

The key to powerful data? Make it easy to collect and easy to understand.

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Healthcare around the world needs accurate, timely, and reliable data to guide decision-making. Without proper data and analysis, healthcare providers cannot identify areas that require intervention, nor measure impact, nor improve programs or monitor progress towards healthcare goals and patient outcomes. Governments, healthcare institutions, frontline community organizations, researchers, and advocates need data to make informed decisions and create change.

Increasingly, effective data collection and analysis have also become a key component in directing scarce resources to where they are most needed. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for data in healthcare, as governments, frontline community organizations, healthcare institutions, researchers, and advocates made swift, life and death decisions based on data analysis.

As COVID-19 revealed the serious gaps in surveillance capacity, it also introduced a plethora of aggregation dashboards which have reframed how we think about health and making data available to wider audiences. This kind of data is here to stay, and it is clear that finding the right approach to its management and analysis is more important than ever to improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

Given all of this, many organizations and service delivery implementers want to have data but find the reality of collecting, analyzing, and using it difficult. With this increased demand for data, organizations need to prioritize easy-to-use data collection tools and analysis methods.

At M4M, we prioritize rigorous, but easy to use, measures so programs can routinely collect, review, and use data. This approach not only makes data easier to use, but it also drives a desire for that data and the stories and trends that it reveals.

When data is easy to understand, it becomes a powerful tool for creating change. It can give context and support comparisons among programs, across geographies, and over time.

The [ACQTool](#) to measure abortion care quality is an example of easy-to-use data collection and analysis. Results, benchmarked to a quality threshold, are [displayed with color-coding](#) to make it readable and comprehensible. It allows a user to understand how well they are doing against a universal target, as well as compare across multiple service delivery sites. The included indicators are linked to health outcomes of interest, which means results carry meaning about how to improve service delivery to improve population health.

Data collection, analysis, and use need to be a continuous process if it is to best help healthcare organizations improve care. At M4M we specialize in providing data-driven insights for global health that simplify measurement to allow organizations to improve health outcomes and equity. We know how important data are to this mission. When resources are limited, data – that are easy to collect and understand – are the backbone of effective healthcare service delivery.

We are constantly looking at new ways to develop evidence-based metrics, prototyping, refining, and disseminating our results because the knowledge which good data unlocks empowers decision makers and directly impacts everyone receiving and providing healthcare services.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Contact M4M (partnerships@m4mgmt.org).

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ABOUT METRICS FOR MANAGEMENT

[Metrics for Management](#) (M4M) is a non-profit organization, created with a vision to establish common metrics in global health, and the tools to apply them, in order to enable governments and NGOs to measure what matters and better serve those in need. M4M designs, promotes, and standardizes performance measures in health service delivery to improve health outcomes and well-being in low- and middle-income countries.