CHAPTER IV

HEALTH
This chapter illustrates the health situation in ESCWA member countries, covering health professionals and health resources for both public and private sectors, and major infectious diseases. Data were taken from the statistical yearbooks of the national statistical offices for the period 2000-2013. Averages were calculated using population data from the United Nations World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision.

Table IV-1 presents data on health professionals. It includes the number of medical doctors/physicians, dentists, nurses and pharmacists per 100,000 population, and the number of nurses per physician in both public and private sectors in 2000 and 2005-2012. The number of medical doctors/physicians covers both generalist and specialist practitioners. With a few exceptions, the data show a consistent increase in the number of health professionals during the period 2000-2012. The numbers of physicians and nurses per 100,000 population were the highest in Qatar and Kuwait respectively, whereas the highest numbers of dentists and pharmacists were in Lebanon and Palestine respectively. Conversely, the lowest numbers of health professionals were seen in the Sudan and Yemen.

Table IV-2 presents data on health resources. It highlights the number of hospitals and hospital beds per 100,000 population for public and private hospitals. It also includes the number of health clinics, maternity and pediatric centres, and pharmacies per 100,000 population in 2000 and the period 2005-2012. The data reveal steady hospital rates in ESCWA member countries. While less than half of the member countries witnessed a decrease in their hospital beds’ rate, an increase for the remaining countries was noticed. The rates of mother and child care centres in most countries remained unchanged, and only 33 per cent of countries had a decrease in the rate of health clinics. An increase in the rate of pharmacies was noticed in the majority of countries.
Table IV-3 presents data on major infectious diseases including malaria, tuberculosis and hepatitis per 100,000 population in 2000 and during the period 2005-2012. The Sudan and Yemen had the highest prevalence of malaria among ESCWA member countries. The prevalence of these infectious diseases generally decreased in almost all countries. However, the prevalence of tuberculosis increased in the Sudan and Yemen and slightly in Palestine over the last period.
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