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Sharp Drop in HIV-related Deaths Contributes to Improved U.S. Life Expectancy

Summary

A 10% decrease in HIV/AIDS-related death since 2007, as well as declines in heart disease and cancer, contributed to an increase in average life expectancy in the U.S., according to the August 19, 2009, edition of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's *National Vital Statistics Reports*.

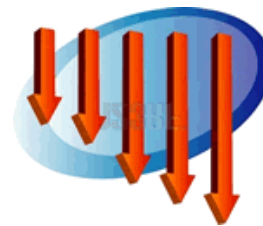
By Liz Highleyman

Jiaquan Xu and colleagues with the CDC's Division of Vital Statistics reported preliminary U.S. data on deaths, death rates, life expectancy, leading causes of death, and infant mortality for 2007 (the most recent data available), organized according to characteristics such as sex, age, and race/ethnicity.

The report is based on death records encompassing approximately 91% of the demographic files and 87% of the medical file for all deaths in the U.S. in 2007. Comparisons were made with data from 2006. The authors cautioned that preliminary figures for certain causes of death such as injuries, homicides, suicides, and drug-induced deaths may differ from final results due to incomplete data.

Results

- The age-adjusted death rate for the U.S. decreased from 776.5 deaths per 100,000 population in 2006 to 760.3 deaths per 100,000 population in 2007.
- The life expectancy at birth rose by 0.2 years -- or 73 days -- to 77.9 years.
- White females had the greatest life expectancy (80.7 years), while black men had the lowest (70.2 years).
- Infant mortality increased slightly, but the change was not statistically significant.
- Age-adjusted death rates in 2007 decreased significantly for 8 of the 15 leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, stroke, accidental injuries, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, hypertensive kidney disease, and homicide).
- The rate of death related to HIV -- no longer among a leading overall causes of death in the U.S., though it remains so for specific population subgroups such as young black women -- decreased about 10% from 2006 to 2007.
- Heart disease and cancer together account for nearly half of all deaths (48.5%); heart disease mortality decreased by about 5% and cancer mortality by nearly 2%.



FDA-approved HIV and AIDS Treatments

- Protease Inhibitors PIs
- non Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors nNRTIs
- Nucleoside / Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors NRTIs
- Fixed-dose Combinations
- Entry / Fusion Inhibitors EIs
- Integrase Inhibitors
- [Experimental Treatments](#)

HIV and AIDS Articles by Topic

- Adverse Events
- Opportunistic Infections
- Metabolic Complications
- Lipodystrophy - Fat Redistribution
- Treatment Guidelines
- Women/Children

- Age-adjusted mortality rates for other major causes of death (Alzheimer's disease, septicemia, suicide, chronic liver disease, Parkinson's disease, and nephrotic kidney disease) did not change significantly in 2007.
- Chronic lower respiratory disease, such as emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), was the only major cause of death with increased mortality from 2006 to 2007.

U.S. life expectancy reached a "record high," the authors included. Disparities remain between men (75.3 years) and women (80.4 years), and between people of different racial/ethnic groups. However, white and black men and women all reached new highs; in fact, blacks experienced larger gains in longevity, so the gap between blacks (73.2 years) and whites (78.2 years) narrowed since 2006. (The researchers did not report data for other racial/ethnic groups).

The decrease in HIV-related mortality was the largest since 1998, soon after the widespread adoption of protease inhibitors and effective combination antiretroviral therapy. The recent decrease may be attributable to new and improved anti-HIV drugs, a better understanding of treatment strategies, and a trend toward earlier therapy.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Vital Statistics.

9/04/09

Reference

J Xu, KD Kochanek, and B Tejada-Vera. Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2007. *National Vital Statistics Reports* 58(1): August 19, 2009.