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Deaths according to Cause of Death. Year 2008
Provisional data

The gross mortality rate decreases 1.3% in 2008 as compared with the previous year

Deaths due to traffic accidents decrease 20.7%

There were 386,324 deaths in Spain in 2008, that is, 963 more than those recorded in 2007.

By sex, there were 186,677 deaths among females, which implies an increase of 1.3% as compared with the previous year. The number of deaths among males stood at 199,647, which implies a decrease of 0.7%.

The **gross mortality rate** stood at 847.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, for a 1.3% decrease as compared with 2007.

In the case of females, the gross mortality rate stood at 808.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, with a 0.3% decrease as compared with 2007. The gross mortality rate for males was 886.8 (2.3% less).

Cardiovascular illnesses, the number one cause of death

The three main causes of mortality in Spain in 2008 by large groups were **cardiovascular diseases** (responsible for 31.7% of the total number of deaths), **tumours** (26.9%) and **diseases of the respiratory tract** (11.4%).

The order of importance of these three groups did not change as compared with the year 2007, although whereas the number of deaths from the first and third group decreased (1.3% and 0.1%, respectively), deaths due to tumours increased (0.6%).

The groups of illnesses resulting in death that increased the most as compared with the year 2007 were *mental and behavioural disorders* and *diseases of the nervous system*.

Deaths due to *mental and behavioural disorders* increased 4.6%, reaching 12,879. Within this group, it is worth noting *dementia*, responsible for 11,973 deaths (68.2% of which were females).

In *diseases of the nervous system*, the number of deaths was 17,432, that is, 4.2% more than the previous year. Within this group, of note was *Alzheimer's disease*, which caused 10,349 deaths (69.6% of these corresponded to females).

Distribution by chapters of the International Classification of Diseases. Year 2008

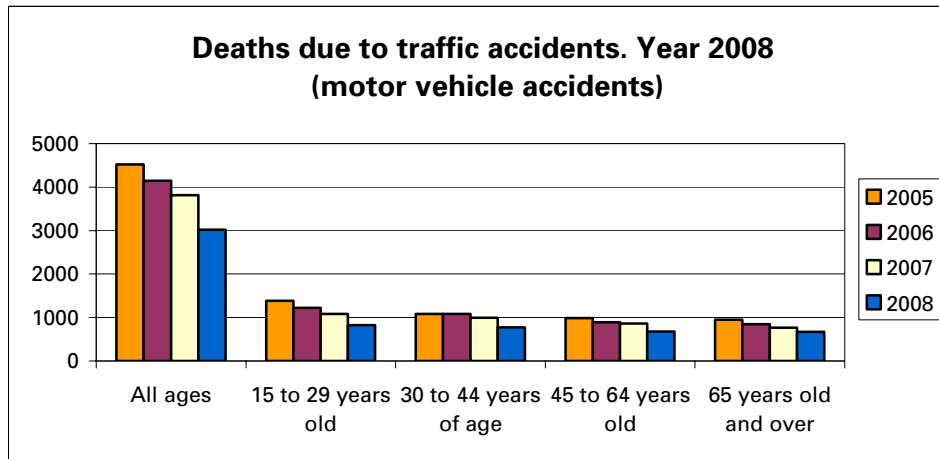
Chapters of the ICD	No. of deaths	%
Total deaths	386,324	100.00
Diseases of the circulatory tract	122,552	31.72
Tumours	103,999	26.92
Diseases of the respiratory tract	43,986	11.39
Diseases of the digestive tract	19,418	5.03
Diseases of the musculoskeletal and of the sensory organs	17,432	4.51
External causes of mortality	16,010	4.14
Mental and behavioural disorders	12,879	3.33
Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases	12,257	3.17
Symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical and laboratory findings	11,651	3.02
Diseases of the genitourinary system	10,560	2.73
Infectious and parasitic diseases	7,693	1.99
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	3,437	0.89
Diseases of the blood and blood forming organs and certain disorders affecting the immune system	1,333	0.35
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	1,218	0.32
Affections originated in the perinatal period	946	0.24
Congenital malformations, deformities and chromosomal anomalies	929	0.24
Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	24	0.01

Suicide stands as the first external cause of death in light of the decrease in deaths due to traffic accidents

On a more detailed level, the 2008 pattern of mortality was similar to that of the previous year. *Ischaemic heart diseases* (infarction, angina pectoris, etc.) and *cerebrovascular diseases* continued to occupy first and second place in the number of deaths.

In turn, *cardiac failure* surpassed *bronchial and lung cancer*.

Deaths due to traffic accidents decreased 20.7%, thus accelerating the decrease experienced the previous year (8.0%). In the year 2008, they resulted in 3,021 deaths. By age, the reduction was significant in all groups, although somewhat less intense in those aged 65 years old and over.



In light of this decrease in mortality in *traffic accidents*, **suicide stood in 2008 as the first external cause of death**, with 3,421 persons who died by suicide, a similar figure to that for 2007. By sex, mortality due to *suicide* was largely confined to males (22.6% were females).

Deaths from AIDS maintained the downward trend of previous years. In 2008, 1,212 persons died, 7.7% less than in 2007.

Number of deaths by most frequent causes of death¹ Year 2008

Total deaths	386,324
Ischaemic heart diseases	35,888
Cerebrovascular diseases	31,714
Cardiac failure	20,211
Bronchial and lung cancer	20,195
Chronic diseases of the lower respiratory tracts	14,857
Dementia	11,973
Colon cancer	10,602
Alzheimer's disease	10,349
Diabetes mellitus	10,081
Pneumonia	9,165
Hypertensive diseases	7,647
Renal failure	6,621
Breast cancer	6,121
Stomach cancer	5,624
Prostate cancer	5,464

(1) Causes whose relative weight was greater than 1.4%

Most frequent causes of death in females

Cerebrovascular diseases remained the number one cause of death among females in 2008. Specifically, they caused 18,312 deaths, 3.4% less than the previous year. The second cause of death was *cardiac ischaemic attacks*, with 15,519 deaths, 2.8% less than in 2007.

Among deaths due to malignant tumours, *breast cancer* once again became the most significant type (6,051 deaths, 1.1% more than the previous year), followed by *colon cancer* (4,629 deaths among females, 3.0% more).

Nevertheless, one of the types of tumour which increased mortality the most among females was *bronchial and lung cancer*. In 2008, it increased 9.0%, confirming its upward evolution of recent years. There was also a significant increase in deaths from *pancreatic cancer* (7.0%).

The most frequent causes of death in females that did not appear among the most common causes for males were *hypertensive diseases*, *pancreatic cancer* and *septicaemia*.

Number of deaths of females by most frequent causes of death²

Year 2008

Total deaths	186,677
Cerebrovascular diseases	18,312
Ischaemic heart diseases	15,519
Cardiac failure	13,262
Dementia	8,161
Alzheimer's disease	7,205
Breast cancer	6,051
Diabetes mellitus	5,914
Hypertensive diseases	5,096
Colon cancer	4,629
Pneumonia	4,327
Chronic diseases of the lower respiratory tracts	3,723
Renal failure	3,384
Bronchial and lung cancer	3,049
Pancreatic cancer	2,454
Septicaemia	2,218

(2) Causes whose relative weight was equal to or greater than 1.2%

Most frequent causes of death in males

Ischaemic heart diseases (infarction, angina pectoris, etc.) were the number one cause of death among males. In 2008 they caused 20,369 deaths, 4.1% less than the previous year.

Bronchial and lung cancer was the second cause of death with 17,146 deaths (0.2% less than in 2007). The second most significant type of cancer was colon cancer (with 5,973 deaths and a 1.0% increase), the third being prostate cancer (responsible for 5,464 deaths, 2.1% less than the previous year).

The most frequent causes of death in males which did not appear among the most common causes in females were *bladder cancer*, *stomach cancer* and *cirrhosis of the liver*.

Number of deaths in men by most frequent causes of death³ Year 2008

Total deaths	199,647
Ischaemic heart diseases	20,369
Bronchial and lung cancer	17,146
Cerebrovascular diseases	13,402
Chronic diseases of the lower respiratory tracts	11,134
Cardiac failure	6,949
Colon cancer	5,973
Prostate cancer	5,464
Pneumonia	4,838
Diabetes mellitus	4,167
Bladder cancer	3,825
Dementia	3,812
Stomach cancer	3,431
Renal failure	3,237
Alzheimer's disease	3,144
Cirrhosis of the liver	3,003

(3) Causes whose relative weight is equal to or greater than 1.5%

Principado de Asturias, Castilla y León and Galicia show the highest gross mortality rates

By Autonomous Community, the highest death rates per 100,000 inhabitants in 2008 corresponded to Principado de Asturias (1,203.0), Castilla y León (1,092.9) and Galicia (1,082.1). The fact that these three Communities have a more aged population than others partly explains these high rates.

In fact, the gross mortality rates are affected by the age structure of each Community, such that a region with a high number of elderly persons will have more deaths than another whose age structure is younger.

Conversely, the lowest rates were Canarias (653.0), the autonomous city of Melilla (656.1) and in Comunidad de Madrid (660.8).

Mortality rate per 1,000 inhabitants. Year 2008

Total	847.3
Asturias (Principado de)	1,203.0
Castilla y León	1,092.9
Galicia	1,082.1
Aragón	1,025.4
Extremadura	967.0
Cantabria	962.4
Rioja (La)	911.5
País Vasco	908.7
Castilla-La Mancha	907.6
Navarra (Comunidad Foral de)	867.0
Cataluña	826.8
Comunitat Valenciana	809.2
Andalucía	809.1
Murcia (Región de)	726.7
Balears (Illes)	707.3
Ceuta	686.9
Madrid (Comunidad de)	660.8
Melilla	656.1
Canarias	653.0

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Methodological note

The Death Statistics according to Cause of Death provides annual information on deaths that have occurred in the country, by basic cause of death, in accordance with the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The 10th revision of this classification has been used since 1999.

In accordance with the international recommendations of the WHO, the classification of causes of death is researched and tabulated depending on the **basic cause of death**. This is defined as the *illness or injury, which started the chain of pathological events which directly led to death. When the cause is a traumatic injury, the basic cause is considered to be the circumstances of the accident or violence that produced the fatal injury.* To be exact, this set or chain of illnesses is what the doctor certifying the death must provide in the statistical bulletin. Starting with these causes, named by the WHO as *immediate, intermediate, initial or fundamental and other processes*, and in accordance with the international regulations established in the ICD-9 for selecting the basic cause, the latter is reached.

Data on causes of death is collected in two statistical questionnaire models: Statistical Death Bulletin (SDB) and Statistical Birth Bulletin (SBB). The former contains data on deaths among those who have lived more than 24 hours, and the latter contains data relating to deaths within the first 24 hours of life. The latter, although considered deaths for statistical purposes, for legal purposes are not counted as deaths, but rather as miscarriages.

The sections in the bulletins containing the causes of death are different in both models. Whereas in the SDB, 4 causes are described, which form the chain of illnesses that led to death, in the SBB only two are shown, one relating to the mother and another to the foetus.

In cases of deaths involving the court, in addition to the SDB, another questionnaire must be completed by the trial courts, showing the external circumstances that caused the injuries.

These statistics provide information on mortality by considering the basic cause of death, its distribution by sex, age, residence and month of death. It also offers indicators which enable drawing of comparisons on an Autonomous Community level and large groups of causes of death.