

LAY ABSTRACT

TITLE: Comparative impact assessment of COVID-19 policy interventions in five South Asian countries using reported and estimated unreported death counts during 2020-2021

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In 2020 and 2021, low- and middle-income countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal were unable to report all COVID-19 deaths. These countries had different policies to report and control COVID-19, which may have affected death reporting and spread of the virus.

In this paper, researchers looked at how these policies changed the number of deaths reported as well as estimated total deaths (reported and unreported combined) from COVID-19. The researchers tested what could have happened if each country had the same policies as each other.

The researchers found that, in the first half of 2021, India could have had fewer COVID-19 deaths if they had used the same policies as Nepal or Pakistan. In the second half of 2021, the other countries could have had fewer COVID-19 deaths if they followed India's policies.

This research shows the need for better systems to record deaths in these countries, and that we need correct data to compare different health policies.