

OVAWG Data Primer

Context

- **Population data:** the number or proportion of people with a given trait within a population
- **Program data:** the number or proportion of people with a given trait among people who use a particular program
 - o Because program data is based only on those using the program, we can't extrapolate to the larger population.
- **Comparative analysis and longitudinal (trend) analysis** are the primary ways to develop context for a given data set or data point.

Comparability

- Data from different sources typically should not be directly compared or combined.

Limitations and cautions

- **Validity**
 - o All estimates have an element of uncertainty, often measured with a margin of error (MOE).
 - o For small areas (such as VT towns), there may be data available but large margins of error limit the effectiveness of those data.
- **Timeliness**
 - o Old data may not accurately reflect population characteristics, so we want to use data that's as up to date as possible.
 - o Looking at trends over time can show us how the population has changed and predict how it will change in the future.
- **Ranking**
 - o Ranking shows how an area ranks compared to other areas on a given indicator, such as Vermont compared to other states.
 - o These rankings are not always accurate:
 - The data may represent differences in reporting rates or other confounding factors, and not necessarily differences in prevalence.

Representativeness

- How proximate is the indicator to the factors influencing the data?

Communicability

- How well does the indicator communicate what is happening in the population?
- How easily is this information communicated to others?

Actionability

- How can we use the data to create change?
- Do the data tell a clear story that enables deeper investigation or direct action?