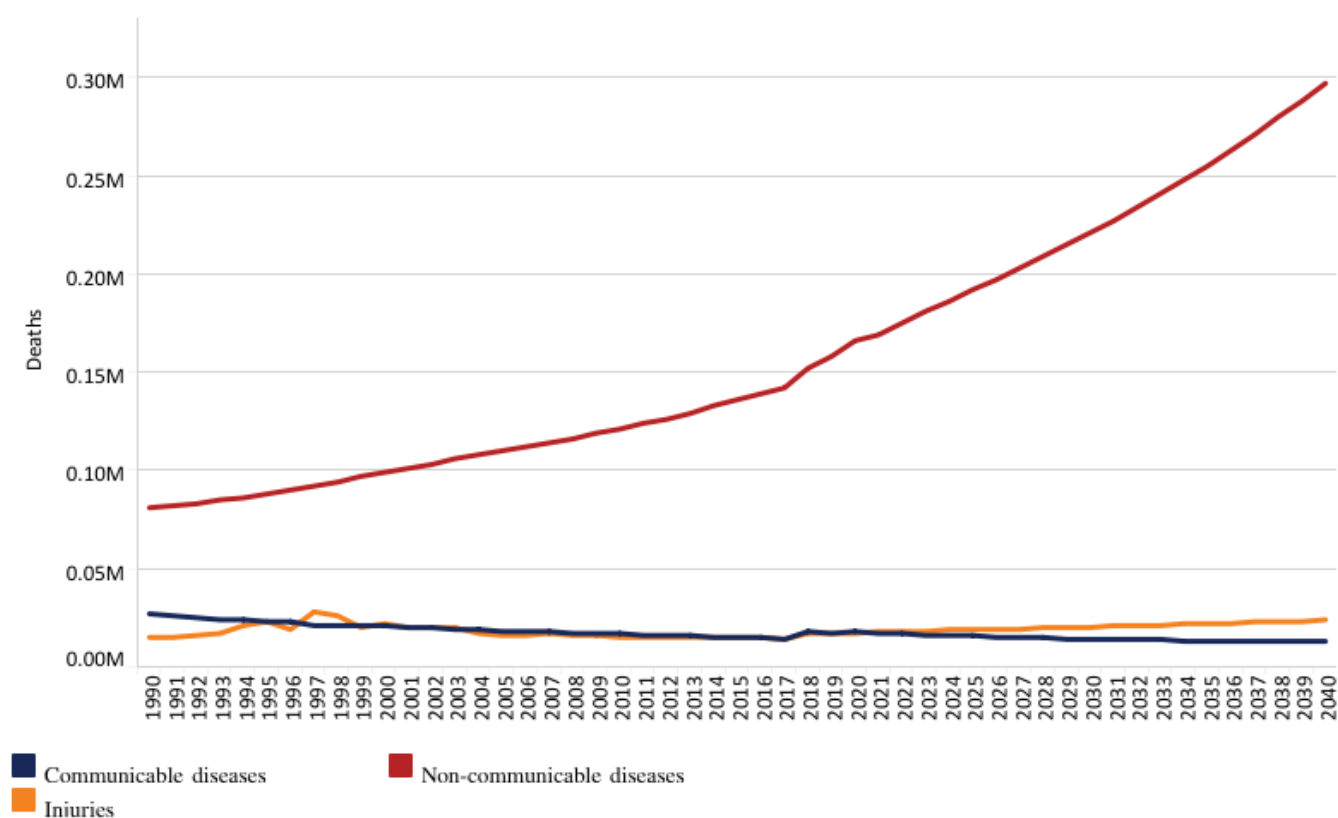
Algeria's maternal mortality ratio is currently estimated at 129.7 per 100 000 live births and the country is on track to achieve the SDG target of fewer than 70 deaths per 100 000 live births in around 2033.

Deaths from communicable diseases are low when compared to sub-Saharan Africa. 'Other communicable diseases'[2] are more common among infants while respiratory infections are more prevalent in the older cohorts.

Given the heavy burden of NCDs and the associated comorbidities of COVID-19, Algeria's population is at a relatively high risk of developing severe complications related to COVID-19.[3] The pandemic is stretching the country's health system and resources at a very vulnerable time.

Injuries as a result of road traffic accidents, although declining, are also more common with males, especially 15–39 years. In 2019, an estimated 3 275 people were killed in road accidents.[4]

Chart 10: Share of disease burden by the three main International Classification of Diseases (ICD) categories



Source: IFs version 7.53, historical data from Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

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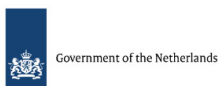
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Chart 10 shows that NCDs will increase in the foreseeable future in Algeria and the country will need to invest in the associated health system, facilities and diagnostics.

Endnotes

1. N Mahfoud and B Brahamia, [The Problems of Funding the Health System in Algeria](#), International Journal of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 4:2, April 2014
2. Catch phrase for other communicable diseases that are not prevalent enough to be categorised on their own.
3. Wie-Jie et al, [Comorbidity and Its Impact on 1590 Patients with COVID-19 in China: A Nationwide Analysis](#), European Respiratory Journal, 55:5, 2020
4. MENAFN, [Road accidents kill 3 275 in Algeria in 2019](#), 18 January 2020

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About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees, head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute, and is an extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

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