



CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
DATA SUMMARY

REPORT REGISTER NO. DS99-06000
(June 1999)

**PREMATURE MORTALITY
IN CALIFORNIA, 1997**

Years of potential life lost before age 65 (YPLL-65) was, until recently, one of the commonly used measures in public health to reflect the impact of premature mortality on a population.¹ Years of potential life lost before age 75 (YPLL-75) has replaced YPLL-65 due to the longer average life expectancy of United States residents.² This report summarizes 1997 California mortality data for selected causes of death contributing to premature mortality as measured by YPLL-75, and compares 1997 data with 1996 data.

YPLL-75 reflects the impact of deaths occurring before the age of 75, the younger the decedent the greater the measured impact. An example would be a 29-year-old woman who dies from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), this event would be counted as 46 years of potential life lost. A 73-year-old man who dies from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) would be counted as two years of potential life lost.

From 1996 to 1997, YPLL-75 in California increased for eight causes of death and decreased for five (**Table 1**). Premature mortality increased for prematurity (+5.6%), sudden infant death syndrome and related conditions (+4.4%), pneumonia and influenza (+4.1%), malignant neoplasms and COPD (+2.1%), diabetes mellitus (+1.3%), diseases of the heart (+0.7%), and cerebrovascular diseases (+0.6%). Premature mortality due to AIDS decreased dramatically (-56.5%) from 1996 to 1997. Premature mortality declined at a slower pace for unintentional injuries (-8.4%), suicide, homicide, and legal intervention (-5.3%), congenital anomalies (-2.0%), and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (-1.5%). Total YPLL-75 for California residents decreased (-5.9%) from 1996 to 1997.

As shown in **Table 2**, malignant neoplasms (cancers) accounted for a total of 30,176 deaths representing 428,135 (21.3%) of the total YPLL-75 for California residents during 1997. Deaths attributed to diseases of the heart (23,092) ranked second in 1997 and accounted for 294,054 (14.6%) of the total YPLL-75 in California. Since cancer and heart disease affect the elderly at high rates, the high ranking for these two causes of death can in part be explained by the inclusion of the age group 65-74 in this report as compared to earlier YPLL-65 reports.

Unintentional injuries was the traditional leading cause in previous YPLL-65 studies,³ but in this report unintentional injuries dropped to the third rank and accounted for a YPLL-75 of 263,897 (13.1% of the total YPLL-75). Intentional injuries (suicide, homicide, and legal intervention), which traditionally ranked second in the state, dropped to fourth and accounted for 224,960 (11.2%) of the total YPLL-75 in California. Congenital anomalies ranked as the fifth leading cause of premature mortality, accounting for 82,340 (4.1%) of the total YPLL-75. Deaths due to AIDS ranked sixth, accounting for 62,332 (3.1%) of the total YPLL-75 in 1997. Cerebrovascular diseases ranked seventh and accounted for another 61,711 (3.1%) of the total YPLL-75. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis ranked eighth and accounted for 60,784 (3.0%) of the total YPLL-75. The remaining categories, excluding the All Other Causes category, made up less than 10 percent of the YPLL-75 in California for 1997.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Premature mortality in the United States. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, (Supplement). Dec 19, 1986; Vol. 35, No. 25.
2. National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 1996-97 and Injury Chartbook 1997*; DHHS (PHS) No. 97-1232.
3. Cox D. Premature mortality in California, 1995. *Data Summary*. Center for Health Statistics, California Department of Health Services. Report Register No. DS97-09000, September 1997.

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TABLE 1
ESTIMATED YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 75 (YPLL-75),
BY SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH, CALIFORNIA, 1996-1997
(By Place of Residence)

SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH	ICD-9 CODES	1996 YPLL-75	1997 YPLL-75	NUMERIC DIFFERENCE	PERCENT CHANGE
TOTAL		2,134,382	2,009,026	-125,356	-5.9
Malignant Neoplasms	140-208	419,532	428,135	8,603	2.1
Diseases of the Heart	390-398,402,404-429	292,122	294,054	1,932	0.7
Unintentional Injuries	E800-E949	288,105	263,897	-24,208	-8.4
Suicide, Homicide, and Legal Intervention	E950-E978	237,546	224,960	-12,586	-5.3
Congenital Anomalies	740-759	83,992	82,340	-1,652	-2.0
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	042-044	143,244	62,332	-80,912	-56.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	430-438	61,331	61,711	380	0.6
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	571	61,691	60,784	-907	-1.5
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	490-496	44,296	45,239	943	2.1
Diabetes Mellitus	250	40,597	41,108	511	1.3
Prematurity	765,769	34,725	36,675	1,950	5.6
Pneumonia and Influenza	480-487	33,766	35,156	1,390	4.1
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Related Conditions	798	23,638	24,669	1,031	4.4
All Other Causes	Residual	369,797	347,966		

Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 75 (YPLL-75),
BY SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH, CALIFORNIA, 1997
(By Place of Residence)

SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH	ICD-9 CODES	DEATHS	RATE*	YPLL-75	RANK
TOTAL		102,653	327.3	2,009,026	
Malignant Neoplasms	140-208	30,176	96.2	428,135	1
Diseases of the Heart	390-398,402,404-429	23,092	73.6	294,054	2
Unintentional Injuries	E800-E949	7,168	22.9	263,897	3
Suicide, Homicide, and Legal Intervention	E950-E978	5,796	18.5	224,960	4
Congenital Anomalies	740-759	1,310	4.2	82,340	5
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	042-044	1,847	5.9	62,332	6
Cerebrovascular Diseases	430-438	4,721	15.1	61,711	7
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	571	2,989	9.5	60,784	8
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	490-496	4,591	14.6	45,239	9
Diabetes Mellitus	250	3,029	9.7	41,108	10
Prematurity	765,769	489	1.6	36,675	11
Pneumonia and Influenza	480-487	2,497	8.0	35,156	12
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Related Conditions	798	330	1.1	24,669	13
All Other Causes	Residual	14,618	46.6	347,966	

* Cause-specific death rates are per 100,000 population under age 75 (n=31,362,711).

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic 1997 Population Projections for Counties with Age and Sex Detail, December 1998.
State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.