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Coverage

England and Wales

Theme

Health and Care

Deaths in England and Wales in 2001

In 2001, 22 per cent of men who died did so in their own homes, while only 4 per cent died in communal establishments such as nursing homes (excluding hospitals and hospices), according to detailed mortality statistics published today by the Office for National Statistics*.

By contrast, only 16 per cent of female deaths occurred in the home and 11 per cent in nursing homes. This reflects women's longer life expectancy, as they are more likely to be widowed and be living in nursing or residential care homes for the elderly at the time of death.

This statistical report on mortality in England and Wales in 2001 includes information on: deaths and death rates by age, sex and marital status; death rates by area for selected causes; infant mortality rates for selected causes; and life expectancy.

Other statistics for 2001 show that:

- Over a fifth (22 per cent) of all deaths were certified by a coroner, rather than by a doctor, and 4 per cent were the subject of an inquest. Most accidental and violent deaths were coroner-certified (85 per cent), with 96 per cent of these subject to an inquest.
- Deaths due to coronary heart disease had a relatively high proportion, 45 per cent, certified by a coroner. This reflects the fact that deaths from heart disease can be sudden and unexpected, whereas deaths from long-term illnesses such as cancer have a far lower proportion (6 per cent in 2001) certified by a coroner.

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****Mortality statistics 2001: General, England and Wales Series DH1 no.34.***

Available free on the National Statistics website:
www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=620



- The highest number of deaths occurred in January, followed by December, and lowest numbers in the summer months, with fewest deaths in September. This seasonal pattern is found for most causes of death, particularly respiratory and circulatory diseases. Deaths from cancer, however, show little variation over the year.
- In 2001, 7.5 per cent of those who died had been born outside the United Kingdom, compared with 4.8 per cent in 1981 and 5.9 per cent in 1991. This partly reflects migration patterns earlier in the 20th century. For example, in 1981 0.2 per cent of deaths were people born in the Caribbean, rising to 0.4 per cent in 1991 and 0.6 per cent in 2001.
- Residents in the North East of England had the highest death rates in England and Wales, and those in the South West of England the lowest, after allowing for the differences in the age structure of the populations.
- The proportions of deaths of married men (54 per cent) and widowers (25 per cent) are almost exactly reversed in women (24 and 59 per cent respectively). This is mainly because women usually live longer than men.
- The average age at death was 73.2 years for males and 79.4 years for females. For those deaths due to land transport accidents the average age at death was 40.1 years for males and 49.1 for females.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
2. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2003.