

**OPENING REMARKS**

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**MODERATOR**

**Ms. Chloe Harvey**
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## SPEAKERS



**Mr. Steve MacFeely**
Director
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**Mr. Thomas Moultrie**
Professor of Demography and Director of the Centre for Actuarial Research (CARe), University of Cape Town, South Africa



**Ms. Helen He**
Design Analyst
Population Insights
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**Dr. Shubash Shander**
Head, Survey Research Centre and Centre for Burden of Disease Research, Ministry of Health Malaysia



**Ms. Rukmini Shrinivasan**
Independent Data Journalist and Host of pandemic podcast: "The Moving Curve"

## BACKGROUND

This Stats Café builds on an earlier session on COVID-19 and death registration, which featured towards the beginning of the pandemic in mid-2020. Since then, over five million COVID-19 deaths have been reported, however, estimates predict that the global excess deaths may be two to four times higher than those officially recorded. Being able to ascertain the true impact of COVID-19 on human lives is critical for informing resource allocation and assessing the effectiveness of public health interventions as the pandemic evolves. However, many countries still lack functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems to provide accurate, complete and timely data on deaths and causes of death. This, coupled with the differences in how countries test and report COVID-19 deaths, makes it challenging to measure the true loss of life from the pandemic. The COVID-19 mortality rate has also sparked heated discussions among the general public, with false claims circulating online that the number of COVID-19 deaths have been inflated in order to justify lockdowns and other restrictions.

**"More than two years into the pandemic, several vaccines and new treatments have been developed, but are we any closer to estimating the true death toll of COVID-19?"**

Demographers, data scientists, and epidemiologists have turned to the estimation of excess mortality to try to understand just how many people died as a result of COVID-19. Excess mortality estimates measure the gap between the number of deaths in an average year under normal conditions and the number of deaths during a crisis, adjusting for relevant demographic changes as far as possible. This Stats Café aims to share a snapshot of some of the varied approaches taken by countries and organizations to produce estimates of excess mortality, as well as providing a journalistic insight of best practices in reporting on it.

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Stats Café
Good coffee makes your day, but good data helps you decide.

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# Excess mortality and the importance of data in the fight against COVID-19

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