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## INDEPTH Network makes critical health and demographic data available

- *Establishes effective data management systems in health research, results in better science*
- *Includes data from Dodowa, Kintampo and Navrongo HDSSs in Ghana*

**Accra, Ghana, July 01, 2013** – The international Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Population and Their Health (INDEPTH Network) today announced the launch of the INDEPTH Data Repository and INDEPTHStats, two data archives that will continue to build and strengthen capacity for research data management and sharing and improve access to health and science research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to individuals working in the public health space globally.

The INDEPTH Data Repository ([www.indepth-ishare.org](http://www.indepth-ishare.org)) is an online archive of high-quality datasets from INDEPTH member Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) centres. It is the first data repository that specialises in longitudinal population-based data from LMICs.

INDEPTHStats ([www.indepth-ishare.org/indepthstats](http://www.indepth-ishare.org/indepthstats)) is a website developed by the INDEPTH Network and freely available to the general public. It will contain summary statistics, images and graphs of key health and demographic indicators generated from the INDEPTH member HDSS centres.

INDEPTHStats will provide researchers, government officials and policymakers with information that can guide their decision-making, including crude birth and death rates, age-specific fertility and death rates, infant, child, and under five mortality rates, as well as numerous other health and demographic indicators. Additional indicators, such as death rates by cause of death, will be added in the near future.

The data are subjected to rigorous technical checks, first at the individual HDSSs and then within INDEPTH. New data will be added annually on 1 July.

“The lack of research data management skills and capacity is generally acknowledged to be a major factor in why such data is not more generally available. These platforms present an opportunity to exert a powerful and sustained influence on the availability of well documented and high quality population-based data,” says Professor Osman Sankoh Executive Director, INDEPTH Network.

As at the launch on 1st July 2013, the INDEPTH Data Repository contains the detail datasets underlying the indicators on INDEPTHStats for eight Network member centres and the data from an INDEPTH collaboration on the study of the epidemiology of epilepsy in demographic sites (SEEDS) is also available. The detail datasets will contain data in event-history format



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for approximately 800,000 individuals representing more than 3.7 million person years of observation. INDEPTHStats will have indicators from a further 14 member centres.

“Sharing of data reinforces the principles of open scientific enquiry and allows more value to be extracted from the data beyond what the original investigators may be able to do. This is particularly true for basic data such as genomic data, but is also relevant for public health data that INDEPTH will share. Re-analysis of the data may lead to new insights and new research,” says Dr. Abraham J. Herbst, Principal Investigator of the INDEPTH project, iSHARE2.

On behalf of the Governing Board of INDEPTH, Prof. Marcel Tanner (Chair of INDEPTH Board), Prof. Peter Byass (Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee of INDEPTH) and Prof. Osman Sankoh (Executive Director of INDEPTH) expressed in a joint statement their delight that INDEPTH has taken this bold step forward: “The process of data sharing and the support provided by funders to do so, enhance research data management capacity and practice. This contributes to the improvement of measurement and data collection methods and advances analytical techniques. Shared data represents a valuable resource to train new scientists.”

The INDEPTH Data Repository and INDEPTHStats are long-term projects of the INDEPTH Network and the datasets available in the repository and the website will continue to expand in conjunction with the INDEPTH Network’s effort to build its research data management capacity.

The availability of these data has been made possible by funding from the Hewlett Foundation, NIA/WHO, IDRC, Sida/Research Cooperation Unit, Wellcome Trust, Rockefeller Foundation and the Gates Foundation combined with the generous, free provision of the data by the member HDSSs as well as their various funders.

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## About **INDEPTH Network**

The INDEPTH Network was formally constituted in 2002 with initial core support from the Rockefeller Foundation, Sida, the World Bank and the Wellcome Trust.

INDEPTH is a pioneer in health and population research, providing robust answers to the most important questions in development. Through its global network of health and demographic surveillance system (HDSS) field sites in Africa, Asia and Oceania, it is the only organisation in the world capable of producing reliable longitudinal data not only about the lives of people in low- and middle-income countries, but about the impact on those lives of development policies and programmes.

INDEPTH is an international network of demographic research institutions that provides health and demographic data to enable developing countries set health priorities and



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policies based on the best available evidence and to guide the cost-effective use of tools, interventions and systems to ensure and monitor progress towards national goals.

The organisation's mission is to harness the collective potential of the world's community-based longitudinal demographic surveillance initiatives in low- and middle-income countries to provide a better understanding of health and social issues and to encourage the application of this understanding to alleviate major health and social problems.

For more information, please visit: [www.indepth-network.org](http://www.indepth-network.org)

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