

Canadian Megatrends, March 2016

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Monday, March 21, 2016

Changes in causes of death, 1950 to 2012

Although death is a universal reality, the cause of death and the age at which most Canadians die changed markedly from 1950 to 2012.

The March issue of *Canadian Megatrends* examines the causes of death in Canada and how improvements in public health practices and policies have helped Canadians live longer.

In Canada, death rates from all causes combined have been steadily decreasing for both men and women. From 1950 to 2012, the annual death rate for men declined from 1,831.5 deaths per 100,000 men to 843.4, a drop of 53.9%. During the same period, the rate for women declined even further, from 1,475.6 deaths per 100,000 women to 580.3, a drop of 60.7%.

Today, cancer is the leading cause of death in Canada, a change from a century ago when infectious and parasitic diseases claimed the most lives.

Better diets and public awareness of the dangers of smoking, community advocacy efforts concerning drinking and driving, seatbelt use, improvements in pre-natal and post-natal care, and childhood vaccinations—just to name a few policies and practices—have all contributed to increased longevity among Canadians.

In addition, better detection, treatment and management of chronic conditions led to fewer deaths from these causes and, consequently, to a decline in premature deaths (deaths among people aged under 75).

The article "[Changes in causes of death, 1950 to 2012](#)," which is part of *Canadian Megatrends* ([11-630-X](#)), is now available from *The Daily* module of our website.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Yves Decady (613-851-4016; yves.decady@canada.ca), Health Statistics Division.

