



Leading causes of morbidity and mortality for Australian youth

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The aim of this presentation is to highlight the leading causes of morbidity and mortality for Australian youth and look at recent and long-term trends by various population groups. Rates of death and hospitalisation, and their causes, are key indicators of the health of a population, and are important in the planning of public health care and health policy. They not only reflect circumstances around the time of death or hospitalisation, but also provide some insight into changes in social and environmental conditions, medical interventions, lifestyles and trends in underlying risk factors. Patterns of morbidity and mortality in young people are distinct from all other age groups. This presentation will discuss the leading causes of morbidity and mortality for Australian youth aged 15–24 years and their recent and long-term trends with a particular focus on mental health (particularly suicide), external causes of injury and cancer. Data sources used will include the AIHW National Hospital Morbidity and Mortality Databases. Both hospital morbidity and mortality data are examined in order to show a more complete picture of the burden of these diseases and injuries. Where possible, data on prevalence and incidence will also be included. It is well known that disparities in morbidity and mortality exist between sub-population groups within Australia, and this is also true for youth. Therefore, the leading causes of morbidity and mortality for youth will also be examined by age, sex, Indigenous status, socioeconomic status and by region (urban/rural/remote).