

Deaths and causes of death, 2014

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, November 16, 2017

The total number of deaths in Canada reached 258,821 in 2014, the highest annual number recorded since the introduction of the Vital Statistics registration system in 1921. Every province and territory reported a record high number of deaths in 2014, except Nova Scotia, Yukon and Nunavut.

There were slightly more male deaths (130,761) than female deaths (128,060) in Canada in 2014. In general, these numbers have been converging over the last three decades because female deaths have been increasing faster than male deaths. This situation is due to a more rapid decline in male mortality than in female mortality since the late 1970s, because women's lifestyles have become increasingly similar to men's.

The increase in the total number of deaths is a result of two factors. The first is the fact that Canada's population is growing—the fastest rate of growth among G7 countries. A larger population generates a higher number of deaths. The second factor is related to population aging. An increasing share of the population is now older, where mortality is higher. The number of deaths is expected to keep increasing in the coming years in Canada with the aging of the large cohorts of baby boomers born between 1946 and 1965. See the document [Population Projections for Canada \(2013 to 2063\)](#), [Provinces and Territories \(2013 to 2038\)](#) for more information.

Over the last 30 years, gains in life expectancy at birth were higher for men than women

Despite an increase in the number of deaths, life expectancy in Canada has increased with time.

Based on the age-specific mortality rates of the period 2012/2014, the Canadian life expectancy at birth reached 79.7 years for men and 83.9 years for women. Every year over the last 30 years, life expectancy at birth has increased by an average of 2.9 months for men and 1.8 months for women in Canada. As a result, the gap in life expectancy between men and women was reduced to 4.2 years, compared to more than seven years at the beginning of the 1980s.

Life expectancy at birth was highest in British Columbia and lowest in Nunavut

British Columbia still had the highest life expectancy at birth in the country in 2012/2014, both for men (80.5 years) and for women (84.5 years). British Columbia has led all provinces and territories since 1994/1996 for women and since 1980/1982 for men. Nunavut had the lowest life expectancy at birth in 2012/2014, at 68.3 years for men and 73.9 years for women, respectively 11.4 years and 10.0 years below the national average. Among the provinces, life expectancy at birth was lowest in Newfoundland and Labrador at 77.2 years for men and 81.7 years for women.

Infant mortality reached new lows

The infant mortality rate in Canada was 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014, the lowest rate observed since the introduction of the Vital Statistics registration system in 1921, when the rate was 77.4 deaths per 1,000 live births. The neonatal (death prior to 28 days of life) and post-neonatal (deaths in months 1 to 11 of life) mortality rates also reached historic lows, at 3.6 and 1.0 deaths per 1,000 live births respectively.

Cancer and heart diseases remained the two leading causes of death in 2014

Cancer and heart diseases have been the two leading causes of death for both men and women since 2000. Together, these two causes accounted for nearly half of all deaths in Canada in 2014.

In 2014, the other eight leading causes of death were stroke, chronic lower respiratory diseases, accidents (unintentional injuries), diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, Alzheimer's disease, suicide, and liver diseases (chronic liver disease and cirrhosis). Liver diseases surpassed kidney diseases to rank tenth among the leading causes in 2014. The annual numbers of deaths for liver diseases and kidney diseases showed similar increases over the period 2000 to 2010. Since 2010, however, deaths due to chronic liver diseases have continued to increase, while deaths due to kidney diseases have dropped from 3,868 in 2010 to 3,098 in 2014. This is the only



change in the 10 leading causes of death that has been observed since 2000. The drop in kidney diseases may be due in part to an increase in the number of conditions that have a causal relationship with renal failure. As a result, some deaths that would previously have been classified as deaths from kidney disease are now classified as deaths from diabetes or heart disease.

Together, the 10 leading causes of death accounted for three-quarters of all deaths in 2014. That is down slightly from 2000, when they accounted for 80% of all deaths.

Cancer and heart diseases were also the leading causes of death in all provinces and territories, except in Nunavut, where cancer ranked first followed by suicide. Suicide ranked in the top five causes of death in all three territories in 2014; suicides were the fifth leading cause in Yukon and fourth in the Northwest Territories. In the provinces, suicides as a cause of death were highest in Alberta, where they were the sixth leading cause.

Sustainable Development Goals

On January 1, 2016, the world officially began implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) — the United Nations' transformative plan of action that addresses urgent global challenges over the next 15 years. The plan is based on 17 specific sustainable development goals.

Deaths and Causes of Death is an example of how Statistics Canada supports the reporting on the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. This release will be used in helping to measure the following goal:



Note to readers

Data on deaths and causes of death are collected by the Canadian Vital Statistics – Death Database. It is an administrative survey that collects demographic and medical (cause of death) information annually from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries on all deaths in Canada.

The data are used to calculate basic indicators, such as cause-specific death rates and life expectancy, on the mortality of Canadians.

Data for reference year 2014 from the Canadian Vital Statistics – Death Database are now available.

Available in CANSIM: tables [053-0003](#), [102-0030](#), [102-0501 to 102-0510](#), [102-0521 to 102-0538](#), [102-0540](#), [102-0542](#), [102-0551](#), [102-0553](#), [102-0561](#), [102-0562](#) and [102-0564](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3233](#).

The 2012/2014 edition of the publication, Life Tables, Canada, Provinces and Territories ([84-537-X](#)), includes complete life tables (for Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) and abridged life tables (for Prince Edward Island, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) from 1980/1982 to 2012/2014. All of these tables are available for men, women and both sexes combined, in two formats: [CANSIM tables](#), and annual or historical Excel files available in publication [84-537-X](#).

The life tables have been updated on the basis of a slightly revised methodology and the most recent population estimates. The methodology used to produce complete and abridged life tables produced by Statistics Canada is available in the document Methods for Constructing Life tables for Canada, Provinces and Territories ([84-538-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).