COVID_SSA

ASSET GHRU/ KING’S GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Update on trajectories of deaths among confirmed COVID-19 cases (cumulative numbers) in 46 sub-Saharan African countries to 17th July 2021

All sub-Saharan countries have now confirmed deaths among COVID-19 cases, the last being Eritrea on the 22nd December 2020.

The cumulative total, by day of outbreak is summarised in charts on the following pages. Note that the scale of the (vertical) y-axis varies according to the total number of deaths recorded to date, ranging from eight in Burundi to 66,677 in South Africa.

Deaths linked to COVID-19 will be under-reported in these data since deaths among those who did not have their infection confirmed by a PCR test (even if suspected on clinical grounds) are not included. This will obviously also apply to deaths in the community that did not come to the attention of clinical services or public health authorities unless post-mortem testing is carried out. While all those with acute respiratory distress should be admitted and tested, limited testing capacity in some countries may mean that this was not always done.

Countries with more confirmed cases, will, in general report more deaths. Furthermore, the trajectories of cumulative numbers of deaths generally follow those of cumulative numbers of cases, with a one to two week time lag – those countries with exponential increases in cases show exponential increases in deaths, and those with a linear growth in cases show the same pattern for deaths. The case fatality risk (CFR - the proportion of confirmed cases that have died up to the date of report) provides a clearer indicator for comparing case fatality across countries. In a separate document, we also provide a set of charts for the evolution of this indicator for all sub-Saharan African countries over time.