



Press release

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Causes of death in 2014

Ageing population influences causes of death

Neuchâtel, 23.06.2016 (FSO) – **In 2014 there were approximately 1000 fewer deaths than one year earlier. A decrease in the probability of dying was observed in all age groups. Meanwhile, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and dementia remain the three most common causes of death in Switzerland. These are the main findings of the Causes of Death Statistics from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).**

The average age at death is continuing to rise. In 2014, half of all the men who died were aged over 79 and half of all the women who died were aged over 85. In 1969, 45 years earlier, this median was 70 for men and 75 for women.

60 percent of those who died were aged 80 or over

In 2014, 63,938 deaths were recorded in the Swiss resident population, around 1000 fewer than in the previous year. The likelihood of dying declined in all age groups. 331 infants died in their first year of life. There were 188 deaths in the age group 1 to 19, 8% less than in the previous year. 869 people aged between 20 and 39 died, roughly the same as in the previous year. Only 1.4% of all deaths occurred in this age group. 7813 people died between the ages of 40 to 64, 16,614 between the ages of 65 and 79. There were 38,123 deaths of people aged over 80, 700 fewer than in the previous year. 2014 was a year without any significant influenza epidemic and with a moderately warm summer.

A third of people die from cardiovascular diseases

20,972, or 33% of all deaths were caused by diseases of the cardiovascular system. For decades this has been the leading cause of death, but its share is falling steadily: in 1995 it was still responsible for 41% of deaths and has therefore declined by 8 percentage points. The standardised mortality rate for these diseases fell among men from 318 to 156 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, and among women from 187 to 103 per 100,000. This means that men's risk of dying from cardiovascular disease has halved in the 19 years since 1995.

Cancer still the second most common cause of death

In second place, as in previous years, are deaths due to cancer: In 2014, these represented 16,765 or 26% of all deaths. The proportion of cancer-related deaths has increased by 1.5 percentage points since 1995. However, when the increase and the ageing of the resident population is taken into account, the mortality rate for cancer has fallen, from 228 to 164 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants among men (-28%) and from 133 to 105 per 100,000 among women (-21%).

Dementia deaths decline for the first time

As a result of the ageing population, the number of dementia-related deaths is high. 5759 people died from dementia as the underlying disease. For the first time since 1995, when the diagnosis was first recorded, a slight decline of 150 cases has been registered. The mortality rate was 28.8 per 100,000 men and 31.9 per 100,000 women and in recent years it has risen less steadily: in comparison to the previous year, rates among women even fell by 2.6 per 100,000 and among men increased by only 0.3 per 100,000.

Decline in suicides...

In 2014, 1028 suicides were recorded, 754 of them men and 274 women. Since the first half of the 1980s, when 1600 people took their own lives every year, the number of suicides has fallen by 35%. Since its peak in 1980, the suicide rate among men has dropped from 36.8 to 15.8 per 100,000 inhabitants, among women (peak 1979) of 15.0 to 6.0 per 100,000 inhabitants.

...increase in assisted suicide

In 2014, 742 assisted suicides were recorded, 320 of them men and 422 women. The number of assisted suicides continues to grow, especially in the over 65 age group. This increase reflects the ageing of the population. A detailed analysis of this trend is planned for the end of the year.

SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE
Media Office

Terminology

Age-standardised mortality rates: As the number of deaths is dependent on the size and age structure of the population, it cannot be compared directly with a number from previous years (or from another population). Standardised mortality rates are obtained by calculating mortality rates for each age group separately. These are calculated using a pre-defined population structure (in this case the WHO's 1976 European Standard Population) and are expressed per 100,000 inhabitants. This enables the mortality rates of different populations to be directly compared with one another.

Cause of death statistics: Basis of the survey

The cause of death statistics is based on the obligation of doctors to register every death in Switzerland. It is one of the oldest federal statistics and has been compiled since 1876. Diagnoses are classified according to World Health Organisation (WHO) policy. The figures published here include only deaths of persons resident in Switzerland. The FSO would like to thank the medical profession for its diligence in recording the causes of death.

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