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Mortality Rates

G. David Batty
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health,
University College London, London, UK

Synonyms

[Death rate](#)

Definition

A mortality rate is an estimate of the proportion of a population group dying during a specific period of time. Mortality rates can be based on how many people die of any cause (“total mortality”) or can be used to describe the death rate of a certain illness or condition, such as dementia or avian influenza.

Mortality rate is calculated as the number of people dying (numerator) divided by the number

of people at risk of dying (denominator). The latter estimate is typically based on midyear population data.

In order to produce readily understandable results, the mortality rate – which is typically calculated as a small fraction – is often multiplied up by expressing it as deaths per 100 or 1,000 individuals. For instance, in a town of 10,000 residents, if ten people die of a heart attack over a given period of time, the mortality rate due to this condition would be said to be one in 1,000 persons.

Cross-References

► [Mortality](#)

References and Further Reading

Bonita, R., Beaglehole, R., Kjellström, T. (2006). Basic Epidemiology. World Health Organization