Leading Causes of Death in the United States

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Ranking the common causes of death among different age groups can be a useful tool in finding out the options to reduce cause-specific morbidity and mortality rates. It should be kept in mind that rankings, however, do not illustrate the mortality risk. The ranking of a specific cause as a reason for frequent deaths may change over time, even if the mortality rates have not changed. Similarly, ranking of a specific cause may remain the same, even though the mortality rate declines; therefore, it is not intelligible to conclude the mortality risk from the rankings of mortality rates.

Overview

The demise of an individual is a disaster. Higher death rates from specific causes can also provide an insight into the larger issues in communities such as violence, lack of health care facilities, environmental issues and ignorance.

Preventable causes, such as car accidents, can be taken out to improve the larger system issues, and mortality rates can then be channeled towards a declining phase. Many fatal incidents can be prevented through social, behavioral and environmental changes and legislative amendments.

Causes of death vary according to different age groups and ethnicity, with black African American children having higher mortality rates as compared to people of other ethnic groups. Differences are also found among the Hispanic, non-Hispanic white, and
non-Hispanic black groups. Given below are the leading causes of death in the U.S according to different age groups.

### Leading Causes of Neonatal Death

1. [Congenital malformations](#), deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
2. Short gestation and low birth weight issues
3. Newborns affected by [maternal complications of pregnancy](#)
4. [Sudden infant death](#) syndrome
5. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
6. Complications of placenta, cord and membranes in newborns
7. Bacterial sepsis of newborns
8. [Respiratory distress of newborns](#)
9. [Cardiovascular diseases](#)
10. Neonatal hemorrhage

### Postneonatal Death Causes

![Image: “Main Symptoms of Influenza.” by Mikael Häggström. License: Public Domain](#)

1. Sudden infant death syndrome
2. Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
3. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
4. Cardiovascular diseases
5. Assault (homicide)
6. [Diarrhea](#) and gastroenteritis of infectious origin
7. [Influenza](#) and [pneumonia](#)
8. Septicemia
9. Disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight
10. Chronic respiratory disease originating in the perinatal period

### Leading Causes of Death: Ages 1 – 4 Years

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
3. Assault (homicide)
4. Malignant neoplasms
5. Diseases of heart
6. Influenza and pneumonia
7. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
8. Septicemia
9. In situ neoplasms, benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain or unknown behavior
10. Certain conditions originating in the perinatal

**Leading Causes of Death: Ages 5 – 9 Years**

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Malignant neoplasms
3. Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
4. Assault (homicide)
5. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
6. Diseases of the heart
7. Influenza and pneumonia
8. Cerebrovascular diseases
9. Septicemia
10. In situ neoplasms, benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain or unknown behavior

**Leading Causes of Death: Ages 10 – 14 Years**

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Malignant neoplasms
3. Suicide
4. Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
5. Assault (homicide)
6. Diseases of heart
7. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
8. Influenza and pneumonia
9. Cerebrovascular diseases
10. In situ neoplasms, benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain or unknown behavior

**Leading Causes of Death: Ages 15 – 19 Years**

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Suicide
3. Assault
4. Malignant neoplasms
5. Diseases of the heart
6. Congenital malformations, deformations, and chromosomal abnormalities
7. Influenza and pneumonia
8. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
9. Cerebrovascular diseases
10. Diabetes mellitus
Leading Causes of Death: Ages 20 – 24 Years

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Suicide
3. Assault
4. Malignant neoplasms
5. Diseases of the heart
6. Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities
7. Diabetes mellitus
8. Pregnancy and childbirth
9. Influenza and pneumonia
10. HIV

Leading Causes of Death: Ages 25 – 34 Years

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Suicide
3. Assault
4. Malignant neoplasms
5. Diseases of the heart
6. Diabetes mellitus
7. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
8. HIV
9. Cerebrovascular disease
10. Influenza and pneumonia

Leading Causes of Death: Ages 35 – 44 Years

1. Accidents (unintentional injuries)
2. Malignant neoplasms
3. Heart diseases
4. Suicide
5. Assault
6. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
7. Diabetes mellitus
8. HIV
9. Cerebrovascular disease
10. Influenza and pneumonia

Leading Causes of Death: Ages 45 – 54 Years

1. Malignant neoplasms
2. Heart diseases
3. Accidents
4. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
5. Suicide
6. Diabetes mellitus
7. Cerebrovascular disease
8. Chronic lower respiratory disease
9. Septicemia
10. HIV

Leading Causes of Death: Ages 55 – 64 Years

1. Malignant neoplasms
2. Heart diseases
3. Accidents
4. Diabetes mellitus
5. Chronic lower respiratory disease
6. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
7. Cerebrovascular disease
8. Suicide
9. Septicemia
10. Nephritis

Leading Causes of Death: Ages 65 – 74 Years

1. Malignant neoplasms
2. Heart diseases
3. Chronic lower respiratory disease
4. Cerebrovascular disease
5. Diabetes mellitus
6. Accidents
7. Nephritis and nephrotic syndrome
8. Septicemia
9. Influenza and pneumonia
10. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis

It can be seen that for the age range of 5 – 14, children are more likely to lose their life as a result of malignant neoplasms and, from 45 to 74 years, malignant neoplasms are the leading cause of death, whereas in the younger age groups, unintentional injuries and intentional self-harm are the primary cause.

References

USA causes of death by age and gender via worldlifeexpectancy.com

Deaths: Leading Causes for 2012 via nih.gov

International Classification of Diseases via cdc.gov

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