

Cardiovascular Disease in the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities in the Region

Why was this study needed?

Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of illness and death in the Caribbean. Regional and global organizations like the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) require Caribbean countries and territories to collect population health information on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). This information is used to track changes in disease rates. It helps us understand what causes and protects communities from diseases like stroke and heart attack.

The information can come from national health surveys, school-based surveys, health care records, death records, or other data collection programs. This review assesses data collection activities in the Caribbean region and the availability of public cardiovascular disease information.



Which data was involved?

We searched for available information on cardiovascular disease in 33 Caribbean countries and territories. Our search looked at information sources available from 2006–2016. Those years followed the calls for more data collection and analysis. We grouped countries by sovereignty and territorial status because this affects what health information is available. We identified NCD data sources that are available to the public. We also looked at how the information was collected.

What were the study results?

- 12% of countries conducted annual surveys on residents' health.
- 39% of countries conducted health surveys two or more times in ten years (from 2006-2016).
- 64% of countries collected information on the six recommended cardiovascular disease risk factors: hypertension, diabetes, obesity, smoking, physical activity, and nutrition.

Takeaway message

The Caribbean region has made modest progress in collecting information on cardiovascular disease. We can enhance the utility of the data being collected by ensuring that all countries collect data annually on all six CVD risk factors. Future efforts to generate consistent and timely population data require collaborative approaches to implement, interpret, and translate that data. These approaches can include pooling resources expertise, and knowledge.

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