**INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH STATISTICS**

Defn: Statistics refers to the art and science of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting numerical data for decision making.

**About Health Statistics**  
How many Kenyans are affected by cardiovascular disease each year? Did the number of Kenyans with health insurance increase significantly following the passage of the UHC? How do the leading causes of death in Kenyan differ from those worldwide?

The answers to these important questions and many others lie in the data collected by government, private, and non-profit agencies and organizations. The health statistics reported by these groups are integral to monitoring trends in the health status of populations, **planning** the allocation of health care resources, and evaluating the effectiveness of public health interventions.

**Health statistics are numbers** that summarize information related to health. Researchers and experts from government, private, and non-profit agencies and organizations collect health statistics. They use the statistics to learn about public health and health care. Some of the types of statistics include

* How many people in the country have a disease or how many people got the disease within a certain period of time
* How many people of a certain group have a disease. The groups could be based on location, race, ethnic group, sex, age, profession, income level, level of education. This can help identify [health disparities](https://medlineplus.gov/healthdisparities.html).
* Whether a treatment is safe and effective
* How many people were born and died. These are known as vital statistics.
* How many people have access to and use health care
* The quality and efficiency of our health care system
* Health care costs, including how much the government, employers, and individuals pay for health care. It could include how poor health can affect the country economically
* The impact of government programs and policies on health
* Risk factors for different diseases. An example would be how [air pollution](https://medlineplus.gov/airpollution.html) can raise your risk of [lung diseases](https://medlineplus.gov/lungdiseases.html)
* Ways to lower risk for diseases, such as exercise and weight loss to lower the risk of getting [type 2 diabetes](https://medlineplus.gov/diabetestype2.html)