

Public Health (SEACO) Research: The identification of causes of death among non-medically certified deaths in Malaysia using verbal autopsy

PhD Opportunity

A fully-funded PhD position is available in the School of Medicine & Health Sciences at Monash University Malaysia. Funding includes tuition, a stipend of RM2,600 / up to a maximum of 42 months of candidature. Anticipated start date is late 2020/early 2021 or until the position is filled.

Brief Background of Research Project

According to the Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM) deaths certified by registered medical practitioners, are referred to as medically certified deaths whereas the other recorded deaths usually those which occur outside a health facility are referred to as non-medically certified deaths. The underlying cause of death is best determined if death is certified by a registered medical practitioner which is common in most developed countries. Although Malaysia has a strong civil registration system, 50% to 52% of the total number of deaths were medically certified as the rest occurred outside a medical facility or in the absence of a doctor. More than 60% of these non-medically certified deaths listed "Old age" as the underlying cause. There was an increase of total recorded deaths by 4.1% in 2016 as compared to 2015, whereas there was an increase of only 1% medically certified deaths in the same period. Verbal autopsy is an important tool in order to cover up the existing gap of knowledge on cause of death between medically certified and non-medically certified deaths in this country.

Project Description

The aims of the study are to identify the cause of death of non-medically certified deaths in the region of Segamat, and to compare and validate the different methods of identification of cause of death between physician review and development of algorithm. This research is a part of the Southeast Asia Community Observatory (SEACO), longitudinal community cohort. More than 1000 verbal autopsy data will be available for PhD project.

Supervisor / Supervision team

Prof Tin Tin Su

Dr Nowrozy Jahan

Eligibility

Candidates must meet the minimum admission requirements (academic and English language proficiency) for the research degree. In general, this is equivalent to a high distinction average (H1/H1E or 1st Class Honours as per Faculty's and Monash's assessment at admission) from a recognized university. Scholarship will be selected based on comprehensive ranking of academic achievement, research publications, and research experience or research-related awards.

Required Skills

- i. **Technical Skills** – Literature review, statistical analysis, use of Microsoft Office or equivalent, use of citation software, public speaking
- ii. **Soft Skills** – Project management, written and oral communication, self-management
- iii. **Education background (discipline)** – public health, epidemiology, anthropology, applied statistics, medical and health sciences or psychology