

The Rest

Relationship Statistics

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DEATHS FROM EXTERNAL CAUSES

- Deaths from external causes, commonly described as deaths from accidents and injury, are deaths caused by environmental events and circumstances. The most common external causes of death are transport accidents, suicide, accidental poisonings, falls and drowning.
- An analysis of all deaths in the five years 1998-2002 reveals that 40,370 (or 6%) of the 645,846 deaths recorded were attributable to external causes as the underlying cause of death.
- In 1991, suicide overtook transport accidents as the most common form of death from external causes.
- In the years 1998-2002, intentional self-harm (suicide) accounted for the largest number of deaths from external causes at 12,312, followed by transport accidents (9,923), accidental exposure to other and unspecified factors (4,527), accidental poisonings (3,779), falls (2,813), assault (1,511) and accidental drowning (1,249). Of transport accidents the most common sub-category was as a car occupant comprising 53% of all such deaths, followed by pedestrians (18%) and motorcyclists (11%).
- Males have more than twice the rate of death from external causes as females – 27,849 compared to 12,521 in 1998-2002. In respect of suicide, the rate for males is almost four times higher than for females, although females are more likely to make a non-fatal attempt at suicide. Even in respect of transport deaths, the crude death rate for males is 15.2 (deaths per 100,000 people) compared to 5.6 for females.
- Among children (aged 0-14 years), deaths from external causes comprised 1,501 or 15% of the 9,768 deaths in 1998-2002. The most common causes were transport accidents (590) and drowning (303).
- Among young adults (aged 15-24 years), deaths from external causes comprised 70% of all deaths. Suicide was the cause of 22% of all deaths in the 15-24 year age group. Transport accidents, however, accounted for a higher proportion of deaths for this age group at 31% of all deaths.
- Among adults (aged 25-64 years), suicide was by far the most common form of death from external causes comprising 8,917 of the 21,589 deaths recorded from external causes of persons in the this age group in 1998-2002. Deaths from external causes comprised 18% of all deaths for 25-64 year olds.
- By contrast, deaths from external causes comprised just 2.2% of the 505,863 deaths of persons aged 65 years and over in the years 1998-2002.
- Deaths from external causes comprised a much higher percentage of all deaths among Indigenous Australians compared to the total population. 20% of all Indigenous male deaths in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory in 1998-2002 were attributable to external causes compared to just 8% of male deaths overall.
- The Northern Territory had the highest rate of deaths from external causes at 89.5 per 100,000 persons, while the ACT had the lowest rate at just 36.5 per 100,000 persons.

SOURCES:

3320.0 *Deaths from External Causes (2004)*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Helps, Y; Cripps, R & Harrison, J. (2002). *Hospital separations due to injury and poisoning, Australia 1999-2000*, Canberra: AIHW.