



2000 to 2015: How Far Have We Progressed in Achieving the Health Related Millennium Development Goals?

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DEAR EDITOR,

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the eight goals formulated by the United Nations (UN) in 2000, to be achieved by 2015 by the UN member states.^[1] The member states have committed to effectively tackle the issues of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, gender inequality, mother and child mortality, infectious diseases, environmental degradation, and to encourage partnership between different stakeholders.^[1] The MDGs has given

policy makers and stakeholders a target to work together and achieve the same within the stipulated time.^[1,2]

In fact, a set of targets has been proposed to monitor the progress toward all the eight goals by the end of 2015.^[1] As 2015 was the last year for countries to accomplish the global targets, the World Health Organization (WHO) has done the analysis of various MDGs, including health-related MDGs.^[2] Even though most of the developed nations have revealed a significant progress, the scenario has been quite worrisome for the developing nations [Table 1].^[3-7] After

Table 1: Status of MDGs

MDG	Target	Observed parameter	1990	Current	Remark
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1)	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	Prevalence of underweight children in developing nations	28%	13%	Not achieved
Reduce child mortality (MDG 4)	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	Number of under-five deaths	12.7 million	6.3 million	Not achieved
Improve maternal health (MDG 5)	To reduce by 75% the maternal mortality ratio	Number of maternal deaths	0.52 million	0.28 million	Not achieved
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6)	HIV/AIDS: To halt by 2015 and then reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, and to achieve universal access to anti-retroviral therapy	Number of HIV positive cases	3.4 million (2001)	2.1 million	Achieved
		Access to ART by HIV-positive people	-	64% people have no access	Not achieved
		Incidence and mortality of malaria	Incidence reduced by 30%; mortality reduced by 47% (in 2000-2013 period)		Achieved
Ensure environmental sustainability (MDG 7)	Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation services	Halt and reverse the trend of TB (incidence of TB)	>10 million (2000)	9 million (2013)	Achieved
		Access to safe drinking water	76%	90%	Achieved
Developing a global partnership for development (MDG 8)	To enhance the accessibility of the people to affordable essential medicines in developing nations	Access to improved sanitation services	-	68% (in contrast to target of 77%)	Not achieved
		Access to essential medicines	37%	-	Not achieved

MDG=Millennium Development Goal, ART=Antiretroviral therapy, TB=Tuberculosis

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a careful analysis, it has been shown that the results have been mixed with some of the targets being achieved (viz., halting and reversing the trends of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, and increasing accessibility to safe water) and some requiring additional inputs to continuously move in the right direction. In an attempt to move continuously forward, the WHO and UN have together chalked down newer goals under the overview of sustainable development goals, set to be achieved by the year 2030.^[2,8]

To conclude, the MDGs has enabled the world to successfully progress on the health front, but at the same time it has even highlighted the various gaps present within the health care delivery system. Thus, it is high time that stakeholders should put in sustainable efforts to improve the quality of life of vulnerable sections of society.


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