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Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in Canada

In 2011/2012, about half of the estimated 228,000 Canadians aged 45 or older who had been diagnosed with dementia lived in private households, while the other half lived in long-term residential care facilities.

Dementia is a general term describing a range of symptoms associated with a decline in mental function severe enough to reduce the ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is a progressive, degenerative and fatal brain disorder characterized by loss of memory and the ability to think and communicate and by changes in mood and behaviour.

People with dementia often have other medical conditions that increase their need for assistance and make caring for them more complex. Among those in private households, 63% had incontinence and 53% had high blood pressure. Between a quarter and a third had heart disease, a mood disorder, or diabetes. Even when age was taken into account, people with dementia were significantly more likely than those without dementia to have heart disease, incontinence or a mood disorder.

Owing to the high prevalence of other diseases and conditions among people with dementia, mortality from Alzheimer's disease may be underreported on death certificates. Rather than Alzheimer's disease, other conditions may be recorded as the underlying cause of death.

From 2004 to 2011, Alzheimer's disease was coded as the underlying cause of 48,525 deaths or 2.6% of all deaths during that period. However, for another 32,343 deaths (1.7%), Alzheimer's disease was a contributing cause. As a result, Alzheimer's disease-related deaths totalled 80,868 or 4.3% of all deaths during the eight-year period. The condition most often listed with Alzheimer's disease as a cause of death was cardiovascular disease.

Note to readers

The analysis of Canadians aged 45 or older with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias was based on the Neurological Conditions Prevalence File, which was derived from the 2010/2011 Canadian Community Health Survey – Annual Component, the 2011 Survey on Living with Neurological Conditions in Canada, and the 2011/2012 Survey of Neurological Conditions in Institutions in Canada.

To examine mortality from Alzheimer's disease, the Multiple-Cause-of-Death file, created by Statistics Canada, was used.



The articles, "[Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in Canada](#)" and "[Mortality from Alzheimer's disease in Canada: A multiple-cause-of-death analysis, 2004 to 2011](#)," are available in the May 2016 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 27, no. 5 (**82-003-X**), from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*.

This issue of *Health Reports* contains one other article: "[Vitamin C status of Canadian adults: Findings from the 2012/2013 Canadian Health Measures Survey](#)."

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