

1 Computer Assisted Verbal Autopsy: Comparing
2 Large Language Models to Physicians for
3 Assigning Causes to 6939 Deaths in Sierra Leone
4 from 2019-2022

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18 **Abstract**

19 **Background:** Verbal autopsies (VAs) collect information on deaths occurring outside traditional healthcare settings to
20 estimate representative Causes of Death (CODs). Current computer models assign CODs at population-level accuracy
21 comparable to physicians, but perform poorly at the individual-level, largely due to reliance on structured questionnaire
22 data and neglect of narrative free text. Recently, the large language model ChatGPT-4 demonstrated human-level
23 performance on professional and academic benchmarks. While ChatGPT-4 shows promise in COD assignment, its
24 application to VA narratives has not yet been evaluated.

25 **Methods:** We analyzed 6,939 VA records from Sierra Leone (2019–2022) to compare four models, GPT-3.5, GPT-4,
26 InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA, against physician-assigned CODs at population and individual levels. GPT models used
27 narratives, whereas InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA relied on questionnaires. CODs were grouped into 19, 10, and 7 categories
28 for adult, child, and neonatal deaths. Cause Specific Mortality Fraction (CSMF) accuracy and Partial Chance Corrected
29 Concordance (PCCC) were used to assess population and individual-level agreement with physician coding respectively,
30 stratified by age and COD.

31 **Results:** GPT-4 outperformed all models overall (PCCC=0.61), followed by GPT-3.5 (0.56) then InSilicoVA and InterVA-
32 5 (0.44). GPT-4 achieved the highest performance for adult (0.64) and neonatal deaths (0.58), while GPT-3.5 had the
33 highest performance for child deaths (0.54). Across ages, performance increased from 1 month to 14 years and declined
34 from 15 to 69 years. GPT4, GPT-3.5, and InSilicoVA achieved the highest PCCC in 17, 9, and 4 of the 30 CODs, respectively.
35 At the population level, all models achieved comparable CSMF accuracies (0.74–0.79).

36 **Conclusion:** All models performed similarly at the population level, but GPT models and InSilicoVA showed greater
37 performance for specific CODs at the individual-level. GPT models demonstrated improvements over InterVA-5 and
38 InSilicoVA models. This study provides foundational evidence for integrating computer models to assist physicians with
39 alternative diagnoses, helping reduce ill-defined codes and improve agreement in COD assignment.

40 **Keywords:** Cause of Death, Physicians, Computer-Assisted Diagnosis, Artificial Intelligence, Natural Language Processing, Machine
41 Learning, Mortality, Surveillance, Mathematical Models, Global Health

42 **1 Background**

43 Every year, 41 million people died prematurely from noncommunicable diseases, accounting for 74% of all
44 deaths globally [1]. While most of these deaths are preventable, effective intervention requires evidence-
45 based resource allocation that targets high-risk populations [2]. Reliable mortality counts and accurate
46 Cause of Death (COD) data are essential for guiding public health policy and reducing premature mortality
47 [3–6]. However, civil registration and vital statistics systems remain incomplete in many low-income
48 countries. Fewer than half of all deaths are registered, and among these, only 8% have an assigned COD [7].
49 To address this gap, Verbal Autopsy (VA) has been deployed as a scalable method for collecting mortality
50 data and assigning likely CODs, particularly for deaths that occur outside of healthcare facilities, which
51 account for more than half of all deaths [8–11].

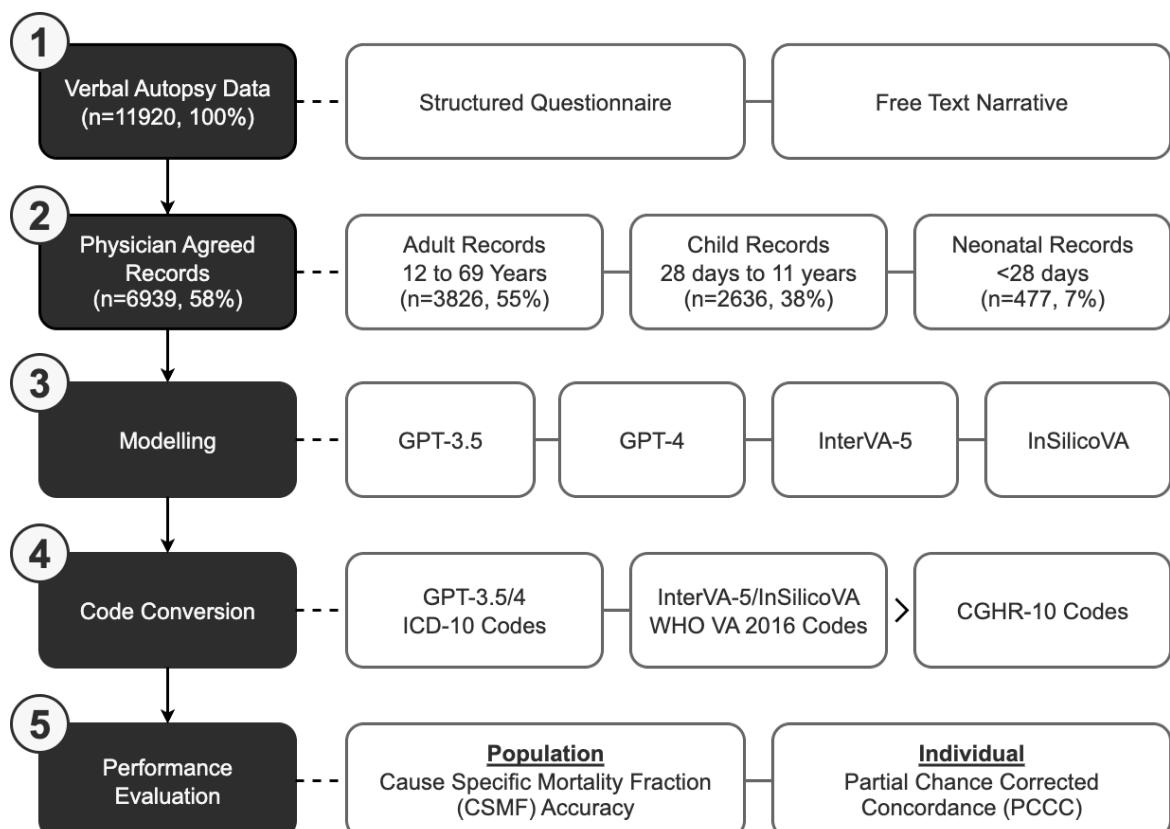
52 VA involves two major components: survey and COD assignment [12–14]. In the survey component, trained
53 interviewers use structured questionnaires and open narrative prompts to gather data from relatives or
54 close contacts of the deceased. In the COD assignment component, physicians review these data to
55 determine the most likely COD. However, reliance on physician assignment has been criticized for limited
56 reproducibility and subjectivity [15–19]. To overcome these limitations, automated Computer Coded Verbal
57 Autopsy (CCVA) methods such as InterVA [20] and InSilicoVA [17] have been developed. These models offer
58 scalable and reproducible alternatives and have demonstrated comparable performance to physicians at
59 the population level. However, their performance at the individual-level remains limited [21–25], while
60 their reliance on structured questionnaire data often omits open narrative text, which can contain
61 additional contextual and chronological information that may improve diagnostic accuracy [26–28].

62 Recent advances in large language models (LLMs), trained on vast textual datasets using deep learning
63 methods, have significantly improved natural language processing (NLP) capabilities. These include tasks
64 such as question answering, code generation, and medical reasoning based on free text [29–32]. ChatGPT,
65 developed by OpenAI and released in 2022, is a widely accessible LLM capable of generating human-like
66 responses to natural language queries. Earlier versions (GPT-1 to GPT-3) scaled from 117 million to 175
67 billion parameters and were trained on data ranging from 5 GB to 45 TB [33]. In 2023, ChatGPT-4 was
68 introduced, achieving human-level performance on a range of academic and professional benchmarks [34].
69 Given the underutilization of narrative free text in VA analysis and the capabilities of LLMs in processing

70 such data, we conducted a study using VA records from Sierra Leone (2019–2022) to compare four models,
71 GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA, against physician-assigned CODs. This work aims to evaluate the
72 potential of LLMs in enhancing COD assignment from narrative data in low-resource settings.

73 **2 Methods**

74 This study outlines the methodology used to compare cause of death (COD) assignments from four models,
75 GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA, with physician-determined CODs, as summarized in Figure 1. The
76 dataset was first filtered to include only records with physician agreement, as described in Section 2.1.
77 Section 2.2 details the input formats and output structures of the four models. Section 2.3 presents the
78 evaluation framework, which compares model outputs to physician assigned CODs using both population-
79 level and individual-level performance metrics. Additional details are provided in Appendix B.



80
81 **Fig. 1** Flow diagram for verbal autopsy coding comparison of 6939 sample deaths in Sierra Leone. Verbal autopsy data containing
82 11,920 sample deaths were initially collected from in-field surveys, and filtered to 6939 records where two randomly assigned
83 physicians agreed on the cause of death. Four computer models GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA were compared to
84 physicians using standardized CGHR-10 codes, and evaluated using individual PCCC and population CSMF accuracy metrics.

85 **2.1 Verbal Autopsy (VA) Data**

86 A total of 11,920 verbal autopsy (VA) records were obtained from the HEAL-SL study [35, 36], which
87 employed dual-coded Electronic Verbal Autopsy (EVA). Each record was independently reviewed by two
88 randomly selected physicians, who assigned COD codes based on the International Classification of
89 Diseases, 10th Revision (ICD-10) [37]. Agreement between physician-assigned CODs was evaluated using
90 Central Medical Evaluation Agreement 10 (CMEA-10) codes, which group related ICD-10 codes into
91 broader, clinically similar categories [38] (see Additional File 1). If both codes fell within the same CMEA-
92 10 group, the record was considered in agreement. Disagreements entered a reconciliation phase, where
93 each physician was shown both the assigned codes and the reasoning from the other physician. Physicians
94 could then (1) retain their original code, (2) adopt the other physician's code, or (3) assign a new code.
95 Records that remained unresolved proceeded to adjudication, where a senior physician reviewed all
96 reasoning and assignments and issued a final COD.

97 To ensure comparability with physician coding, only records with physician agreement were used in this
98 study, as such cases provide higher confidence in the COD assignment [18, 39, 40]. From the original dataset,
99 6,942 records met this criterion. All ICD-10 codes were then standardized to CGHR-10 categories (see
100 Appendix A), which group causes into 19, 10, and 7 categories for adults (12–69 years), children (28 days
101 to 11 years), and neonates (under 28 days), respectively. After excluding three records without a valid
102 CGHR-10 category, a total of 6,939 physician-agreed records (3,826 adult, 2,636 child, and 477 neonatal)
103 were used for model comparison and performance evaluation. Further details on data preprocessing are
104 provided in Appendix B.1, with COD and age group distributions summarized in Tables B4 and B5.

105 **2.2 Modelling**

106 Four computational models were used to assign causes of death (CODs) for each of the 6,939 physician-
107 agreed verbal autopsy (VA) records: GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA. InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA are
108 widely used statistical models within the OpenVA framework for COD assignment in VAs [13, 21, 22, 24, 25,
109 41–43]. InterVA-5 applies a Bayesian probabilistic approach, using a standardized set of symptoms and
110 expert-derived conditional probabilities to assign the most likely COD based on maximum probability [20,
111 44, 45]. InSilicoVA extends this approach by incorporating a hierarchical Bayesian framework and Markov

112 Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods [46–48], allowing for quantification of uncertainty, individual-level
113 probability estimates, and the integration of additional data sources [17]. GPT-3.5 [49] and GPT-4 [34] are
114 large language models (LLMs) that generate human-like text by learning from large amounts of textual data
115 [50]. These models are trained using reinforcement learning from human feedback [51–54], enabling them
116 to follow natural language instructions and generate human-level responses. GPT-4 demonstrated
117 improvements over GPT-3.5, including more recent training data, enhanced reasoning capabilities, and
118 multimodal input-output functionality (e.g. text, image, voice) [33].

119 For GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, the following user prompt was used to instruct each model to produce COD
120 assignments as ICD-10 codes, where *<age>* and *<sex>* from the questionnaire, and *<narrative>* from the
121 narratives, were replaced with values from the data:

122 *Determine the underlying cause of death and provide the most probable ICD-10 code for a verbal autopsy*
123 *narrative of a <age> years old <sex> death in Sierra Leone: <narrative>*
124 InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA used structured questionnaire data, which were converted into OpenVA-
125 compatible format [43]. Both models produced COD assignments coded using the WHO 2016 VA standard
126 [55]. To ensure comparability across models, all output CODs were mapped to the CGHR-10 classification
127 system for evaluation relative to physician-assigned CODs. Further details on model input formats, output
128 mappings, and code conversion procedures are provided in Appendix B.2.

129 **2.3 Performance Evaluation**

130 Model performance was assessed at both the population and individual levels by comparing each model's
131 CGHR-10 COD assignments to those of physicians for all 6,939 records. Cause-Specific Mortality Fraction
132 (CSMF) accuracy was used to evaluate agreement at the population level (see Appendix B.3.1), while Partial
133 Chance Corrected Concordance (PCCC) was used to assess individual-level agreement (see Appendix B.3.2)
134 [56]. Both metrics range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate stronger similarity with physician
135 assignment. Given that model performance can vary by age and different CODs [41, 42, 57], both CSMF
136 accuracy and PCCC were calculated overall and stratified by age group (adult, child, neonatal), CGHR-10
137 COD, and age at death. For adult and child groups, metrics were computed in five-year age bands for records
138 with age at death of one year or older, and five-month bands for records between 28 days and one year. For

139 the neonatal group, evaluations were conducted separately for age intervals of 0–6 days and 7–27 days.

140 Additional details on the evaluation strategy and metric calculations are provided in Appendix B.3.

141 **3 Results**

142 **3.1 Overall Performance**

143 Population level performances were similar for all models (0.74-0.79 CSMF accuracy). Thus, the remainder
144 of the results focus on the individual-level performances measured by PCCC. GPT-4 demonstrated the
145 highest performance (0.61) followed by GPT-3.5 (0.56), InSilicoVA (0.44), and InterVA-5 (0.44) (Figure 2).
146 GPT-3.5 and GPT-4 had improvements from 0.14-0.18 in the PCCC over InSilicoVA and InterVA-5, while GPT-
147 4 slightly improved over GPT-3.5 by 0.05. Figure 3 shows the individual performance across three age
148 groups (adult, child, and neonate). GPT-4 had the best performance for adult and neonatal records (0.64
149 and 0.58), while GPT-3.5 had the best performance for child records (0.54) with GPT-4 performing slightly
150 worse (0.51). InSilicoVA and InterVA-5 performed the worst for adult and child records (less than 0.5),
151 while GPT-3.5 performed the worse for neonatal records (0.42). Performance varied less for child deaths
152 (range: 0.13) than for adult and neonatal deaths (range: 0.24 and 0.22). Across ages, all models followed a
153 similar pattern in performance (Figure 4). In adults, performance decreased with age for 12 to 59 years
154 (from 0.7 down to 0.35), suggesting greater difficulty in assigning CODs among older adults, with a modest
155 improvement observed after age 59. Among children and neonates, performance improved from 5 months
156 to 11 years (from 0.1 towards 0.75), indicating greater model reliability as developmental age advanced.
157 The highest and lowest performances were observed for ages 12-29 years (0.4-0.7) and 1-11 months (0.1-
158 0.35) respectively.

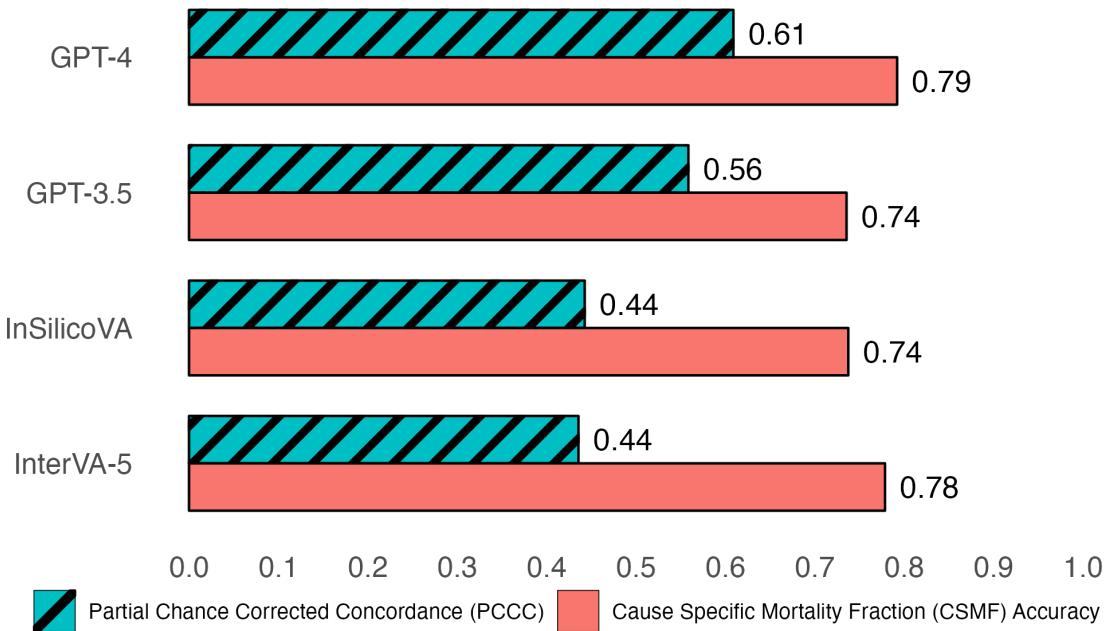


Fig. 2 Individual (PCCC) and population (CSMF accuracy) level verbal autopsy coding performance of all 6939 deaths. PCCC and CSMF accuracy values range from 0 to 1. PCCC values of 1 indicate complete agreement with physician coding per individual death, while CSMF accuracy values of 1 indicate complete agreement with physician coding per cause, irrespective of individual deaths.

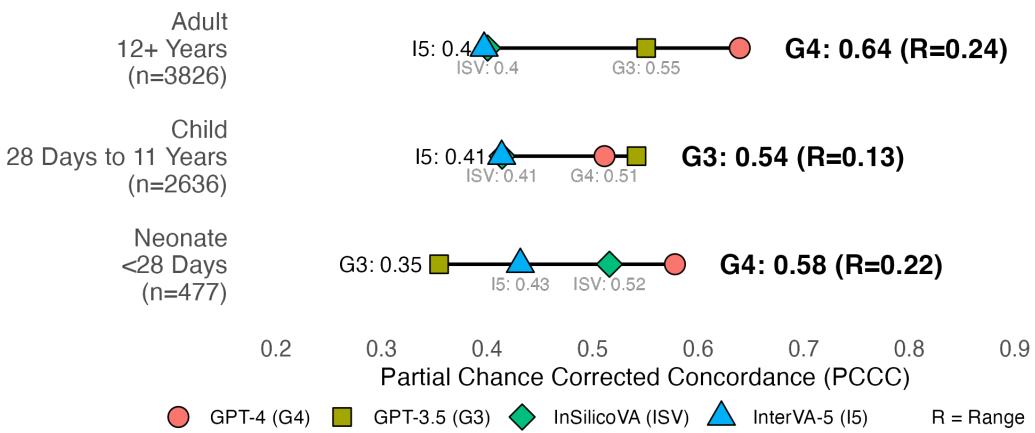
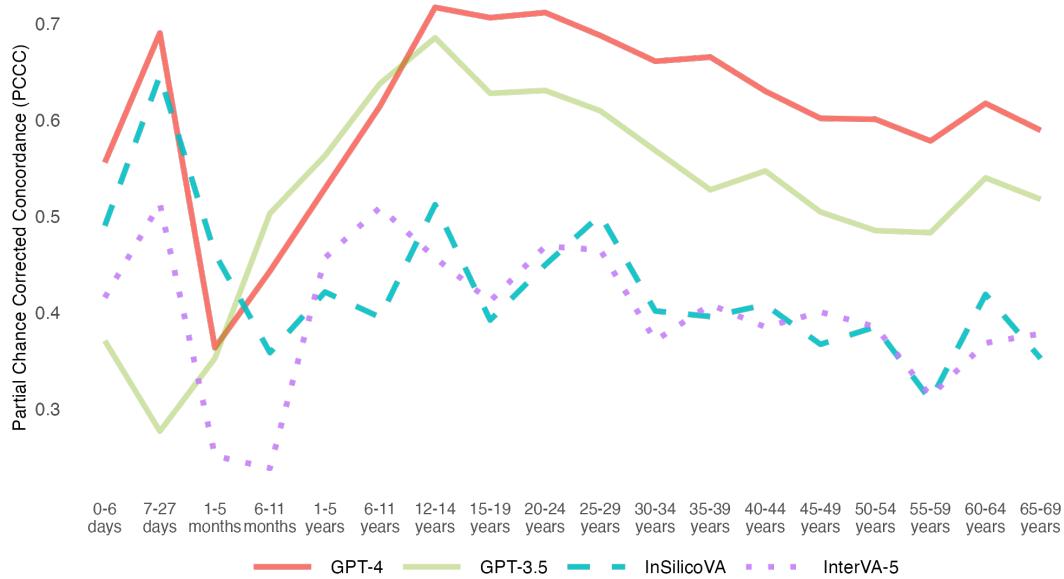


Fig. 3 Individual-level verbal autopsy coding performance by age group. PCCC values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete agreement with physician coding per individual death. R (range) represents the difference between the maximum and minimum PCCC values across all models per age group.

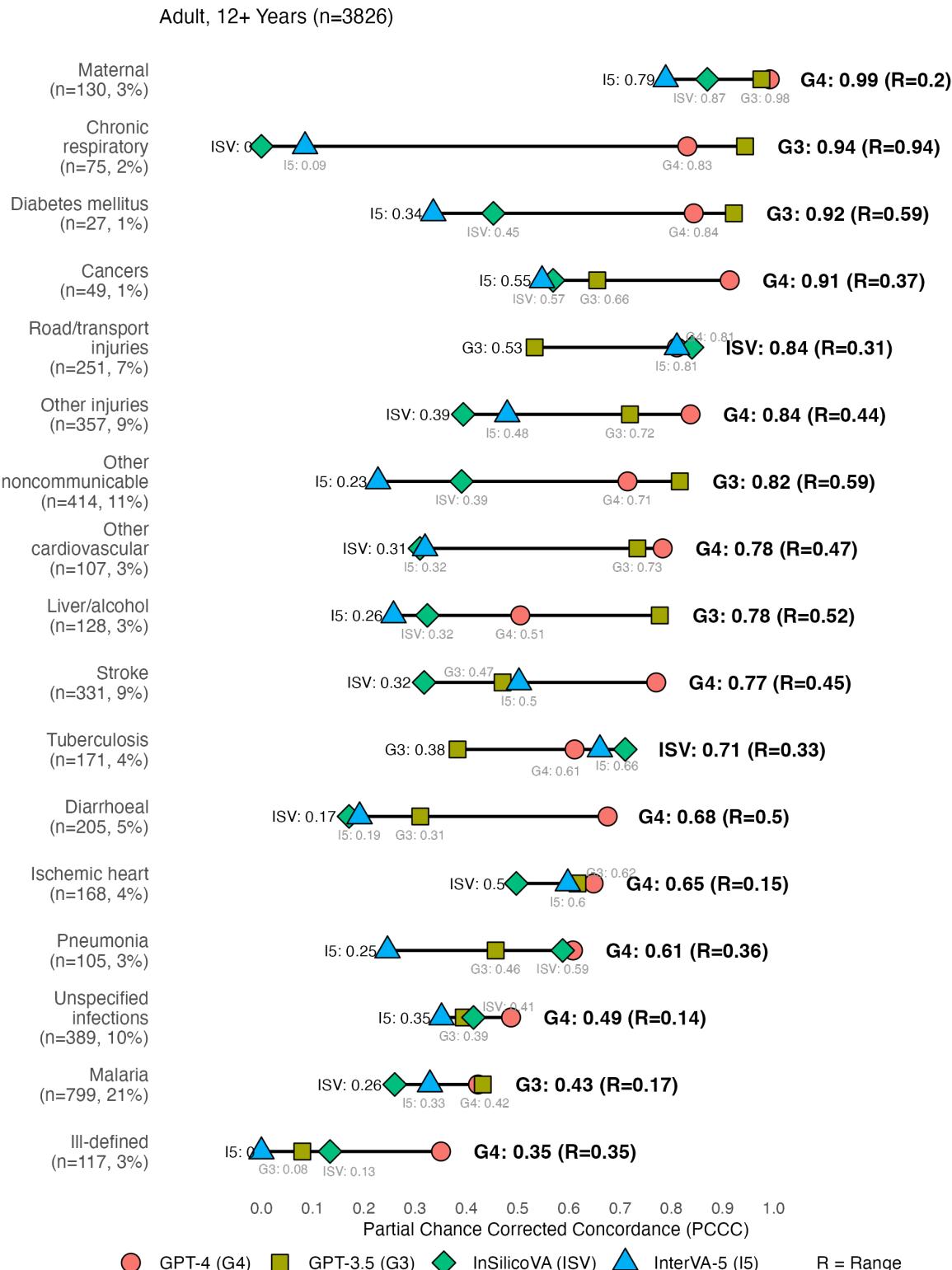


167

168 **Fig. 4** Individual-level model performance by age of deceased. PCCC values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete agreement
169 with physician coding per individual death. Ages 0-27 days represent neonatal deaths, ages 1-11 months represent child deaths, and
170 ages 12-69 years represent adult deaths.

171 **3.2 Performance for 3826 Adult Records (12 to 69 years)**

172 Figure 5 presents performance across 17 adult CODs. GPT-4 achieved the highest individual-level
173 performance for 10 of 17 CODs (0.35–0.99), followed by GPT-3.5 for 5 CODs (0.43–0.94), and InSilicoVA for
174 2 CODs (0.71 and 0.84). InterVA-5 had the lowest performance for 8 CODs (0–0.79), InSilicoVA for 6 CODs
175 (0.01–0.41), and GPT-3.5 for 2 CODs (0.38 and 0.53). The greatest improvements of GPT-3.5/4 over
176 InSilicoVA and InterVA-5 were observed in chronic respiratory diseases (0.74–0.94 in the PCCC), while the
177 smallest improvements were for malaria (0.09–0.17 in the PCCC). All models performed well for maternal
178 conditions (0.79–0.99), but poorly for unspecified infections (0.35–0.49), malaria (0.26–0.43), and ill-
179 defined CODs (0–0.35). GPT-4 showed performance improvements between over all other models for
180 cancers (0.25–0.36 in the PCCC), stroke (0.27–0.45 in the PCCC), and diarrhoeal diseases (0.37–0.51 in the
181 PCCC). GPT-3.5 demonstrated similar gains for liver and alcohol-related diseases (0.27–0.52 in the PCCC).
182 Performance variability across models was most pronounced for chronic respiratory diseases (range: 0.94),
183 while narrower differences were observed for maternal conditions (range: 0.20), malaria (range: 0.17),
184 ischemic heart disease (range: 0.15), and unspecified infections (range: 0.14).



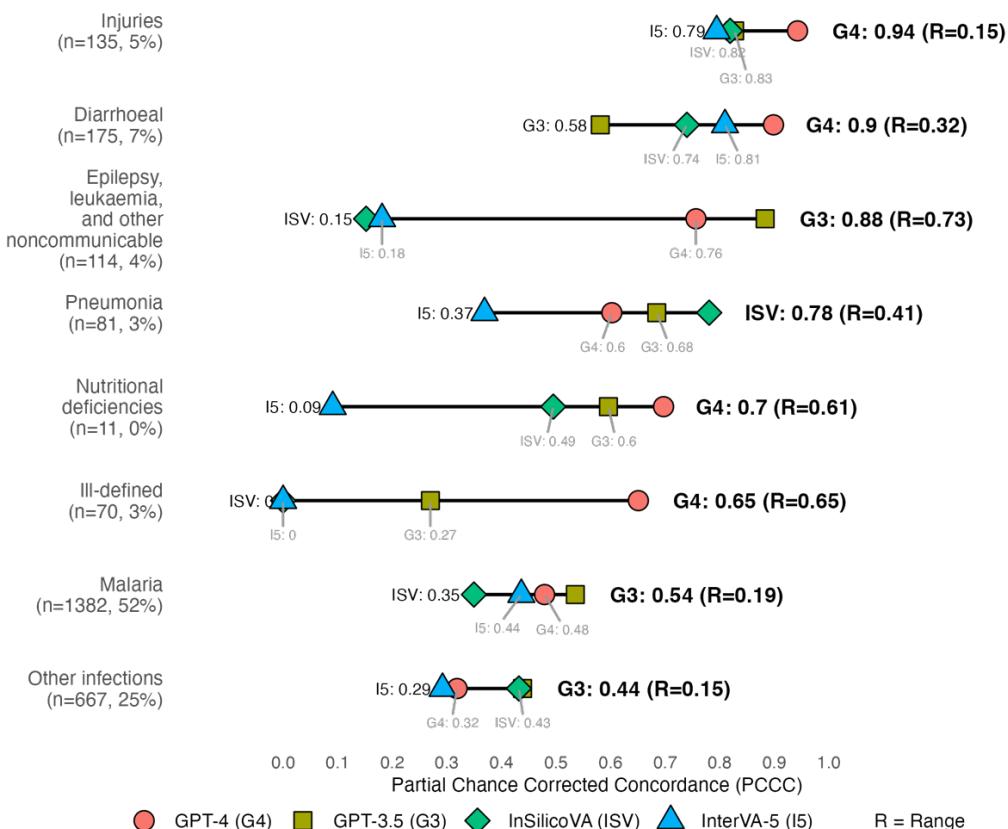
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186 **Fig. 5** Individual-level model performance for adult causes of death. PCCC values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete
 187 agreement with physician coding per individual death. R (range) represents the difference between the maximum and minimum
 188 PCCC values across all models per cause of death. Symbols on the far left represent lowest performing models, while symbols on the
 189 right with bolded text represent highest performing models per cause of death. Suicide (n=3, <1%) was excluded due to low sample
 190 size.

191 **3.3 Performance for 2636 Child Records (28 Days to 11 Years)**

192 Figure 6 shows individual-level performance across 8 child CODs, excluding congenital anomalies due to a
193 low sample size ($n=1$, <1%). GPT-4 achieved the highest PCCC for 4 of the 8 CODs (0.65–0.94), followed by
194 GPT-3.5 for 3 CODs (0.44–0.88), and InSilicoVA for 1 COD (0.78). InterVA-5 had the lowest performance for
195 4 CODs (0.09–0.79), InSilicoVA for 3 CODs (0–0.35), and GPT-3.5 for 1 COD (0.58). All models performed
196 well for injuries (0.79–0.94), while showing lower performance for malaria (0.35–0.54) and other
197 infections (0.29–0.44). GPT-4 demonstrated an improvement over other models for ill-defined CODs, with
198 improvements between 0.38–0.65 in the PCCC, while demonstrating stronger performance for injuries,
199 with gains of 0.11–0.15 compared to 0.01–0.04 in the PCCC for other models. Performance differences
200 exceeding 0.60 in the PCCC were observed for epilepsy, leukaemia, other communicable diseases (range:
201 0.73), ill-defined causes (range: 0.65), and nutritional deficiencies (range: 0.61). In contrast, narrower
202 differences (less than 0.30 in the PCCC) were seen for malaria (range: 0.20), injuries, and other infections
203 (range: 0.15).

Child, 28 Days to 11 Years (n=2636)

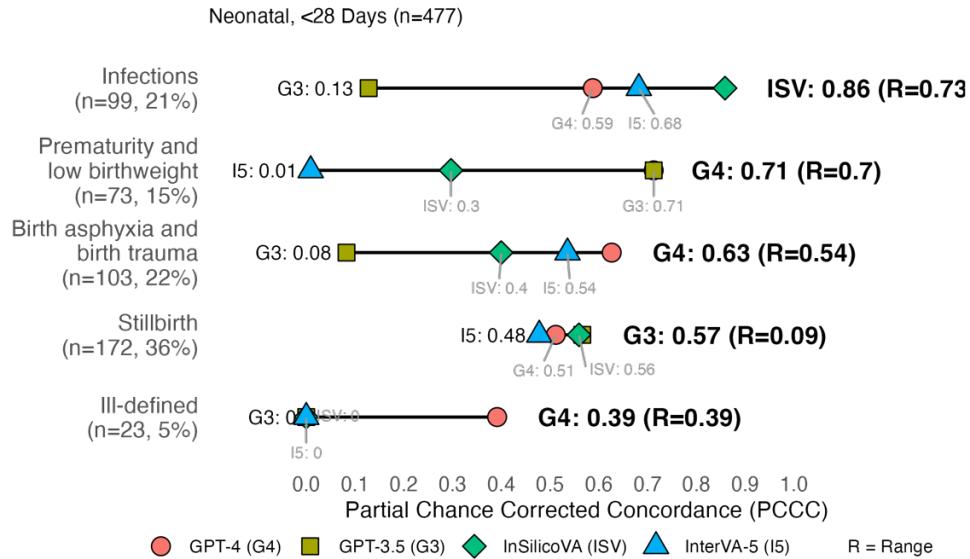


204

205 **Fig. 6** Individual-level model performance for child causes of death. PCCC values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete
206 agreement with physician coding per individual death. R (range) represents the difference between the maximum and minimum
207 PCCC values across all models per cause of death. Symbols on the far left represent lowest performing models, while symbols on the
208 right with bolded text represent highest performing models per cause of death. Congenital anomalies (n=1, <1%) was excluded due
209 to low sample size.

210 3.4 Performance for 477 Neonatal Records (Under 28 Days)

211 Figure 7 shows model performance across 5 neonatal CODs, excluding congenital anomalies (n=2, <1%)
212 and other causes (n=5, 1%) due to limited sample sizes. GPT-4 achieved the highest performance for 3 of
213 the 5 CODs (0.39–0.71), while GPT-3.5 and InSilicoVA had the highest performance for one COD each (0.57
214 and 0.86). GPT-3.5 showed the lowest performance for 3 CODs (0–0.13), and InterVA-5 for 2 CODs (0.01 and
215 0.48). Performance was similar across all models for stillbirths (0.48–0.57). Notably, only GPT-4 achieved a
216 PCCC greater than zero for prematurity-related deaths. InSilicoVA outperformed all other models for
217 neonatal infections, with gains of 0.18–0.73 in the PCCC. Larger performance differences between models
218 were observed for infections (range: 0.73) and prematurity and low birthweight (0.7), while lower
219 differences were seen in stillbirth (range: 0.09).



220

221 **Fig. 7** Individual-level model performance for neonatal causes of death. PCCC values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete
 222 agreement with physician coding per individual death. R (range) represents the difference between the maximum and minimum
 223 PCCC values across all models per cause of death. Symbols on the far left represent lowest performing models, while symbols on the
 224 right with bolded text represent highest performing models per cause of death. Congenital anomalies (n=2, <1%) and other causes
 225 (n=5, 1%) were excluded due to low sample size.

226 4 Discussion

227 As model performance varied by disease and age, the findings suggest cause-specific models to maximize
 228 performance across disease categories, and ensuring that performance across age align with expectations
 229 from clinical literature as validation [58, 59]. In terms of individual performance, GPT-3.5/4 consistently
 230 outperformed InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA for most leading CODs identified in prior Sierra Leone studies [36,
 231 60] as seen in Table 1. A key advantage of GPT-3.5/4 is their ability to process and generate natural language
 232 text as input and output. Unlike InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA, GPT models assign CODs using the ICD-10
 233 standard, mirroring physician practice. In contrast, InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA rely exclusively on structured
 234 WHO VA 2016 questionnaires and assign CODs using broader WHO VA 2016 codes. This dependency
 235 necessitates ongoing maintenance and conversion between questionnaire versions and coding systems,
 236 reducing interoperability and comparability across models. In addition, rarer diseases, underrepresented
 237 in questionnaire data, are better contextualized through external knowledge (e.g., web sources, journals,
 238 books) embedded in GPT models. The flexibility of GPT models in handling unstructured data allows them
 239 to capture latent and ambiguous information, such as health-seeking behaviors and social context, which
 240 are not encompassed by standardized VA codes or structured questionnaires [26, 28].

241 Although GPT models improved over InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA models, several limitations exist. A brief
242 experiment in Appendix C revealed that GPT-3.5 did not assign consistent CODs when repeated on the same
243 record [61–63]. In contrast, InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA provide assignments with probabilities for alternative
244 causes, which was made feasible by calculating probabilities using repeated runs without costs. Another
245 limitation common to all models was their reliance on past training data, limiting potential to detect new
246 or emerging diseases (e.g., COVID-19). This is often remedied with re-training or updating models with new
247 data or knowledge [64–66]. We also note that GPT-3.5/4 required data sent to external servers, raising
248 significant privacy concerns from reliance on third-party services [67, 68]. While jurisdictions, such as the
249 European Union, enforce strict protections under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), most low-
250 and middle-income countries are only beginning to formalize regulatory frameworks for data protection
251 and artificial intelligence governance [69–71]. In contrast, InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA are run on local systems
252 under the control of the data owner. As technology improves, larger GPT models may be possible on local
253 systems, while currently, smaller LLMs exist as an alternative [72–74]. Although this study rigorously
254 compares computer algorithms for COD assignment in Sierra Leone, the extent to which these findings are
255 generalizable in other geographic or epidemiological contexts remains limited. Given ongoing efforts to
256 scale and integrate VA systems for mortality surveillance across diverse low- and middle-income countries,
257 further validation across globally representative VA datasets is essential to evaluate model robustness,
258 adaptability, and operational utility in practice [75–77].

259 This study establishes a basis for Computer Assisted Verbal Autopsy (CAVA), the integration of computer
260 models into VA systems to support physician assignment. Model-generated COD suggestions can be offered
261 to physicians after their initial assignment, enabling reconsideration or confirmation of CODs as seen in
262 step 2 of Figure 8. We highlight that the integration of models into VAs is both scalable and affordable in
263 resource-constrained settings [39]. At the time of analysis, GPT-3.5 cost ~\$0.02 USD per 100 records, GPT-
264 4 cost ~\$1.65 USD per 100 records [78], while InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA were freely available as open-
265 source software. These costs complement physician review, which is already affordable at ~\$1 USD per
266 household (including field survey) in settings like India [15, 16]. Given recent studies supporting
267 improvement in physician diagnosis from LLM assistance [79, 80], we foresee the potential of alternative
268 COD suggestions from computer models reducing physician disagreement and frequency of ill-defined

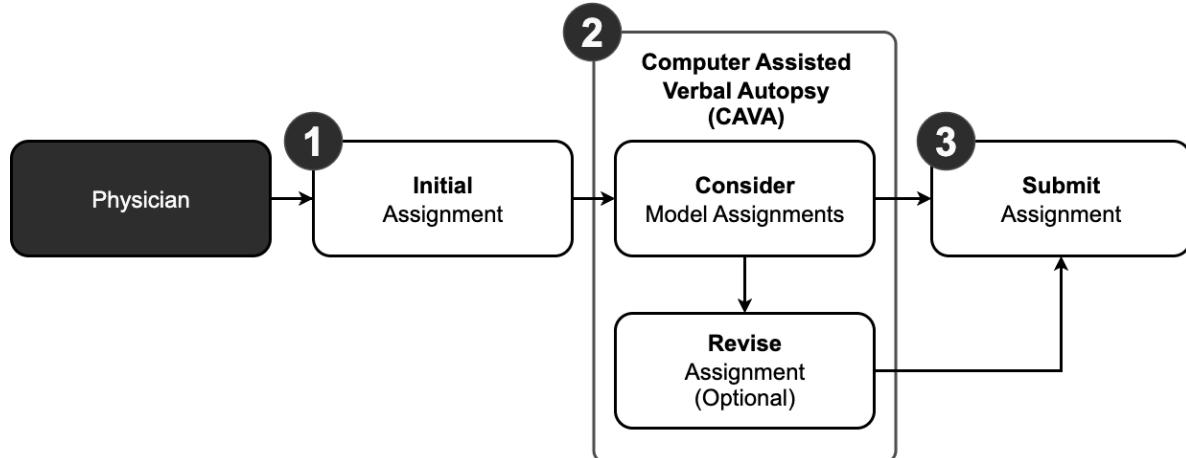
269 records. Presently, we have integrated CAVA (using GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA) into the ongoing
270 HEAL-SL study [35], with future work evaluating the impact of CAVA on physician assignment.

271 **Table 1** Top ten leading causes of death for Sierra Leone in 2023 and best performing models for verbal autopsy coding.

Top 10 Leading Cause of Death (~71% of ~76K deaths) ¹	Deaths (% of 76K) ²	Best Model(s) at the individual-level
Malaria	16,075 (21%)	GPT-3.5/4
Infections	11,777 (16%)	GPT-3.5/4/InSilicoVA
Ischaemic heart and other vascular	5,747 (8%)	GPT-4
Diarrhoea	4,285 (6%)	GPT-4
Stroke	4,262 (6%)	GPT-4
Pneumonia	3,074 (4%)	GPT-4/InSilicoVA
Birth asphyxia and birth trauma	2,431 (3%)	GPT-4
Tuberculosis	2,399 (3%)	InSilicoVA
Low birth weight/preterm	1,570 (2%)	GPT-4
Asthma and chronic respiratory	1,551 (2%)	GPT-3

272 ¹Other infections and severe systemic/localized infections were generalized into infections. Appendix, hernia, intestinal and Peptic
273 ulcer/gastroesophageal causes did not have comparable CGHR-10 codes and were omitted from the top ten.

274 ²Percentage of ~76 thousand (K) total deaths [60]. Numbers are rounded.



275

276 **Fig. 8** Computer Assisted Verbal Autopsy (CAVA) integrated into physician coding as a three-step process. The first step involves the
277 physician assigning an initial cause of death to a record without considering causes of death provided by models. The second step is
278 the addition of CAVA, where the physician can compare their initial assignment in step one to model assignments and optionally
279 choose to revise their initial assignments. The third step submits the record with either the initial or revised assignment to the
280 verbal autopsy coding system.

281 **5 Conclusion**

282 This study evaluated the performance of GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA models against
283 physicians in assigning CODs for 6,939 VA records from Sierra Leone (2019–2022). At the population level,
284 all models achieved similar CSMF accuracy (0.74–0.79). At the individual-level, GPT-4 had the highest
285 performance (0.61 PCCC), followed by GPT-3.5 (0.58), and InSilicoVA/InterVA-5 (0.44). By COD, GPT-4
286 performed best for 10 of 17 adult, 4 of 8 child, and 3 of 5 neonatal causes, while GPT-3.5 led in 5 adult, 3

287 child, and 1 neonatal CODs, and InSilicoVA led in 2 adult, 1 child, and 1 neonatal cause. Performance
288 increased (~0.1–0.75 PCCC) as children and neonates matured (0 days to 14 years) and decreased (~0.7–
289 0.35) with adult aging (15 to 69 years). These findings suggest that combining models tailored to specific
290 CODs and age groups may optimize performance relative to physicians. All models demonstrated scalability
291 and on-demand availability, enabling COD estimation and alternative diagnoses in low-resource or
292 physician-scarce settings. GPT models' natural language processing capability allowed flexible data input
293 and output, aligning closer to physician reasoning, but issues remain with reproducibility, reliance on
294 historical training data, computational demands, and data privacy. Study limitations included challenges
295 comparing ICD-10 codes across models, limited sensitivity analyses due to costs, and exclusion of multiple
296 COD assignment evaluation. Future research opportunities include prompt engineering and custom GPT
297 models to improve accuracy, guided household surveys to enhance narrative quality, and CAVA systems
298 integrating GPT and other models to support physicians by suggesting alternative COD assignments. GPT-
299 4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA have been incorporated into ongoing HEAL-SL study since 2022 to provide
300 second-opinion support for physician COD assignment. Evaluating the impact of computer-assisted VA on
301 physician agreement and reduction of ill-defined deaths will be critical to advancing accurate, efficient VA
302 systems worldwide.

303 **Supplementary information.** Additional file 1 (.csv) titled "Central Medical Evaluation Agreement 10
304 (CMEA-10) codes" with description" ICD-10 code ranges considered in physician agreement" was used to
305 supplement this study.

306 **Acknowledgments.** TBD.

307 **Declarations**

308 **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

309 The Sierra Leone Ethics and Scientific Review Committee (SLESRC No. 025/04/2023) and Unity Health
310 Toronto Research Ethics Board (REB#15-231) granted ethics approval for the project. Relatives of the
311 deceased provided informed consent.

312 **Consent for publication**

313 Not applicable.

314 **Availability of data and materials**

315 The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available in the Open Mortality
316 repository, <https://openmortality.org>, on reasonable request. All code files used and/or analysed during
317 the current study are available in the Github repository, <https://github.com/cghr-toronto/heasl-gpt-paper>.

318 **Competing interests**

319 The authors had no conflicts of interest.

320 **Funding**

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322 design, implementation, data collection, analyses, or report preparation.

323 **Authors' contributions**

324 PJ and RA are the study Principal Investigators. ATA and RK implemented the data collection procedures.
325 RW, TKSN, and CM processed, documented, and prepared the data. RW, ASL, and RK ran the models. RW
326 wrote the paper and conducted the analysis. AB and RCM provided medical domain guidance and feedback.
327 All authors reviewed the results and contributed to the report. All authors read and approved the final
328 manuscript.

329 **Acknowledgements**

330 Not applicable.

331 **Appendix A CGHR-10 Codes**

332 **Table A1** CGHR-10 codes for adults (12-69 years).

Adult CGHR-10 Code	ICD-10 Range
Acute respiratory infections	H65-H68, H70-H71, J00-J22, J32, J36, J85-J86, P23
Tuberculosis	A15-A16, B90, J65
Diarhoeal	A00-A09
Unspecified infections	A17-A33, A35-A99, B00-B17, B19-B49, B55-B89, B91-B99, C46, D64, D84, G00-G09, H10, H60, I30, I32-I33, K02, K04-K05, K61, K65, K67, K81, L00-L04, L08, M00-M01, M60, M86, N10, N30, N34, N41, N49, N61, N70-N74, P35-P39, R50, R75, ZZ21
Malaria	B50-B54
Maternal conditions	A34, F53, O00-O08, O10-O16, O20-O99
Nutritional deficiencies	D50-D53, E00-E02, E40-E46, E50-E64, X53-X54
Chronic respiratory	J30-J31, J33-J35, J37-J64, J66-J84, J90-J99, R04-R06, R84, R91
Cancers	C00-C26, C30-C45, C47-C58, C60-C97, D00-D48, D91, N60, N62-N64, N87, R59
Ischemic heart	I20-I25, R55
Stroke	G45-G46, G81-G83, I60-I69
Diabetes mellitus	E10-E14
Other cardiovascular	I00-I03, I05-I15, I26-I28, I31, I34-I52, I70-I99, R00-R01, R03, ZZ23
Liver and alcohol related	B18, F10, K70-K77, R16-R18, X45, Y15, Y90-91
Other noncommunicable	D55-D63, D65-D83, D86, D89, E03-E07, E15-E35, E65-E68, E70E90, F00-F09, F11-F52, F54-F99, G10-G37, G40-G41, G43-G44, G50-G80, G84-G99, H00-H06, H11-H59, H61-H62, H69, H72-H95, K00-K01, K03, K06-K14, K20-K31, K35-K38, K40-K60, K62-K64, K66, K78-K80, K82-K93, L05, L10-L99, M02-M54, M61-M85, M87-M99, N00-N08, N11-N29, N31-N33, N35-N40, N42-N48, N50N59, N75-N86, N88-N99, Q00-Q99, R10-R15, R19-R23, R26-R27, R29-R49, R56, R63, R70-R74, R76-R77, R80-R82, R85-R87, R90, ZZ25
Road and transport injuries	V01-V99, Y85
Suicide	X60-X84
Other injuries	S00-S99, T00-T99, W00-W99, X00-X44, X46-X52, X55-X59, X85-X99, Y00-Y14, Y16-Y84, Y86, Y89, Y92-Y98, ZZ27
Ill-defined	R02, R07-R09, R25, R51-R54, R57-R58, R60-R62, R64-R69, R78-R79, R83, R89, R92-R94, R96, R98-R99

333

Table A2 CGHR-10 codes for children and neonates.

Child CGHR-10 Code (28 days to 11 years)	ICD-10 Range
Pneumonia	A37, H65-H68, H70-H71, J00-J22, J32, J36, J85-J86, P23, U04
Diarrhoeal	A00-A09
Malaria	B50-B54
Other infections	A15-A28, A30-A36, A38-A44, A46, A48-A71, A74-A75, A77-A99, B00B09, B15-B27, B30, B33-B49, B55-B60, B64-B83, B85-B92, B94-B97, B99, G00-G09, H10, H60, I30, I32-I33, I39-I41, J65, K02, K04-K05, K61, K65, K67, K81, L00-L04, L08, M00-M01, M60, M86, N10, N30, N34, N41, N49, N61, N70-N74, P35-P39, R50, R75, U00, Y95, ZZ11
Congenital anomalies	P01, P05, P07, P21, Q00-Q99
Epilepsy, leukaemia, and other noncommunicable	C00-C97, D01-D48, D55-D89, E03-E35, E65-E90, F00-F02, F73, G10G99, H00-H06, H11-H59, H61-H62, H69, H72-H95, I00-I28, I31, I34-I38, I42-I99, J30-J31, J33-J35, J37-J47, J60, J64, J66-J70, J80-J82, J84, J90-J99, K00-K01, K03, K06-K60, K62-K63, K70-K80, K82-K93, L05, L10-L99, M02-M54, M61-M85, M87-M99, N00-N08, N11-N29, N31N33, N35-N40, N42-N48, N50-N51, N60, N62-N64, N75-N99, P04, P08, P27, P51, P53-P60, P70-P72, P74-P76, P78, P80-P83, P92-P94, R00-R01, R03-R06, R11-R23, R26-R27, R29-R49, R55-R56, R59, R63, R70-R74, R76-R77, R80-R82, R84-R87, R90-R91, ZZ12-ZZ13, ZZ15
Injuries	S00-S99, T00-T98, V01-V99, W00-W99, X00-X52, X57-X99, Y00-Y91, Y97-Y98
Nutritional deficiencies	D50-D53, E00-E02, E40-E46, E50-E56, E59-E61, E63-E64, X53-X54
Other	D00, F03-F72, F74-F99, P00, P02-P03, P10-P15, P20, P22, P24-P26, P28-P29, P50, P52, P61, P77, P90-P91
Ill-defined	P96, R02, R07, R09-R10, R25, R51-R54, R57-R58, R60-R62, R64, R68-R69, R78-R79, R83, R89, R92-R99
Neonate CGHR-10 Code (<28 days)	
Prematurity & low birthweight	D64, O60, P01, P05, P07, P22, P25-P28, P52, P61, P77, P80, P92, R04
Neonatal infections	A00-A09, A20-A28, A32-A35, A37-A44, A46, A48-A49, A68A70, A74-A75, A77-A79, A81-A90, B54, B95-B96, G00-G09, H10, H60, H65-H68, H70-H71, I30, I32-I33, I39-I41, J00-J22, J32, J36, J85-J86, K65, K67, K81, L00-L04, L08, M00-M01, M60, M86, N10, N30, N34, N41, N49, N61, O85, P23, P35,P39, P58-P59, P63, U04
Birth asphyxia and birth trauma	G40, P00, P02-P03, P10-P15, P20-P21, P24, P29, P50-P51, P90-P91, R06, W79, Z37
Stillbirth	P95
Congenital anomalies	C76, Q00-Q99
Other	A15-A19, A30-A31, A36, A50-A67, A71, A80, A91-A99, B00-B09, B15-B27, B30, B33-B53, B55-B60, B64-B83, B85-B92, B94, B97, B99, C00-C75, C77-C97, D00-D48, D50-D53, D55-D63, D65-D89, E00-E35, E40-E46, E50-E56, E59-E61, E63-E90, F00-F99, G10-G39, G41-G99, H00-H06, H11-H59, H61-H62, H69, H72-H95, I00-I28, I31, I34-I38, I42-I99, J30, J31, J33-J35, J37-J47, J60, J64-J70, J80-J82, J84, J90J99, K00-K63, K70-K80, K82-K93, L05, L10-L99, M02-M54, M61-M85, M87-M99, N00-N08, N11-N29, N31-N33, N35N40, N42-N48, N50-N51, N60, N62-N64, N70-N99, P04, P08, P53-P57, P60,P70-P72, P74-P76, P78, P81-P83, P93-P94, R00-R01, R03-R05, R11-R23, R26-R27, R29-R36, R39-R50, R55-R56, R59, R63, R70-R77, R80-R82, R84-R87, R90-R91, S00-S99, T00-T98, U00, V01-V99, W00-W78, W80-W99, X00-X54, X57-X99, Y00-Y91, Y95, Y97-Y98
Ill-defined	P96, R02, R07, R09-R10, R25, R51-R54, R57-R58, R60-R62, R64, R68-R69, R78-R79, R83, R89, R92-R99

336 **Appendix B Details on Methods**

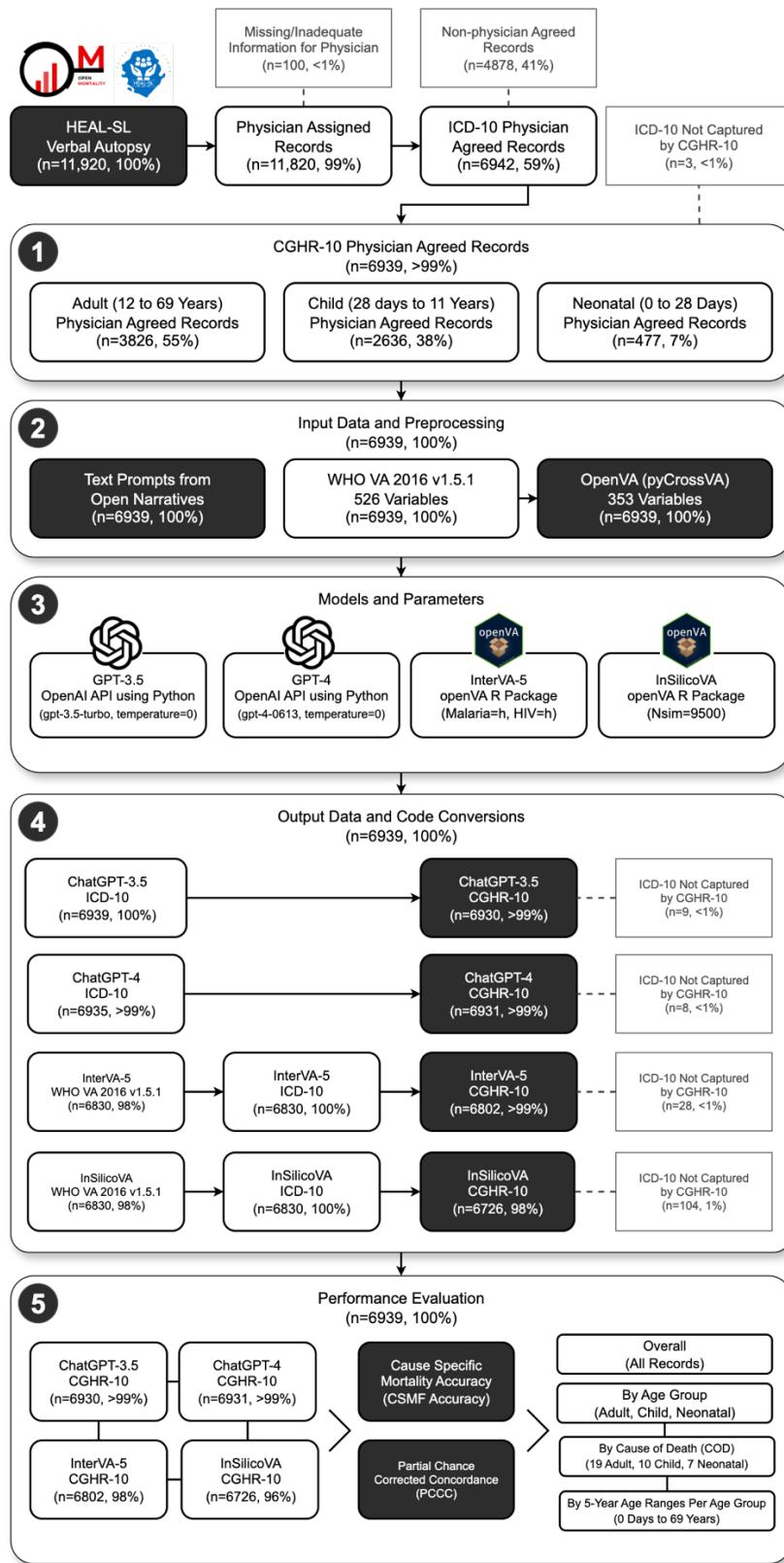
337 This section provides additional details on the methods described in Section 2. An overview of the methods
338 used in this study is seen in Figure B1 as a five-step process. Section B.1 provides details on the
339 preprocessed data used for modelling. Section B.2 describes the data and parameter inputs and outputs for
340 each model, while Section B.3 details the evaluation of model outputs at the individual and population level
341 across different CODs, age groups, and ages.

342 **B.1 CGHR-10 Physician Agreed Records**

343 Initially, 11,920 records were collected from dual-coded EVA in the HEAL-SL study. Physicians were able to
344 assign CODs for 11,820 of the 11,920 records, where 100 of these records could not be assigned a COD due
345 to missing or inadequate information (e.g. low quality narrative, data loss). The 11,820 physician coded
346 records were further filtered for records where both physicians agreed on the assigned codes (records that
347 were not reconciled or adjudicated) resulting in 6942 physician agreed records (based on comparisons
348 using CMEA-10 codes, see Additional File 1). The 6942 records were converted into CGHR-10 codes (see
349 Appendix A) that generalized ICD-10 codes into 19, 10, and 7 categories for the adult (12 to 69 years), child
350 (28 days to 11 years), and neonatal (under 28 days) age groups. After conversion, a final total of 6939
351 physician agreed records (3826 adult, 2636 child, and 477 neonatal) were used for modelling and
352 performance evaluation, where three records were removed as their ICD-10 codes did not have a matching
353 CGHR-10 code.

354 The 6939 physician agreed records were collected using VA from the HEAL-SL study between 2019-2022,
355 where records were collected using nation-wide samples across Sierra Leone provinces seen in Figure B2.
356 More populous areas (e.g. southern and north east provinces with ~197,000 and ~135,000 population
357 respectively) had more sampling areas versus less populous areas (e.g. north west and eastern provinces
358 with ~50,000 and ~69,000 people respectively). The distribution of the study data are shown by CGHR-10
359 causes of death in Table B4. All age groups had relatively evenly distributed female and male records (44-
360 55% of 6939 records each). Across CODs, there were noticeably more female records for cancers (65%), other
361 and maternal conditions (100%), while more male records for chronic respiratory diseases (61%), other

362 noncommunicable diseases (61%), other injuries (77%), road and transport injuries (71%), and
363 tuberculosis (68%). Most records were coded by physicians as malaria for adults (20%) and children
364 (52%), and stillbirth (36%) and neonatal infections (21%) for neonates. Suicide, congenital anomalies,
365 nutritional deficiencies, and other had low sample sizes for each age group (<1% of total records for each
366 age group). Table B5 shows the distribution of the study data by age. Across ages, there were more male
367 records for 50-59 years (60-62%), while all other records had between 49-59% female and male records.
368 Most records were in the 65-69 years age range for adults (15%), 1-5 years for children (62%), and 0-6
369 days for neonates (83%).



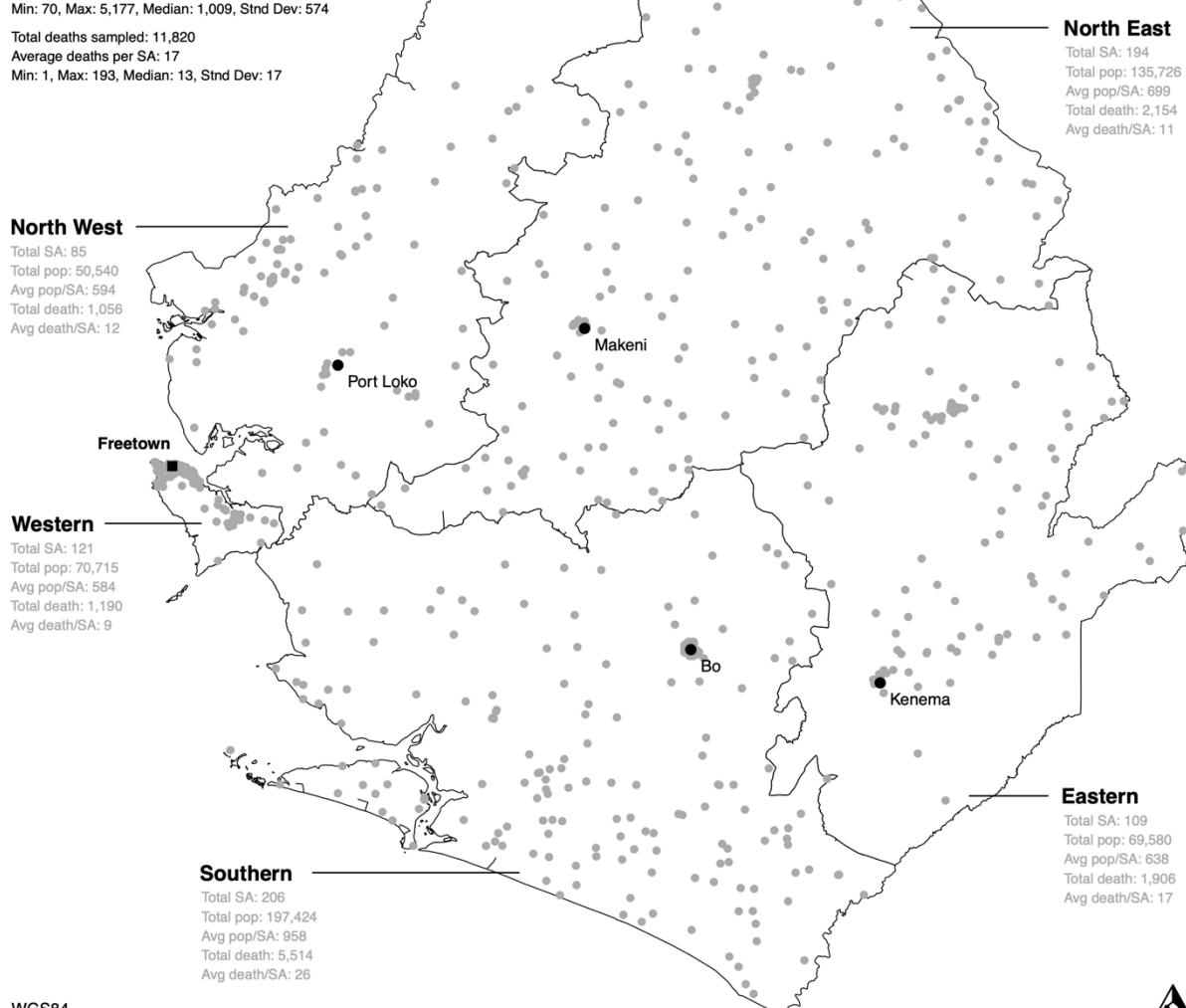
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Fig. B1 Detailed flow diagram for verbal autopsy coding comparison of 6939 sample deaths in Sierra Leone. This supplements the diagram in Figure 1, providing additional details on removed records, model specifications, and sub-processes.

Sierra Leone (2019–2022)

Total population sampled: 523,985
 Average population (pop) per sampling area (SA): 1,057
 Min: 70, Max: 5,177, Median: 1,009, Std Dev: 574
 Total death sampled: 11,820
 Average deaths per SA: 17
 Min: 1, Max: 193, Median: 13, Std Dev: 17



373
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375

Fig. B2 Healthy Sierra Leone (HEAL-SL) verbal autopsy data sampling areas for Sierra Leone from 2019-2022. The boundaries represent Sierra Leone provinces. Each grey point represents the centroid of sampling areas. Pop=population, SA=sampling area.

376 B.2 Modelling Details

377 Each model (GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InSilicoVA, and InterVA-5) required pre-processing of the 6939 records into
 378 input data, and standardization of output COD codes from models for performance evaluation as not all
 379 models produced comparable codes across outputs. Although each model can assign multiple CODs per
 380 record, only the first generated COD response from GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, and the most probable COD from
 381 InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA were used for evaluation. Section B.2.1 describes the input data and parameters
 382 for each model, while Section B.2.3 details the outputs from running each model.

383

384 **Table B4** Study data by cause of death.

Age Group	CGHR-10 Cause of Death (COD)	Female	Male	Total
Adult, 18 CODs (n=3826, 55.1%)	Acute Respiratory Infections	48 (45.7%)	57 (54.3%)	105 (2.7%)
	Cancers	32 (65.3%)	17 (34.7%)	49 (1.3%)
Adult Female (n=1681, 43.9%)	Chronic Respiratory Diseases	29 (38.7%)	46 (61.3%)	75 (2%)
	Diabetes Mellitus	14 (51.9%)	13 (48.1%)	27 (0.7%)
Adult Male (n=2145, 56.1%)	Diarrhoeal Diseases	102 (49.8%)	103 (50.2%)	205 (5.4%)
	Ill-Defined	56 (47.9%)	61 (52.1%)	117 (3.1%)
	Ischemic Heart Disease	89 (53%)	79 (47%)	168 (4.4%)
	Liver And Alcohol Related Diseases	58 (45.3%)	70 (54.7%)	128 (3.3%)
	Malaria	372 (46.6%)	427 (53.4%)	799 (20.9%)
	Maternal Conditions	130 (100%)	N/A	130 (3.4%)
	Other Cardiovascular Diseases	59 (55.1%)	48 (44.9%)	107 (2.8%)
	Other Noncommunicable Diseases	160 (38.6%)	254 (61.4%)	414 (10.8%)
	Other Injuries	83 (23.2%)	274 (76.8%)	357 (9.3%)
	Road And Transport Injuries	73 (29.1%)	178 (70.9%)	251 (6.6%)
	Stroke	147 (44.4%)	184 (55.6%)	331 (8.7%)
	Suicide	N/A	3 (100%)	3 (0.1%)
	Tuberculosis	54 (31.6%)	117 (68.4%)	171 (4.5%)
Child, 9 CODs (n=2636, 38%)	Congenital Anomalies	1 (100%)	N/A	1 (0%)
	Diarrhoeal Diseases	79 (45.1%)	96 (54.9%)	175 (6.6%)
Child Female (n=1290, 48.9%)	Epilepsy, Leukaemia, & Other Non-communicable	61 (53.5%)	53 (46.5%)	114 (4.3%)
	Ill-Defined	34 (48.6%)	36 (51.4%)	70 (2.7%)
Child Male (n=1346, 51.1%)	Injuries	51 (37.8%)	84 (62.2%)	135 (5.1%)
	Malaria	680 (49.2%)	702 (50.8%)	1382 (52.4%)
	Nutritional Deficiencies	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	11 (0.4%)
	Other infections	338 (50.7%)	329 (49.3%)	667 (25.3%)
	Pneumonia	39 (48.1%)	42 (51.9%)	81 (3.1%)
Neonate, 7 CODs (n=477, 6.9%)	Birth Asphyxia and Birth Trauma	38 (36.9%)	65 (63.1%)	103 (21.6%)
	Congenital Anomalies	2 (100%)	N/A	2 (0.4%)
Neonate Female (n=227, 47.6%)	Ill-Defined	11 (47.8%)	12 (52.2%)	23 (4.8%)
	Neonatal Infections	49 (49.5%)	50 (50.5%)	99 (20.8%)
Neonate Male (n=250, 52.4%)	Other	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5 (1%)
	Prematurity And Low Birthweight	39 (53.4%)	34 (46.6%)	73 (15.3%)
	Stillbirth	86 (50%)	86 (50%)	172 (36.1%)

385 **B.2.1 Input Data and Preprocessing**

386 For GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, 6939 text prompts were generated for each physician agreed record as input to
 387 instruct the models to assign CODs based on the open narratives. Two types of text prompts were used:
 388 user prompts and system prompts. System prompts contained textual instructions to assign the role of a
 389 physician ICD-10 coder with expertise in Sierra Leone. The following system prompt was used:

390 *You are a physician with expertise in determining underlying causes of death in Sierra Leone by assigning the
 391 most probable ICD-10 code for each death using verbal autopsy narratives. Return only the ICD-10 code without
 392 description. E. g. A00. If there are multiple ICD-10 codes, show one code per line.*

393 User prompts contained textual instructions to perform coding of VA records based on the age, sex, and
 394 narrative of the deceased. The following template was used to generate user prompts for each record, where
 395 <age> and <sex> from the questionnaire, and <narrative> from the narratives, were replaced with values
 396 from the data:

397 *Determine the underlying cause of death and provide the most probable ICD-10 code for a verbal autopsy*
398 *narrative of a <age> years old <sex> death in Sierra Leone: <narrative>*
399 For InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA, the standardized questionnaire data from the HEAL-SL EVA were first
400 converted into 2016 World Health Organization (WHO) VA questionnaire revision 1.5.1 Open Data Kit
401 (ODK) format [81, 82] consisting of 526 variables [83], followed by further conversion into OpenVA format
402 [43] consisting of 353 variables [84] using the pyCrossVA version 0.97 Python package [85]. The 6939
403 records were all converted into OpenVA formatted records for InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA.

404 **Table B5** Study data by age range.

Age Group	Age Range	Female	Male	Total
Adult (n=3826, 55.1%)	12-14 Years	51 (37.8%)	84 (62.2%)	135 (3.5%)
Adult Female (n=1681, 43.9%)	15-19 Years	115 (42.8%)	154 (57.2%)	269 (7%)
Adult Male (n=2145, 56.1%)	20-24 Years	146 (53.1%)	129 (46.9%)	275 (7.2%)
	25-29 Years	159 (45.2%)	193 (54.8%)	352 (9.2%)
	30-34 Years	174 (50.9%)	168 (49.1%)	342 (8.9%)
	35-39 Years	153 (45.4%)	184 (54.6%)	337 (8.8%)
	40-44 Years	134 (42%)	185 (58%)	319 (8.3%)
	45-49 Years	148 (47%)	167 (53%)	315 (8.2%)
	50-54 Years	134 (39.6%)	204 (60.4%)	338 (8.8%)
	55-59 Years	96 (37.6%)	159 (62.4%)	255 (6.7%)
	60-64 Years	128 (40.8%)	186 (59.2%)	314 (8.2%)
	65-69 Years	243 (42.3%)	332 (57.7%)	575 (15%)
Child (n=2636, 38%)	1-5 Months	146 (47.4%)	162 (52.6%)	308 (11.7%)
Child Female (n=1290, 48.9%)	6-11 Months	160 (50.8%)	155 (49.2%)	315 (11.9%)
Child Male (n=1346, 51.1%)	1-5 Years	822 (50.3%)	811 (49.7%)	1633 (61.9%)
	6-11 Years	162 (42.6%)	218 (57.4%)	380 (14.4%)
Neonate (n=477, 6.9%)	0-6 Days	184 (46.6%)	211 (53.4%)	395 (82.8%)
Neonate Female (n=227, 47.6%)	7-27 Days	43 (52.4%)	39 (47.6%)	82 (17.2%)
Neonate Male (n=250, 52.4%)				

405 **B.2.2 Models and Parameters**

406 The GPT-3.5 and GPT-4 Application Programming Interface (API) was accessed using Python version 3.11.4
407 and used to assign CODs for each record. GPT-3.5 used the *gpt-3.5-turbo* model, while GPT-4 used the *gpt-*
408 *4-0613* model. The parameter *temperature* for GPT-3.5 and GPT-4, representing the sampling temperature
409 ranging from 0 to 2 (default of 1), was set to 0 to produce more deterministic outputs [86]. Higher values
410 closer to 2 may produce less deterministic outputs, while lower values closer to 0 produce more
411 deterministic outputs.

412 The *openVA* R package was used to run InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA models to assign CODs for each record in
413 R version 4.3.1. The *openVA* package version 1.1.1 used dependent packages InterVA5 version 1.1.3 and
414 InSilicoVA version 1.4.0. The *Nsim* (number of iterations to run) parameter [87] for InSilicoVA was set to

9500, while the HIV (level of prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus) and Malaria (level of prevalence of Malaria) parameters [88] for InterVA-5 were both set to h (high) reflecting HIV and Malaria disease assumptions in Sierra Leone [89, 90]. Note that the default value of $Nsim=10000$ for InSilicoVA ran until 9500 iterations before it stopped due to errors, thus $Nsim=9500$ was used and ran successfully.

419 **B.2.3 Output Data and Code Conversion**

420 Of the 6939 input records, GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InterVA-5, and InSilicoVA were able to assign CODs for 6939
421 (100%), 6935 (>99%), 6830 (98%), 6830 (98%) records respectively. All 6830 (100%) InterVA-5 and
422 InSilicoVA records with WHO VA 2016 v1.5 output codes [55] were converted into ICD-10 codes
423 respectively. After all model outputs were converted to ICD-10 codes, they were further converted to CGHR-
424 10 codes. The 6939 GPT-3.5 and 6935 GPT-4 output records with ICD-10 codes were converted into 6930
425 (>99%) and 6931 (>99) records with CGHR-10 codes, where <1% (9 and 8) records did not have matching
426 CGHR-10 codes respectively. The 6830 InterVA-5 and InSilicoVA records with ICD-10 codes were converted
427 into 6802 (>99%) and 6726 (98%) records with CGHR-10 codes respectively, where 28 (<1%) and 104
428 (1%) of records could not be converted into CGHR-10 codes.

429 **B.3 Performance Evaluation Details**

430 The performance of GPT-3.5, GPT-4, InSilicoVA, and InterVA-5 models were evaluated with metrics at the
431 population and individual-level by comparing their CGHR-10 COD outputs for 6939 records to physician
432 COD assignments. Section B.3.1 describes CSMF accuracy in detail for evaluating models on the population
433 level, Section B.3.2 describes PCCC for evaluating models on the individual-level. Records that were
434 assigned a COD by physicians, but not by a model were considered an incorrect COD assignment by the
435 model. CSMF accuracy and PCCC were calculated for each model overall and by three age groups (adult,
436 child, and neonatal), then further into age and COD for each age group.

437 **B.3.1 Cause Specific Mortality Fraction (CSMF) Accuracy**

438 CSMF accuracy measures the performance of models at the population level, comparing distributions of
439 CODs between the physicians and the models [56]. To calculate CSMF accuracy, $CSMF_j$ was calculated as is
440 the fraction of physician or model records for cause j , given by dividing the number of records for cause j

441 with the total number of records as seen in Equation B1. Then, the $CSMFMaximumError$, representing the
 442 worst possible model, is calculated using Equation B2. Finally, the CSMF accuracy is given by Equation B3,
 443 where k is the number of causes, j is a cause, $CSMF_j^{true}$ is the true physician CSMF for cause j , and $CSMF_j^{pred}$
 444 is the prediction model CSMF for cause j . CSMF accuracy ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 means that the model
 445 completely matched the physician COD distribution and 0 means that it did not match the distribution.

$$446 \quad CSMF_j = \frac{Records_j}{Records} \quad (B1)$$

$$447 \quad CSMFMaximumError = 2(1 - Min(CSMF_j^{true})) \quad (B2)$$

$$CSMAccuracy = 1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k |CSMF_j^{true} - CSMF_j^{pred}|}{CSMFMaximumError} \quad (B3)$$

448 B.3.2 Partial Chance Corrected Concordance (PCCC)

449 PCCC measures the performance of models at the individual-level, comparing COD assignments between
 450 the physicians and models on a record by record basis, correcting for COD assignments made purely by
 451 chance [56]. PCCC is given by Equation B5, where k is the number of top COD assignments from the model
 452 to consider, N is number of causes, and C is fraction of records where the physician COD assignment is one
 453 of the top COD assignments from the model. For this study, k was set to 1, making C equivalent to the fraction
 454 of true positives TP or records, where the physician COD assignment is equal to the model COD assignment
 455 as shown in Equation B4. Higher PCCC values closer to 1 indicate that model COD assignments are similar
 456 to physician COD assignments, while values closer to 0 indicate that they are not similar to physicians.

$$457 \quad C = \frac{TP}{Records} \quad (B4)$$

$$PCCC(k) = \frac{C - \frac{k}{N}}{1 - \frac{k}{N}} \quad (B5)$$

458 Appendix C Experiment on Repeated Runs of GPT-3.5

459 A short experiment was conducted to test the consistency of GPT-3.5 outputs repeated on the same record.
 460 100 records, sampled randomly with approximately equal proportions across age groups, CODs, and survey
 461 rounds 1 and 2, were used to test repeated runs of GPT-3.5. Each record from the 100 records was rerun 10

462 times through GPT3.5, resulting in ten COD outputs per record. The ICD-10 codes were then converted to
463 CGHR-10 codes and tested for consistency, where completely inconsistent results had different ICD-10 or
464 CGHR-10 codes for each of the 10 reruns (1 times+), and completely consistent results had the same ICD-
465 10 or CGHR-10 code for all 10 reruns (10 times), on the same record.

466 The results are shown in Table C6. For all 100 records, GPT-3.5 assigns the same ICD-10 and CGHR-10 code
467 for the same record 5+ times out of 10. For 66 and 79 records, GPT-3.5 assigns the same ICD-10 and CGHR-
468 10 code respectively for each record. This number increases to 94 (from 66) and 96 (from 79) when
469 reducing the number of times out of 10 that GPT-3.5 assigns the same ICD-10 and CGHR-10 code
470 respectively. Thus, GPT-3.5 does not always produce the same outputs when repeated on the same record
471 (10 times out of 10), even when the temperature is set to 0, but does so for more than half the records. For
472 most records (more than 90%), GPT-3.5 will produce the same outputs for the same record 7+ times of 10.

473 **Table C6** Records with same GPT-3.5 outputs based on 10 repeated reruns of 100 records

Times with Same GPT-3.5 Outputs	ICD-10 Records	CGHR-10 Records
1 times+ (inconsistent)	100	100
2 times+	100	100
3 times+	100	100
4 times+	100	100
5 times+	100	100
6 times+	94	96
7 times+	92	94
8 times+	86	91
9 times+	79	86
10 times (consistent)	66	79

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