

## Developing Suicide Referral Pathways for Youth in the Context of Routine National Surveys

3. Epidemiology and surveillance

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### Abstract text

Suicide is a leading cause of death for young people globally, yet most countries lack data on the prevalence of youth suicide ideation and attempts. Indicators and questionnaire items to collect data on suicide thoughts and behaviors have been designed by UNICEF and partners for population-level data collection. The questionnaire items, as well as resources for the cultural adaptation and implementation of these items into national and subnational surveys, are being rolled out for the first time within UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys program in low- and middle-income country settings. Prior to administering the survey in each setting, national survey administrators establish local suicide referral pathways for at-risk cases identified by the survey questionnaire items. Teams of trained survey interviewers administer the mental health module to youth ages 15-24 years. Young people participating in the survey who self-report current suicide ideation and a suicide attempt in the past year are offered to be contacted shortly by a care provider. Here, we present quantitative and qualitative findings of an initial country implementing the suicide items and referral procedure into a routine largescale survey data collection. We present an overview of the outcomes, including the portion of youth participants identified to be at risk of suicide attempt, portion of at-risk cases agreeing to referral, and the portion of at-risk youth cases successfully in contact with a care provider. We discuss challenges faced in implementing the items to measure youth suicide thoughts and behaviors in largescale surveys. We also present the experiences of the teams in developing and implementing referral procedures for youth at risk of suicide attempt who are identified during largescale surveys in low- and middle-income countries.