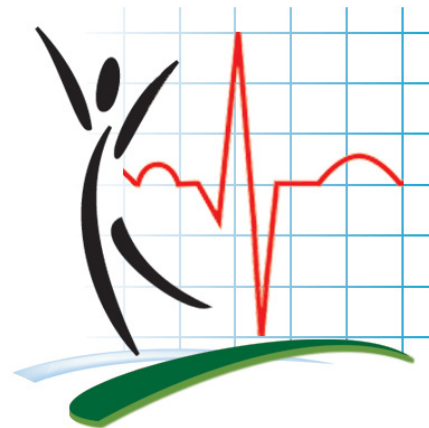


Health Fact Sheets

The 10 leading causes of death, 2011



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- not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
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- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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The 10 leading causes of death, 2011

The number of deaths is used as the ranking criteria for leading causes of death. Ranking causes of death is an informative way to present mortality statistics, supplementing other measures of mortality such as death rates and life tables. The methodology used to select the leading causes of death was developed by the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Heron).



Statistics shown in this fact sheet come from Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database. These data are collected from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries and contain demographic and medical (cause of death) information on all deaths in Canada.

The proportion of deaths for the 10 leading causes of death is declining

In 2011, the 10 leading causes of death were responsible for 181,625 deaths, representing 75% of all deaths in Canada, compared to 80% in 2000 (Table 1). The relative burden of the 10 leading causes of death has been declining since 2000, while the proportion of all other causes of death increased.

The ranking of the 10 leading causes of death was the same for 2000 and 2011. In 2010, however, two leading causes switched places: accidents (unintentional injuries) ranked fourth, followed by chronic lower respiratory diseases.

Table 1

Ranking, number and percentage of death for the 10 leading causes of death, Canada, 2000, 2010 and 2011

Cause of death	2011			2010			2000		
	rank	number	percent	rank	number	percent	rank	number	percent
All causes of death	...	242,074	100.0	...	240,075	100.0	...	218,062	100.0
Total, ten leading causes of death	...	181,625	75.0	...	182,287	75.9	...	175,149	80.3
Malignant neoplasms (cancer)	1	72,476	29.9	1	71,882	29.9	1	62,672	28.7
Diseases of heart (heart disease)	2	47,627	19.7	2	48,757	20.3	2	55,070	25.3
Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke)	3	13,283	5.5	3	13,706	5.7	3	15,576	7.1
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	4	11,184	4.6	5	10,757	4.5	4	9,813	4.5
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	5	10,716	4.4	4	10,866	4.5	5	8,589	3.9
Diabetes mellitus (diabetes)	6	7,194	3.0	6	6,942	2.9	6	6,714	3.1
Alzheimer's disease	7	6,356	2.6	7	6,452	2.7	7	5,007	2.3
Influenza and pneumonia	8	5,767	2.4	8	5,106	2.1	8	4,966	2.3
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	9	3,728	1.5	9	3,951	1.6	9	3,606	1.7

Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (kidney disease)	10	3,294	1.4	10	3,868	1.6	10	3,136	1.4
All other causes	...	60,449	25.0	...	57,788	24.1	...	42,913	19.7
... not applicable									
Note: The order of the causes of death in this table is based on the ranking of the 10 leading causes of death in 2011.									
Source: Vital statistics: Death database, CANSIM Table 102-0561 .									

Cancer, the leading cause of death, accounted for 72,476 deaths in 2011 or 30% of all deaths, a proportion that has remained almost unchanged since 2000 (29%). The second leading cause of death was heart disease, accounting for 20% of all deaths followed in third rank by stroke (cerebrovascular diseases) with 6%.

Four out of ten leading causes had the same ranking both for men and women

In 2011, males and females shared eight of the 10 leading causes of death. However, only four leading causes of death had the same ranking: cancer (first), heart disease (second), chronic lower respiratory diseases (fourth), and influenza and pneumonia (eighth).

Table 2
Ranking and number of deaths for the 10 leading causes of death by sex, Canada, 2011

Cause of death	Males			Females			Male-Female ratio ¹
	rank	number	percent	rank	number	percent	
All causes of death	...	121,042	100.0	...	121,032	100.0	100
Malignant neoplasms (cancer)	1	37,916	31.3	1	34,560	28.6	110
Diseases of heart (heart disease)	2	24,987	20.6	2	22,640	18.7	110
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	3	6,243	5.2	5	4,473	3.7	140
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	4	5,551	4.6	4	5,633	4.7	99
Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke)	5	5,486	4.5	3	7,797	6.4	70
Diabetes mellitus (diabetes)	6	3,825	3.2	7	3,369	2.8	114
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	7	2,781	2.3	14	947	0.8	294
Influenza and pneumonia	8	2,616	2.2	8	3,151	2.6	83
Alzheimer's disease	9	1,961	1.6	6	4,395	3.6	45
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	10	1,830	1.5	11	1,012	0.8	181
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	11	1,641	1.4	9	1,653	1.4	99
Sepsis	13	1,124	0.9	10	1,332	1.1	84
All other causes	...	25,081	20.7	...	30,070	24.8	83
... not applicable							
¹ Number of male deaths per 100 female deaths.							
Note: The order of the causes of death in this table is based on the ranking of the leading causes for males.							
Source: Vital statistics: Death Database, CANSIM Table 102-0561 .							

The third leading cause of death for males was accidents (unintentional injuries); this cause ranked fifth for females. In 2000, accidents ranked fifth for males and seventh for females.

Suicide was the seventh leading cause of death for males in 2011, same rank compared to 2000. For females, suicide ranked 14th in 2011 but ranked 10th in 2000. In Table 2, the sex ratio (number of male deaths per 100 female deaths) in 2011 shows that suicide is nearly three times higher for males than for females. This is confirmed by a study of suicide rates in Canada (Navaneelan).

Alzheimer's disease ranked sixth for females and ninth for males. The sex ratio shows that in 2011, more than twice as many females as males died from this cause of death. In 2000, Alzheimer's disease ranked fifth for females and 10th for males.

Although stroke has ranked third for females since 2000, for males it went from third in 2000 to fifth in 2011.

For females, diabetes was in seventh place in 2011, down from sixth place in 2000. Sepsis ranked 10th among females in 2011, and 15th in 2000.

Age differences

Chart 1 clearly shows that there were differences between age groups in the leading causes of death in 2011. In the 1-to-24 age group, more than half of the deaths are attributable to external causes of death such as accidents (unintentional injuries), with 35%, and suicide, with 20%. Deaths from cancer rank third, with 10%, followed by homicide, with 6%.

In the group aged 25 to 44, the leading cause of death is accidents (unintentional injuries), with 22%, followed closely by cancer, with 21%, and suicide, with 16%. In this age group, heart disease moves into the top five causes of death.

In the 45-to-64 age group, 44% of the deaths are attributable to cancer, and 16% to heart disease.

In the 65-and-over age group, where the number of death is most numerous, deaths due to chronic conditions were among the top five leading causes of death. Cancer and heart disease accounted for nearly half of the deaths in this age group, followed by stroke at 6%, chronic lower respiratory diseases, at 5%, and Alzheimer's disease, at 3%. Note that for the 85-and-over category, heart disease outranked cancer and Alzheimer's disease surpassed chronic lower respiratory diseases.

References

Heron, M. "Deaths: leading causes for 2004." National Vital Statistics Reports. 2007; 56 (5): 1-95.

Navaneelan, Tanya. "Suicide rates: An overview", Health at a Glance. 2012; Statistics Canada, Catalogue no 82-624-X.

Data Tables

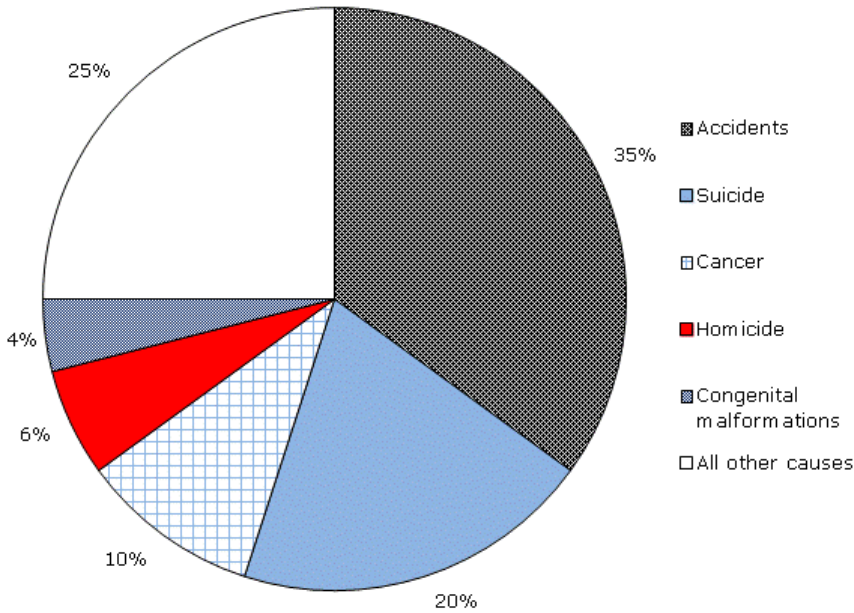
CANSIM tables [102-0561](#), [102-0562](#) and [102-0563](#).



Chart 1 Percentage distribution for the 5 leading causes of death in Canada, 2011

Age group: 1 to 24 years

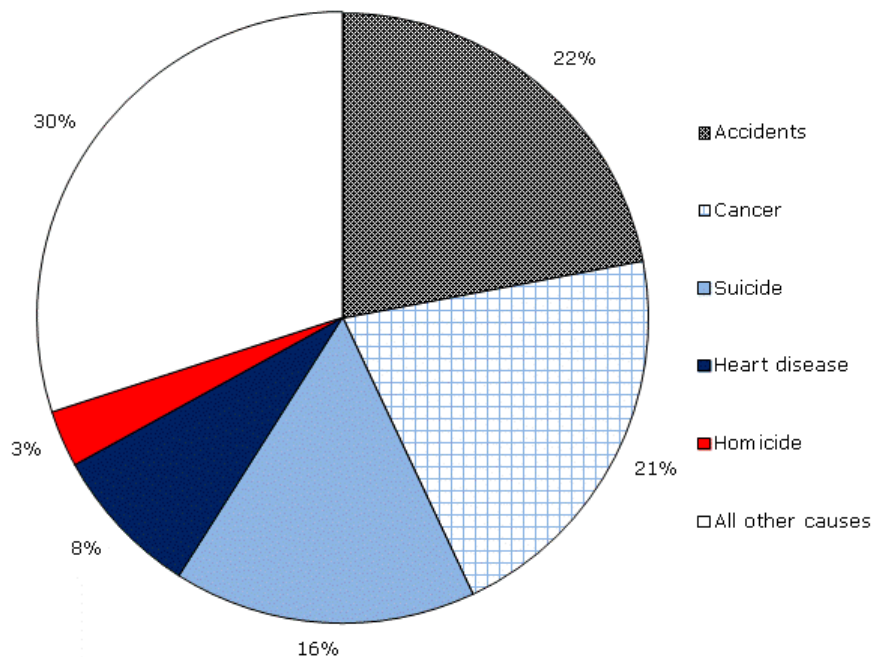
Number of deaths= 2,679



Source: Vital Statistics: Death Database, CANSIM Table 102-0561.

Age group: 25 to 44 years

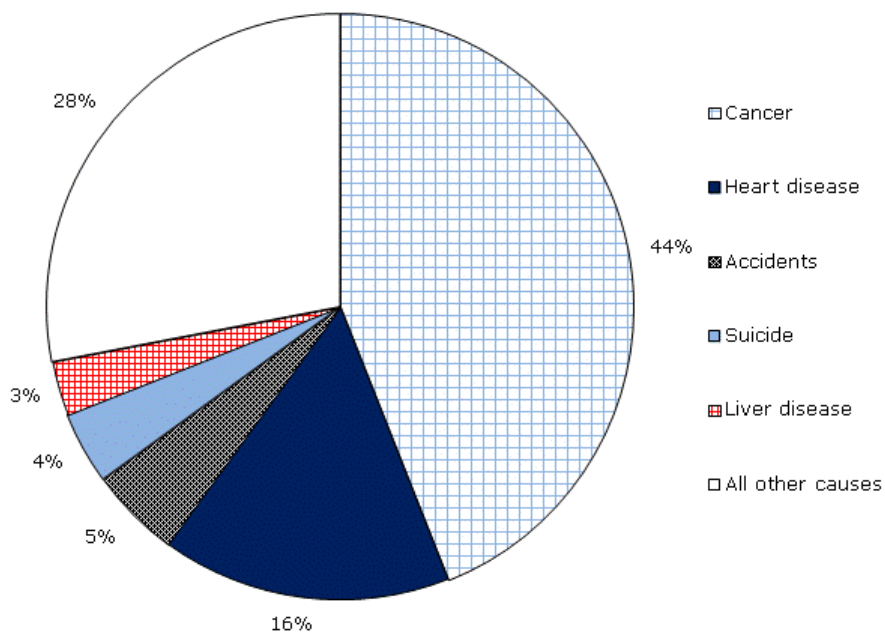
Number of deaths= 7,325



Source: Vital Statistics: Death Database, CANSIM Table 102-0561.

Age group: 45 to 64 years

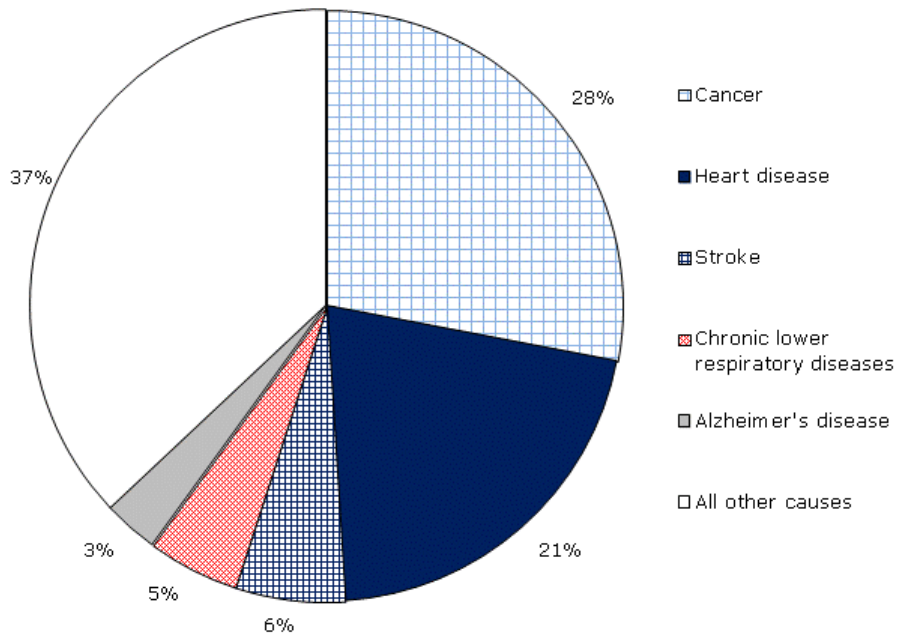
Number of deaths= 40,088



Source: Vital Statistics: Death Database, CANSIM Table 102-0561.

Age group: 65 years and over

Number of deaths= 190,171



Source: Vital Statistics: Death Database, CANSIM Table 102-0561.