

Meeting report

Sixth meeting of the Global Action for
Measurement of Adolescent health
(GAMA) Advisory Group

Virtual, 28-30 April 2021



Background

To improve adolescent health measurement globally, WHO, in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, the World Bank Group, and the World Food Programme (WFP), established the Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Advisory Group in 2018.

The objectives of GAMA's work are:

- to provide technical guidance to WHO, partner United Nations (UN) agencies and other relevant measurement groups to define a core set of adolescent health indicators, for the purpose of harmonizing efforts around adolescent health measurement and reporting;
- to promote harmonized guidance for adolescent health measurement, supporting countries and technical organizations in collecting useful data to track progress in the improvement of adolescent health.

The GAMA Advisory Group meets twice per year to advance work towards these objectives. GAMA meetings also serve as a platform to share state-of-the-art evidence on adolescent health measurement between GAMA experts, UN, WHO-HQ, Regional and Country Offices technical representatives, as well as external stakeholders, with the aim to better coordinate and align adolescent health measurement.

GAMA's completed work is displayed on the GAMA website¹ and in journal articles^{2,3}. The most recent activity was a systematic selection of draft priority indicators for global and national adolescent health measurement. As part of this selection process, measurement gaps were also identified. Public feed-back on the draft set of priority indicators and the measurement gaps was collected over a three-month period from October – January 2021, and subsequently incorporated into the penultimate draft.

It is against this background that WHO held the sixth meeting of the GAMA Advisory Group from 28-30 April 2021. The meeting was held virtually, and to accommodate for the different time zones the meeting was held in two different sessions each day, with one session in the morning according to CET, that was then repeated during the afternoon.

The meeting brought together experts of the GAMA Advisory Group; representatives of UN agencies; WHO regional adolescent health focal points; WHO technical experts; country representatives participating in the third GAMA meeting and in the scoring of adolescent health indicators; external partners; as well as members of funding agencies.

1 The Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA). Available at:

<https://www.who.int/data/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent/gama/>

2 Guthold R, Moller AB, Azzopardi P, et al. The Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Initiative – Rethinking Adolescent Metrics. *J Adolesc Health* 2019;64(6):697-9.

3 Guthold R, Moller AB, Adebayo E, et al. Priority areas for adolescent health measurement. Accepted for publication in *J Adolesc Health* 2021.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes presentations, discussions and outcomes of the sixth GAMA meeting, which was held virtually between 28 and 30 April 2021.

Meeting objectives

The objectives of the sixth GAMA meeting were to:

- Exchange information on the latest activities in the area of adolescent health measurement between GAMA experts, UN, WHO-HQ, Regional and Country Offices technical representatives, as well as external stakeholders;
- Review and discuss the penultimate draft of the list of GAMA priority indicators.

Expected outcomes

- Shared knowledge on the latest activities in the area of adolescent health measurement;
- Agreed upon next steps to finalise the list of GAMA priority indicators.

Updates on current issues within adolescent health measurement

A series of presentations related to updates within the field of adolescent health measurement were given. This included updates on the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC); the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS); the Global School Health Policies and Practices Study (G-SHPPS); Monitoring menstrual health and hygiene; Measuring transgender and non-binary gender identities among adolescents in Canada and beyond; UNAIDS', UNFPA's, and UNICEF's adolescent health measurement activities; UNICEF's adolescent nutrition measurement activities; WHO/UNICEF HPV vaccine coverage estimates; the Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan for adolescent health in Nigeria – a process informed by the GAMA work; Subnational collection, analysis and use of adolescent sexual and reproductive health data; Programmatic measures for adolescent sexual and reproductive health services; Measuring inequity; Cause of death estimates for 5-19 year olds; and on Research findings on the indirect effects of COVID-19 on adolescents and the implications of this for working for and with them.

GAMA priority indicator list

Discussion on survey feedback requiring input from the GAMA experts

Public feedback on the proposed indicator list has been collected via a survey. The WHO GAMA Secretariat presented the top line results of this survey, as well as an overview of how the this collected feedback was addressed, including examples of changes to the list that had been made, based on this feedback.

This meeting was used to discuss feedback from the survey that required additional input from experts before taking decisions on further changes to the list. For each of these outstanding questions, a poll was used to collect input from the meeting participants. Each poll was accompanied by a discussion between meeting participants.

It was agreed that the following next steps would be taken:

1. Incorporating input from the polling and related discussions into the draft indicator list.
2. Establishing a mechanism for deciding on final indicator list in the next meeting of the GAMA Co-Chairs following this GAMA meeting.
3. Reviewing changes and final input into the draft indicator list draft by GAMA experts.
4. Finalizing the draft indicator list by the GAMA Secretariat.

Proposed products

The Secretariat proposed the following products to be produced:

- List of priority indicators, including background information.
- Online indicator meta-data database.
- A journal article describing methods and results of the indicator selection process.

Intended use and target audience of the indicator list

Intended use of the indicator list

The list of priority indicators is proposed for the measurement of adolescent health in all countries and all adolescent population subgroups. The indicators included are intended to guide policy and programming and to assist with identifying areas where further and more detailed assessments of health status and programming are needed. Target audiences

- Measurement stakeholders at country level, e.g. national statistics offices and ministries.
- International measurement initiatives and survey programmes.

Communications plan

The following dissemination channels were proposed by the WHO GAMA Secretariat :

- Webinar with a specific focus on countries
- GAMA website and websites of other relevant organisations
- Journal article
- Newsletters
- Dissemination through partners, including UN agencies, Health Data Collaborative, WHO regional offices, and WHO country offices.

Pilot testing/demonstration of indicator list and related products

It was decided that there will be a pilot testing/demonstration of the final indicator list including their measurement guidance. It was suggested that the pilot test/demonstration be conducted in at least one country per WHO region, and that GAMA may partner with relevant stakeholders in countries in this process. It was concluded that the pilot test/demonstration may be conducted virtually if deemed pragmatic.

It was noted that there is a distinction between *piloting the feasibility* of implementing the indicator list, and *demonstrating* the list, its utility, and its feasibility to implement. It was suggested that a pilot testing and a demonstration may be conducted in parallel. As it is anticipated that the indicator list will continuously evolve with time, it was concluded that the GAMA Group should begin the advocacy work even before the list is considered “final”.

Through a demonstration exercise, GAMA may be able to show that much data is already collected at national level; to support countries in improving existing data collection efforts; and to mitigate potential perceptions of this list as being overwhelming/unfeasible to implement.

Through a pilot testing, GAMA may ensure that the indicator list is applicable in countries, including assess what components of the list that country stakeholders may consider problematic to implement.

Next steps for GAMA

GAMA’s Objectives for Phase 2 (Aug 2020 – Feb 2023)

- Increase alignment and harmonization of ADH measurement among WHO, UN partners and other key measurement stakeholders, considering country needs;
- Develop guidance for the measurement of GAMA priority indicators and materials for technical support to strengthen ADH measurement in countries & pilot test in countries;
- Disseminate GAMA measurement guidance and related materials and information for effective use by stakeholders and countries.

GAMA’s activities until the end of 2021

The group agreed on the following activities until the end of 2021:

1. Finalization of list of priority indicators that will then be further tested
2. Finalization of online indicator metadata database
3. Finalization of a journal article describing the methods and results of the indicator selection process. (This may be finalised before the pilot testing.)
4. Plan for pilot testing/demonstration of indicator list and related measurement guidance.
5. Desk review to inform continued harmonization of priority indicators.

Next GAMA meeting

The seventh GAMA meeting will take place between 13–15 October 2021.

Annex 1. Concept note

Sixth Meeting of the GAMA Advisory Group, virtual, 28-30 April 2021

Concept note

Background and Scope

To improve adolescent health measurement globally, WHO, in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, the World Bank Group, and the World Food Programme (WFP), established the Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Advisory Group in 2018.

The objectives of GAMA's work are to:

- provide technical guidance to WHO, partner UN agencies and other relevant measurement groups to define a core set of adolescent health indicators, for the purpose of harmonizing efforts around adolescent health measurement and reporting;
- promote harmonized guidance for adolescent health measurement, supporting countries and technical organizations in collecting useful data to track progress in the improvement of adolescent health.

The GAMA Advisory Group meets twice per year to advance work towards these objectives. GAMA meetings also serve as a platform to share state-of-the-art evidence on adolescent health measurement between GAMA experts, UN, WHO-HQ and Regional Office technical representatives, as well as external stakeholders, with the aim to better coordinate and align adolescent health measurement.

GAMA's completed work is displayed on the GAMA website⁴ and in journal articles.^{5 6} The most recent activity was a systematic selection of draft priority indicators for global and national adolescent health measurement. As part of this selection process, measurement gaps were also identified. Public feedback on the draft set of priority indicators and the measurement gaps was collected over a three-month period from October – January 2021, and subsequently incorporated into the penultimate draft. It is against this background that WHO has organized the sixth meeting of the GAMA Advisory Group, scheduled to be held virtually, from 28-30 April 2021.

⁴ The Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA). Available at: <https://www.who.int/data/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent/gama/>

⁵ Guthold R, Moller AB, Azzopardi P, et al. The Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent health (GAMA) Initiative – Rethinking Adolescent Metrics. *J Adolesc Health* 2019;64(6):697-9.

⁶ Guthold R, Moller AB, Adebayo E, et al. Priority areas for adolescent health measurement. Accepted for publication in *J Adolesc Health* 2021.

Meeting objectives

The objectives of the sixth GAMA meeting are to:

- Exchange information on the latest activities in the area of adolescent health measurement between GAMA experts, UN, WHO-HQ and Regional Office technical representatives, as well as external stakeholders;
- Review and discuss the penultimate draft of the list of GAMA priority indicators.

Expected outcomes

- Shared knowledge on the latest activities in the area of adolescent health measurement;
- Agreed upon next steps to finalise the list of GAMA priority indicators.

Methodology

The sixth GAMA meeting will be held virtually over three days. To accommodate for participants joining from different time zones, two sessions (with one being a repeat of the other) will be held. A zoom link will be shared in advance. The meeting will be held in English.

Participants

The sixth GAMA meeting will bring together:

- Experts of the GAMA Advisory Group;
- Representatives of UN agencies;
- WHO regional adolescent health focal points;
- WHO technical experts;
- Country representatives participating in the third GAMA meeting and in scoring of adolescent health indicators;
- External partners;
- Members of funding agencies.

Annex 2. Agenda

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

DAY 1 [all times in CET]			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2	Moderator: Ann-Beth Moller	
11:00 - 11:15	16:30 - 16:45	Opening session - Welcome, introductions, COI statements - Expected outcomes and meeting rules	Regina Guthold
11:15 - 12:15	16:45 - 17:45	GAMA priority indicator list: - Presentation of topline results, Q&A - Summary of changes & addressing open questions: domains 1&2	Andrew Marsh
12:15 - 12:30	17:45 - 18:00	Break	
12:30 - 12:45	18:00 - 18:15	Update on the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC)	Jo Inchley
12:45 - 13:00	18:15 - 18:30	Revisions of the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) and the Global School Health Policies and Practices Study (G-SHPPS)	Leanne Riley/ Laura Kann
13:00 - 13:15	18:30 - 18:45	Monitoring menstrual health and hygiene	Marni Sommer/ Thérèse Mahon
13:15 - 13:30	18:45 - 19:00	Measuring transgender and non-binary gender identities among adolescents in Canada and beyond	Elizabeth Saewyc

Thursday, 29 April 2021

DAY 2 [all times in CET]			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2	Moderator: Regina Guthold	
11:00 - 11:15	16:30 - 16:45	Update on UNAIDS' adolescent health measurement activities	Victoria Bendaud
11:15 - 12:15	16:45 - 17:45	GAMA priority indicator list: - Summary of changes & addressing open questions: domains 3-6	Andrew Marsh
12:15 - 12:30	17:45 - 18:00	Break	
12:30 - 12:45	18:00 - 18:15	WHO/UNICEF HPV vaccine coverage estimates methodology	Paul Bloem
12:45 - 13:00	18:15 - 18:30	Update on UNFPA's adolescent health measurement activities	Howard Friedman
13:00 - 13:15	18:30 - 18:45	Update on UNICEF's adolescent health measurement activities	Liliana Carvajal/ Monica Giuffrida
13:15 - 13:30	18:45 - 19:00	Update on UNICEF's adolescent nutrition measurement activities	Vrinda Mehra/ Chika Hayashi

Friday, 30 April 2021

DAY 3 [all times in CET]			
SESSION 1	SESSION 2	Moderator: Ann-Beth Moller	
11:00 – 11:15	16:30 – 16:45	Developing the M&E plan for Adolescent Health in Nigeria – a process informed by the GAMA work	Emmanuel Adebayo
11:15 – 11:30	16:45 – 17:00	Subnational collection, analysis and use of adolescent sexual and reproductive health data	Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli/ Elsie Akwara
11:30 – 11:45	17:00 – 17:15	Programmatic measures for adolescent sexual and reproductive health services	Dominic Montagu/Nirali Chakraborty
11:45 – 12:00	17:15 – 17:30	Measuring inequity (earlier session)/ Cause of death estimates for 5-19 year olds (later session)*	Peter Azzopardi/ Diana Yeung
12:00 – 12:10	17:30 – 17:40	Break	
12:10 – 12:15	17:40 – 17:45	Five messages – research findings on the indirect effects of COVID-19 on adolescents and the implications of this for working for & with them	Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli
12:15 – 13:15	17:45 – 18:45	GAMA priority indicator list: - summary of discussions and next steps to finalize the indicator list - communications plan	Andrew Marsh
13:15 – 13:30	18:45 – 19:00	Next steps and closing of meeting	Regina Guthold