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Cardiovascular diseases and cancer remain the most common causes of death in 2023

Mortality 1% below the pre-pandemic level

Vienna, 2024-06-24 – According to Statistics Austria, at 89 760 deaths mortality in 2023 was 5% below the average for 2020 to 2022. The most common causes of deaths continued to be cardiovascular diseases and cancer. More than half of those who died in 2023 were over 80 years old.

“In 2023, mortality in Austria not only fell by 5% compared to the pandemic years 2020 to 2022. Adjusted for population growth and age structure, mortality was also around 1% below the average for the pre-pandemic period from 2015 to 2019. The most common causes of death remain cardiovascular diseases and cancer”, says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

Mortality in 2023 was significantly (–5%) below the average of the three previous years 2020 to 2022. Compared to the average of the pre-pandemic years 2015 to 2019, overall mortality adjusted for age effects also fell by around 1% for both genders combined.

Cardiovascular diseases and cancer responsible for 58% of all deaths

Cardiovascular diseases and cancer together accounted for around six in ten deaths in 2023. In both groups of causes of death, mortality has fallen compared to the years before the pandemic (diseases of the circulatory system –15%; cancer –6%). In contrast, mortality in 2023 was significantly higher due to dementia (+48%) and Parkinson’s disease (+13%). This continued a trend that was already visible before the pandemic.

Mortality from transport accidents (–6%) fell slightly compared to the 2015 to 2019 average. Suicide mortality in 2023 was back at the pre-pandemic level (+3% compared to the average for 2015 to 2019), having been slightly lower in 2020 and 2021. Covid mortality fell again in 2023 and was 61% below the average for 2020 to 2022.

Age-related causes of death dominate

Due to the steady increase in life expectancy, both men and women are dying more frequently from diseases that occur more frequently in old age. The two most common causes of death in 2023 were diseases of the circulatory system (35%) and cancer (24%). Other significant causes of death were diseases of the respiratory system (6%), injuries and poisoning (6%), dementia (4 %) and diseases of the digestive system (4%).

More than half of deaths in 2023 (52 258 deaths or 58%) occurred after the age of 80. In this age group, four out of ten deaths (43%) were caused by a disease of the circulatory system. Around one in six in this age group (16%) died of cancer. Diseases of the respiratory organs, dementia, metabolic diseases and injuries were the next most important causes.

Around 40% of all deaths occurred between the ages of 40 and 80. In this age group, cancer was the most common cause of death: three out of ten deaths were caused by carcinoma. Around a quarter of deaths in middle adulthood in 2023 were caused by cardiovascular diseases and 6% by respiratory diseases.

Suicides, accidents and cancer were the most common causes of death among young people and adults aged between 10 and 40 (together 2% of all deaths). Among the few deaths of children aged one to under ten years (0,1% of all deaths), accidents and cancer were the most common causes of death.

For infants (220 deaths in 2023 or 0.2%), birth complications and congenital malformations were the most common causes of early death.

For detailed results and further information please refer to our [website](#).

Table 1: Total number of deaths in 2023 by cause of death and age

Causes of death (ICD-10-code)	Age (in years)					Total
	un- der 1	1–9	10–39	40–79	80+	
All causes of death (A00-Y89)	220	66	1 396	35 820	52 258	89 760
Malignant neoplasms (C00-C97)	1	16	206	12 640	8 204	21 067
Diseases of the cardiovascular system (I00-I99)	1	1	99	8 518	22 510	31 129
Diseases of the respiratory organs (J00-J99)	3	5	18	2 296	3 075	5 397
Diseases of the digestive organs (K00-K92)	1	-	52	1 894	1 322	3 269
Injuries and poisoning (V01-Y89, U12)	6	15	696	2 489	2 236	5 442
Other diseases (A00-B99, D00-H95, L00-R99, U04, U07-U10)	208	29	325	7 983	14 911	23 456
Selected causes of death (groups)						
Cerebrovascular diseases (I60-I69)	-	1	15	1 379	2 930	4 325
Cancer of the trachea, bronchi and lungs (C33-C34)	-	-	8	3 134	994	4 136
Acute myocardial infarction (I21-I22)	-	-	22	2 013	2 002	4 037
Diabetes mellitus (E10-E14)	-	-	13	1 285	2 056	3 354
Dementia (F01, F03)	-	-	-	383	2 921	3 304
Chronic diseases of the lower respiratory tract (J40-J47)	-	-	4	1 639	1 454	3 097
COVID-19 (U07-U10)	-	-	10	710	1 999	2 719
Cancer of the colon, rectum and anus (C18-C21)	-	-	18	1 161	899	2 078
Cancer of the pancreas (C25)	-	-	8	1 239	739	1 986
Diseases of the urogenital system (N00-N99)	-	-	1	341	1 342	1 684
Cancer of the mammary gland (C50)	-	-	26	844	773	1 643
Cancer of the prostate (C61)	-	-	-	561	863	1 424
Suicide and self-harm (X60-X84, Y87.0)	-	-	238	839	233	1 310
Parkinson's disease (G20)	-	-	-	321	894	1 215
Alzheimer's disease (G30)	-	-	-	192	1 022	1 214
Pneumonia (J12-J18)	1	3	2	252	926	1 184
Accidents due to falls (W00-W19)	-	1	22	301	682	1 006
Leukaemia (C91-C95)	-	4	15	382	422	823
Influenza (J09-J11)	1	2	5	169	270	447
Accidents involving means of transport (V01-V99, Y85)	1	3	134	238	54	430

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Causes of death statistics 2023.

Table 2: Deaths and age-standardised mortality rates (ASR, per 100 000 of the population) by the most common cause of death groups in 2023, 2022 and on average in 2020–2022 and 2015–2019

Causes of death (ICD-10-code)	2023		2022		Average 2020–2022		Average 2015–2019	
	Abs. num.	ASR	Abs. num.	ASR	Abs. num.	ASR	Abs. num.	ASR
All causes of death (A00-Y89)	89 760	952,8	93 332	1 002,9	92 298	1 003,0	82 875	963,4
Malignant neoplasms (C00-C97)	21 067	220,5	21 170	225,1	20 947	226,3	20 384	235,1
Diseases of the cardiovascular system (I00-I99)	31 129	332,8	32 000	345,5	32 027	349,1	33 348	390,7
Diseases of the respiratory organs (J00-J99)	5 397	57,4	4 830	52,2	4 565	49,9	4 989	58,2
Diseases of the digestive organs (K00-K92)	3 269	34,5	3 218	34,3	3 197	34,5	2 883	33,1
Injuries and poisoning (V01-Y89, U12)	5 442	57,9	5 376	57,7	5 048	54,8	4 443	50,7
Other diseases (A00-B99, D00-H95, L00-R99, U04, U07-U10)	23 456	249,7	26 738	288,1	26 514	288,4	16 826	195,6
Selected causes of death (groups)								
Cerebrovascular diseases (I60-I69)	4 325	45,7	4 518	48,2	4 600	49,8	4 768	55,5
Cancer of the trachea, bronchi and lungs (C33-C34)	4 136	43,5	4 125	44,2	4 082	44,4	3 951	45,8
Acute myocardial infarction (I21-I22)	4 037	42,3	4 298	45,8	4 394	47,5	4 612	53,3
Diabetes mellitus (E10-E14)	3 354	35,3	3 489	37,4	3 208	34,7	3 131	36,4
Dementia (F01, F03)	3 304	35,4	2 931	31,7	2 697	29,5	2 049	24,0
Chronic diseases of the lower respiratory tract (J40-J47)	3 097	32,8	3 052	32,9	3 027	33,1	3 085	36,0
COVID-19 (U07-U10)	2 719	28,9	6 317	68,1	6 890	74,8	-	-
Cancer of the colon, rectum and anus (C18-C21)	2 078	21,8	1 980	21,1	2 048	22,1	2 093	24,2
Cancer of the pancreas (C25)	1 986	20,6	1 897	20,1	1 877	20,2	1 739	20,1
Diseases of the urogenital system (N00-N99)	1 684	18,2	1 836	19,9	2 011	22,0	1 776	20,8
Cancer of the mammary gland (C50)	1 643	17,2	1 605	17,0	1 637	17,7	1 620	18,6
Cancer of the prostate (C61)	1 424	15,0	1 417	15,1	1 386	14,9	1 236	14,3
Suicide and self-harm (X60-X84, Y87.0)	1 310	13,9	1 276	13,6	1 149	12,4	1 200	13,4
Parkinson's disease (G20)	1 215	12,5	1 166	12,1	1 128	12,0	962	11,1
Alzheimer's disease (G30)	1 214	12,9	1 217	13,0	1 205	13,0	1 172	13,6
Pneumonia (J12-J18)	1 184	12,7	868	9,4	825	9,0	1 119	13,2
Accidents due to falls (W00-W19)	1 006	10,7	1 006	10,8	964	10,4	877	10,1
Leukaemia (C91-C95)	823	8,5	895	9,5	844	9,1	758	8,7
Influenza (J09-J11)	447	4,8	342	3,7	216	2,4	230	2,7
Accidents involving means of transport (V01-V99, Y85)	430	4,6	364	3,9	373	4,1	436	4,9

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Causes of death statistics 2023.

Information on methodology, definitions: The results of the cause of death statistics 2023 refer to all deaths occurring in Austria between 1 January and 31 December 2023 and also include events occurring abroad of persons with their main residence in Austria. Deaths occurring in Austria of persons residing abroad are not included. The regional allocation of the published data is based on the last place of residence (main residence).

The legal basis for collecting the cause of death is the 2013 Civil Status Act (PStG 2013: Section 28 (1)). Accordingly, Statistics Austria must receive and process information on the cause of death. The basis for compiling the cause of death statistics is the so-called death certificate, the structure of which is defined by the

World Health Organisation (WHO). The death certificate is filled out during the coroner's inquest, whereby the successive illnesses that ultimately led to death are indicated on the death certificate.

The death certificates are sent to the registry office where the death is certified. These certified deaths are then forwarded to Statistics Austria, where they are recorded, coded and analysed. The coding is carried out according to international standards (the International Classification of Causes of Diseases (ICD-10)) and selects the disease underlying the death process (the underlying condition). An example of this would be a COVID-19 disease with the pneumonia or viral myocarditis as secondary diseases.

In addition, concomitant diseases that contributed to or accelerated the death process can also be indicated on the death certificate. Examples of this would be diabetes or high blood pressure.

The total number of deaths in a year depends on the mortality rate as well as the size and age structure of the population. Mortality is usually described using age-standardised mortality rates. The standardised mortality rate indicates how many deaths would have occurred per 100 000 inhabitants based on the prevailing mortality ratios if the age structure of the population in the reporting period in question (here figures for the annual average for 2023) had corresponded to that of a standard population. The comparatively distorting influence of the respective age structure is thus eliminated, i.e. this measure takes into account both the overall growing population and its continuous ageing and thus makes the different mortality conditions comparable over time. The standard population used is the standard population 2013 published by Eurostat, which is an artificial population with an estimated age structure for the European population that is used as a uniform basis for calculating comparable age-standardised mortality rates.

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