

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

In 2007, there were 1,200,336 deaths of women aged 18 and older in the United States. Of these deaths, nearly half were attributable to heart disease and malignant neoplasms (cancer), which were responsible for 25.5 and 22.4 percent of deaths, respectively. The next two leading causes of death were cerebrovascular diseases (stroke), which accounted for 6.8 percent of deaths, and chronic lower respiratory disease, which accounted for 5.5 percent.

Heart disease was the leading cause of death for women in most racial and ethnic groups; the exceptions were non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women, for whom the leading cause of death was cancer. One of the most noticeable differences in leading causes of death by race and ethnicity is that diabetes mellitus was the seventh leading cause of death among non-Hispanic White women, while it was the fourth among all other racial and ethnic groups. Similarly, chronic lower respiratory disease was the fourth and fifth leading causes of death among non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women, respectively, while it ranked seventh among other racial and ethnic groups. Nephritis, or kidney inflammation, was the fifth leading cause of death among non-Hispanic Black women, but ranked eighth

and ninth among women of other races and ethnicities.

Hypertension was the tenth leading cause among non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander women, accounting for 2.0 and 1.6 percent of deaths, respectively (data not shown). Also noteworthy is that non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women

experienced a higher proportion of deaths due to unintentional injury (8.2 percent) and liver disease (4.8 percent; seventh leading cause of death) than women of other racial and ethnic groups. Liver disease was also the tenth leading cause of death among Hispanic women, accounting for 2.0 percent of deaths (data not shown).

Ten Leading Causes of Death Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Race/Ethnicity, 2007

Source II.5: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System

Cause of Death	Total % (Rank)	Non-Hispanic White % (Rank)	Non-Hispanic Black % (Rank)	Hispanic % (Rank)	Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander % (Rank)	Non-Hispanic American Indian/ Alaska Native % (Rank)
Heart Disease	25.5 (1)	25.6 (1)	26.0 (1)	23.8 (1)	22.9 (2)	18.2 (2)
Malignant Neoplasms (cancer)	22.4 (2)	22.3 (2)	22.7 (2)	23.2 (2)	27.9 (1)	19.6 (1)
Cerebrovascular Diseases (stroke)	6.8 (3)	6.7 (3)	7.0 (3)	6.7 (3)	9.5 (3)	5.0 (6)
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	5.5 (4)	6.2 (4)	2.7 (7)	2.9 (7)	2.5 (7)	5.0 (5)
Alzheimer's Disease	4.4 (5)	4.8 (5)	2.6 (8)	3.0 (6)	2.4 (8)	N/A
Unintentional Injury	3.4 (6)	3.4 (6)	2.7 (6)	4.3 (5)	3.6 (5)	8.2 (3)
Diabetes Mellitus	3.0 (7)	2.5 (7)	5.1 (4)	5.8 (4)	4.2 (4)	6.7 (4)
Influenza and Pneumonia	2.4 (8)	2.4 (8)	N/A	2.4 (8)	3.0 (6)	2.1 (9)
Nephritis (kidney inflammation)	2.0 (9)	1.8 (9)	3.4 (5)	2.3 (9)	1.9 (9)	2.7 (8)
Septicemia (blood poisoning)	1.6 (10)	1.4 (10)	2.5 (9)	N/A	N/A	2.0 (10)

N/A = not in the top 10 leading causes of death for this racial/ethnic group.