



# Australian Population Association

---

12th Biennial Conference

population and society: issues, research, policy

15-17 September 2004 - Canberra, Australia

## Compression of mortality: is there a real story?

**Paul Meyer** (paul.meyer@aihw.gov.au)  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

### Abstract

Mortality in Australia has declined considerably over the past century. Increasingly the major causes of death are non-communicable diseases, mainly chronic conditions, with relatively few deaths from infectious diseases, maternal and neonatal conditions, and injuries. Australia can therefore be considered to be in an advanced stage of the epidemiological transition.

One expected result of these trends is the compression of mortality, with deaths occurring at older ages and in an increasingly narrower range of years. This can be demonstrated for all deaths as well as for the major causes of death, coronary heart disease and stroke. The pattern is less clear for other significant causes of death, such as diabetes, kidney disease, COPD and some cancers.

This presentation will examine these various patterns, mainly for the period from 1980 to 2000, and compare the compression of mortality to competing explanations.

Paper prepared for the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Australian Population Association, 15-17 September 2004, Canberra.

