

INTRODUCTION

This publication by the Arizona Department of Health Services, *Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2003*, is the 21th annual update of information on vital statistics and the health status of Arizona residents. It provides population-wide data on pregnancies, births, abortions, stillbirths, reportable diseases, deaths, marriages, divorces and the population of the state. The year 2003 report consists of 236 tables, 111 graphs, 49 thematic maps and accompanying text. It highlights both the statewide trends and patterns in the general population, as well as inequalities in the health status among ethnic groups and Arizona's counties. The data for 2003 are placed in a temporal context by comparison with the data for the preceding years.

The updated *Index to Tables* in this report contains more than 500 entries referring to specific health conditions, risk factors, diseases and causes of death.

The information in this volume consists of frequencies and rates of vital events for the State's residents (except as noted). The report contains approximately 2,200 age-adjusted and 4,900 age-specific mortality rates, and more than 17,000 other rates and ratios (fertility rates, pregnancy rates, rates of natural increase, etc.).

Since 1992, the report has been organized into three major parts, reflecting differences in geographic coverage:

Part I is concerned with statewide statistics, Part II presents county-level information, Part III is focused on community-level data.

Each part is further divided into sections on reproductive and perinatal health, mortality and the status on year 2010 health objectives.

Not all health statistics are available on a sub-county level. Hence, information about pregnancies, stillbirths, induced terminations of pregnancy (abortions), reportable diseases, marriages and marriage dissolutions is given only for the State and by county.

Part I, *THE STATE*, of the report has four chapters. The first chapter deals with *reproductive and perinatal health*, i.e., characteristics of women who became pregnant, factors related to the course of their pregnancies and the status of pregnancy outcomes. Much of these data are given for each year from 1993 to 2003. The natality section of this report is concerned with fertility and birth rates, the general health of newborns as indexed by birthweight and prematurity and selected demographic and prenatal care characteristics of the women giving birth.

The second chapter is focused on *trends and patterns in mortality*. It compares the annual age-adjusted profile of leading causes of death by gender from 1993 to 2003. Urban/rural and ethnic differences in cause-specific mortality are also examined for Arizona residents. The five leading causes of death are discussed for infants (<1 year), children (1-14 years), adolescents (15-19 years), young adults (20-44 years), middle-aged adults (45-64 years) and the elderly (65 or more years). For each age group, cause-specific mortality is compared between urban (i.e. Maricopa, Pima, Pinal and Yuma counties) and rural (all other counties) regions and between genders by year from 1993 to 2003. Urban and rural regions are compared in gender-specific total mortality. The chapter on mortality concludes with an examination of patterns of premature mortality by gender and race/ethnicity.

Beginning with the 2000 data year in Arizona (1999 nationally) two major changes have occurred that affect the computation of mortality rates, tabulation of leading causes of death and analyses of mortality data over time. First, a new revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), used to classify causes of death, was implemented. Second, a new population standard for the age adjustment of mortality rates has replaced the standard based on the 1940 population and used since 1943.

Both changes have profound effects on the comparability of mortality data and continuity in statistical trends. More than 1,800 age-adjusted mortality rates in this report were recomputed for the new population standard so that mortality trends can be compared over time (Tables 2B-2, 2B-3, 5E-5). Several new tables were introduced in the 2000 edition of this report to accommodate ICD-10-specific listing of 113 causes of death by gender (Table 2B-6), age group (Table 2C-28) and county of residence (Table 5E-12). These and other changes and their implications are discussed in detail in chapter 2.

Morbidity, levels of disease in the population, is the topic of the third chapter. The presentation is limited to data on diseases reported for the entire population of the State by statutory mandate.

Preceding the tabulated data in the first three chapters is a narrative description of the data. This description is not meant to be exhaustive but rather is a presentation of the major highlights to be gleaned from the data.

Chapter 4 and chapter 6 focus on Arizona's standing in 2003 with respect to **Healthy Arizona 2010*** and selected major national health objectives for the year 2010. The health indicators are organized around ten subject areas: maternal, infant and child health, responsible sexual behavior, vaccine preventable diseases, injury and violence, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, respiratory diseases, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease, and substance abuse.

***Healthy Arizona 2010. Collaborating for a Healthier Future.** Arizona Department of Health Services. March 2003.

Part II and Part III contain information with no accompanying narrative.

In Part II, **THE COUNTIES**, tables, figures and maps present the data on 1) trends and patterns in health status and vital statistics by county of residence, 2) county profiles on indicators for assessing health status and monitoring progress toward Arizona and national year 2010 objectives, 3) geographic patterns in births, deaths and reportable diseases and 4) selected historical vital events by year and county in the State for 1950-1992.

Part III, **THE COMMUNITIES**, provides readers with selected community-level data on live births and deaths in Arizona in 2003.

The 2003 report includes previously not available trend data for Asian and Pacific Islander residents of Arizona (Table 1B-14, Table 1B-15). It also clarifies the fetal death statistics in sections 1C and 5C as focused on spontaneous terminations of pregnancy (statistics on induced terminations of pregnancy are provided in sections 1D and 5D). For the first time a new measure used to summarize reproduction patterns, called *gross reproduction rate*, is given in Table 1B-1 and Figure 1B-4. The report also provides new statistical information about non-surgical abortions (Figure 1D-1, Figure 1D-4).

To use **Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2003** effectively, the reader should become familiar with *Technical Notes* at the end of the report. They provide definitions of terms used in the report, as well as information about the sources of data. *Technical Notes* also include detailed comparability ratios used to make comparisons between cause-of-death data classified by the Ninth and Tenth Revisions of the International Classification of Diseases.

In addition to bound form, the **Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2003** is available online at:

<http://www.azdhs.gov/plan/report/ahs/>

A comparison of some of the basic findings for the State for 1993, 1997 and 2003 is presented on the following page.