

Cardiovascular disease

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) refers to all diseases and conditions involving the heart and blood vessels. The main types of CVD in Australia are coronary heart disease, stroke and heart failure/cardiomyopathy.¹

Mortality

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in Australia. There were 43,900 deaths attributed to CVD in Australia in 2012. On average, one Australian dies as a result of CVD every 12 minutes.²

CVD accounted for nearly 30% of all deaths in Australia in 2012, including 28% for males and 32% for females. From 2002 to 2012, the number of CVD deaths has fallen by 12.6% from 50,294 to 43,946.²

Hospitalisation

CVD was the main cause for 524,000 hospitalisations in 2011/12 and played a secondary role in a further 800,000. The number of hospital separations due to CVD has increased by 19% from 2001/02 to 2011/12.³

Prevalence

One in six Australians are affected by cardiovascular disease, accounting for more than 3.7 million Australians.⁴

CVD prevalence increases with age, with 35% of Australians aged 55-64 reporting a long term CVD condition, increasing to 62% for Australians aged 75 and over.⁴

Overall, people in the lower socioeconomic groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living in regional and remote areas generally have higher rates of hospitalisation and death resulting from CVD than other Australians.¹

Lifetime risks of cardiovascular disease

A higher burden of risk factors is associated with a higher lifetime risk of death from CVD. These risk factors include high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, overweight or obesity, and physical inactivity.⁵

Mortality risks

Men aged 55 years with at least two major risk factors were six times as likely to die from CVD by age 80 than men with no or one CVD risk factor (29.6% vs. 4.7%).⁵

Women aged 55 years with at least two major risk factors were three times as likely to die from CVD by age 80 than men with no or one CVD risk factor.⁵

Morbidity risks

Men aged 45 years with two or more risk factors had a 49.5 per cent chance of having a cardiovascular event by age 80. Men with no risk factors only had a 1.4 per cent chance of having a cardiovascular event by age 80.⁵

Women aged 45 years old with two or more risk factors had a 30.7 per cent chance of having a major cardiovascular event by age 80. Women with no risk factors only had a 4.1 per cent chance of having a major cardiovascular event by age 80.⁵

Burden of disease

Cardiovascular disease is the second largest cause of disease burden in Australia; accounting for 18% of the total burden of disease.⁶

CVD remains the most expensive disease group in Australia, costing about \$5.9 billion in 2004-05 with just over half of this money spent on patients admitted to hospital.⁷

References:

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