

MORTALITY OF MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS

The 1,070,276 middle-aged adult residents aged 45 to 64 experienced 6,785 deaths or an average of 19 deaths per day. The total mortality rate of middle-aged adults decreased from 677.1/100,000 in 1999 to 633.9/100,000 in 2000 (**Figure 2C-11, Table 2C-20**), and was 13.7 percent lower than the 1990 rate.

Leading causes of death

In 2000, three of the leading cause-specific rates of death for middle-aged adults were lower compared to 1990. *Chronic lower respiratory diseases*, the fourth leading cause of death, had the largest decline in rate (29.9 percent; **Table 2C-20**), followed by *diseases of heart*, the second leading cause (28.1 percent) and *cancer*, the leading cause, (20.6 percent). The 2000 rate of death for *chronic liver disease and cirrhosis* (29.1/100,000), the fifth leading cause of mortality, was no different from the 1990 rate of 29.0/100,000).

In contrast, middle-aged adults were more likely to die in 2000 from *unintentional injuries* (42.7/100,000), the third leading cause, than they were in 1990 (40.7/100,000).

Among the unintentional injury deaths unrelated to motor vehicles, Arizona's middle-aged adults experienced a sharp increase in mortality from *accidental drug overdoses* (**Figure 2C-12**). In 2000, 84 deaths of middle-aged adults were attributed to *accidental drug overdose*, compared to 14 deaths in 1990. The 2000 death rate for accidental drug overdose among middle-aged Arizonans was 3.9 times greater than the rate reported for 1989 (7.8/100,000 vs. 2.0/100,000).

Gender differences

The 2000 total mortality rate among middle-age females was 11.6 percent lower and among middle-aged males 5.3 percent lower than their respective rates in 1990 (**Table 2C-20**). Compared to 1990, the elevation of the male *heart disease* death rate over the female rate decreased in 2000 (2.8 vs. 2.5:1). *Cancer*, the leading cause of death of middle-aged women also showed a smaller gender differential in 2000 than in 1990, with men 17 percent (30 percent in 1990) more likely to die from this cause than women.

In 2000, *heart disease* and *cancer* death rates differed for males by a mere 5.1 percent. In contrast, middle-aged females were 2.3 times as likely to die in 2000 from *cancer* than *heart disease*.

Urban/rural differences

The total mortality rate declined between 1990 and 2000 for both urban and rural middle-aged adults (**Table 2C-21**). However, the mortality differential between rural and urban middle-aged males changed very little in the eleven-year period from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, the mortality risk of rural compared to urban middle-aged males was 20.8 percent greater, in 2000 it was 18.8 percent greater. In contrast, the mortality risk of rural compared to urban middle-aged females went from a 9.3 percent greater mortality rate in 1990 to 25.2 greater in 2000 (**Table 2C-22**).