

Chapter 2

Universal Health Coverage Progress in Asian Countries

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Chapter 2

Universal Health Coverage Progress in Asian Countries

Universal health coverage (UHC) is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as ‘all people have access to the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. It covers the full continuum of essential health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care across the life course’ (WHO, 2022). UHC comprises three major components: (i) cover entire population without disparity, (ii) provide necessary health services, and (iii) provide financial risk protection. To measure the achievement of UHC, the service coverage indicator (SCI) has been established by the WHO and the World Bank to provide necessary health services and financial risk protection with the establishment of two indicators: catastrophic expenditure and impoverishment.

Table 2.1 shows the progress made by each ERIA country on the most representative indicators in the SCI. All countries have achieved a relatively high level of progress in infectious diseases and maternal and child health, and almost all countries have achieved 80%, especially in the area of child immunisation. On the other hand, indicators for the management of NCDs, especially hypertension, are still low in most countries, and further improvement is needed. The greatest disparity between high-income and low- and middle-income countries is probably in the area of ‘service capacity and access.’ This indicates the number of doctors, nurses, and hospital beds per population and other so-called medical infrastructure, but there is still a large disparity in this area, and further improvement is needed in the future. In addition, the SCI basically evaluates inputs, not the actual quality of medical care and services provided. Therefore, for example, it has been pointed out that even if 80% of maternal health check-ups are achieved, the maternal health check-ups provided there are not always of good quality, and as a result, do not contribute to the reduction of maternal deaths. It will be important to incorporate the aspect of quality assessment in the future, especially in countries in the ERIA region, where the achievement of SCI is approaching 80% to some extent.

Table 2.1. Coverage of Health Services at National Level (%)

| Indicators | Brunei | Cambodia | Indonesia | Lao PDR | Malaysia | Myanmar | Philippines | Singapore |
|---|---------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Family planning | 76 | 61 | ≥80 | 70 | 55 | 77 | 57 | 77 |
| Antenatal care by healthcare providers | ≥80 | 76 | ≥80 | 62 | ≥80 | 59 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Child vaccination | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 77 | ≥80 |
| Care seeking for pneumonia or acute respiratory tract infection | ≥80 | 69 | 75 | 40 | ≥80 | 58 | 66 | ≥80 |
| Tuberculosis treatment | ≥80 | 63 | 66 | 61 | ≥80 | 77 | 68 | ≥80 |
| HIV treatment | 71 | ≥80 | 24 | 50 | 50 | ≥80 | 43 | 76 |
| Access to at least basic sanitation | ≥80 | 66 | ≥80 | 79 | ≥80 | 73 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Management of blood pressure | 23 | 57 | 33 | 53 | 32 | 38 | 44 | 48 |
| Management of diabetes | 68 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 76 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Tobacco control | 76 | 68 | 46 | 53 | 67 | 35 | 66 | 76 |
| RMNCH | ≥80 | 74 | ≥80 | 61 | ≥80 | 70 | 71 | ≥80 |
| Infectious diseases | ≥80 | 70 | 51 | 62 | 76 | 77 | 62 | ≥80 |
| NCDs | 49 | 73 | 53 | 65 | 55 | 51 | 66 | 71 |
| Service capacity and access | ≥80 | 37 | 53 | 26 | ≥80 | 49 | 32 | ≥80 |
| UHC SCI | 77 | 61 | 59 | 50 | 76 | 61 | 55 | ≥80 |

Table 2.1. Continued

| Indicators | Thailand | Viet Nam | Japan | China | Republic of Korea | India | Australia | New Zealand |
|---|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------|-------------|
| Family planning | ≥80 | 79 | 57 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 73 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Antenatal care by healthcare providers | ≥80 | 74 | ≥80 | 77 | ≥80 | 51 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Child vaccination | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Care seeking for pneumonia or acute respiratory tract infection | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 78 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Tuberculosis treatment | ≥80 | 60 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| HIV treatment | 75 | 65 | ≥80 | 75 | 75 | 63 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Access to at least basic sanitation | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 68 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Management of blood pressure | 52 | 51 | 48 | 55 | 56 | 48 | 51 | 48 |
| Management of diabetes | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 72 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Tobacco control | 68 | 64 | 70 | 63 | 69 | 60 | 80 | 80 |
| RMNCH | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 72 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| Infectious diseases | ≥80 | 70 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 71 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| NCDs | 70 | 69 | 69 | 62 | 70 | 63 | 73 | 69 |
| Service capacity and access | ≥80 | 61 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 44 | ≥80 | ≥80 |
| UHC SCI | ≥80 | 70 | ≥80 | ≥80 | ≥80 | 61 | ≥80 | ≥80 |

HIV = human immunodeficiency virus, RMNCH = Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health, = NCD = non-communicable disease, UHC = universal health coverage, SCI = service coverage indicator.

Source: World Health Organization (2021), Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2021 Global Monitoring Report.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240040618>