



Glossary

Aboriginal: A person of Aboriginal descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

accommodation (of eye): How the eye automatically adjusts so it can focus at various distances, mainly by changing the shape of its lens.

acute: Coming on sharply and often brief, intense and severe.

acute hospitals: Public, Department of Veterans' Affairs (repatriation) and private hospitals which provide services primarily to admitted patients with acute or temporary ailments. The average length of stay is relatively short.

Addiction/addictive use: A condition marked by repeated and compulsive activity in a manner or at a level that is harmful or dangerous. Term is most often applied to addictive drug use, such as with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, but could be applied to gambling or many other practices.

admission: Admission to hospital. In this report, the number of separations has been taken as the number of admissions. Hence an admission rate is the same as a separation rate.

admitted patient: A patient who undergoes a hospital's formal admission process. See Box 5.6, page 283.

affective disorders: Mood disorders such as *depression*, *mania* and *bipolar affective disorder*. (Do not include anxiety disorders, which are classified as a separate group.)

age-specific death rate: See Box 2.6, page 68.

age-specific rate: A rate for a specific age group. The numerator and denominator relate to the same age group.

age standardisation: A method of removing the influence of age when comparing populations with different age structures. This is usually necessary because the rates of many diseases vary strongly (usually increasing) with age. The age structures of the different populations are converted to the same 'standard' structure, then the disease rates that would have occurred with that structure are calculated and compared.

age-standardised death rate: See Box 2.6, page 68.

agoraphobia: Fear of being in public places from which it may be difficult to escape.

Alzheimer's disease: A disease (named after a German physician) in which there is progressive loss of brainpower shown by worsening short-term memory, confusion and disorientation. A form of *dementia*.

ambulatory care: Care provided to hospital patients who are not admitted to the hospital, such as patients of emergency departments and outpatients clinics. The term is also used to refer to care provided to patients of community-based (non-hospital) healthcare services.

anaemia: A reduced level of haemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen in the red blood cells. Has many causes, including bleeding (loss of red blood cells), low production of red blood cells and processes that damage them. Can cause paleness, tiredness and even breathlessness.

AN-DRGs: See *DRGs*.

angina: Temporary chest pain or discomfort when the heart's own blood supply is inadequate to meet extra needs, as in exercise. See also *cardiovascular disease*.

anencephalus: A congenital condition with partial or complete absence of the skull and hemispheres of the brain.

angioplasty: A method of reducing a blockage in an artery by opening out a balloon placed inside the artery at the point of narrowing. If the artery is a coronary artery the procedure is technically known as percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA).

anxiety disorders: A group of mental disorders marked by excessive feelings of apprehension, worry, nervousness and stress. Includes panic disorder, various phobias, generalised anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

arrhythmia: A disturbed rhythm of the heart beat—either too fast, too slow or irregular.

arthritis: A group of disorders in which there is inflammation of the joints, which can become stiff, painful, swollen or deformed. The two main types of arthritis are *osteoarthritis* and *rheumatoid arthritis*.

asthma: An inflammatory disease of the air passages that makes them prone to narrow too easily and too much, causing episodes of shortness of breath and wheezing or coughing. The narrowing is due to many 'triggers' which include the house dust mite, exercise, pollens, cold weather, throat and chest infections, tobacco smoke and other factors.

atherosclerosis: A process that gradually clogs arteries, through fatty and fibre-like deposits that build up on the inner walls of the arteries. It is the main underlying condition in *heart attack*, *angina*, *stroke* and *peripheral vascular disease*.

atrial fibrillation: A condition marked by an irregular rapid heart beat. Arises because the heart's collecting chambers (atria) stop beating rhythmically and quiver uselessly (fibrillate).

auto-immune diseases: Diseases, such as *rheumatoid arthritis* and *Type 1 diabetes*, in which the immune system reacts against body tissues, damaging them.

available beds: Beds immediately available for use by admitted patients.

average length of stay (ALOS): The average of the length of stay for admitted patient episodes.

benchmark: A standard or point of reference for measuring quality or performance. See also *benchmarking*.

benchmarking: A continuous process of measuring quality or performance against the highest standards. See also *benchmark*.

bipolar affective disorder: A mental disorder where the person may be depressed at one time and manic at another. Formerly known as manic depression.

blood cholesterol: Fatty substance produced by the liver and carried by the blood to supply the rest of the body. Its natural function is to supply material for cell walls and for steroid hormones, but if levels in the blood become too high this can lead to *atherosclerosis* and heart disease.

body mass index (BMI): The most commonly used method of assessing whether a person is normal weight, underweight, overweight or obese. Calculated by dividing the person's weight (in kilograms) by their height (in metres) squared, i.e. $kg \div m^2$. Also known as Quetelet's Index. For both men and women, underweight is a BMI below 18.5, acceptable weight is from 18.5 to less than 25, overweight is 25 and above but less than 30, and obese is 30 and over.

bronchitis: Inflammation of the main air passages (the bronchi). May be acute (due to infection) or chronic (most often due to tobacco smoking).

campylobacteriosis: A disease usually marked by diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting for a few days, caused by some types of *Campylobacter* bacteria and often food-borne.

cancer: A range of diseases where some of the body's cells begin to multiply out of control, can invade and damage the area around them, and can also spread to other parts of the body to cause further damage.

cardiovascular disease: Any disease of the heart (cardio) or blood vessels (vascular). Includes *heart attack*, *angina*, *stroke* and *peripheral vascular disease*. Also known as circulatory disease.

capital expenditure: Expenditure on large-scale fixed assets (for example, new buildings and equipment with a useful life extending over a number of years).

casemix: The range and types of patients (the mix of cases) treated by a hospital or other health service. This provides a way of describing and comparing hospitals and other services for planning and managing health care. Casemix classifications put patients into manageable numbers of groups with similar conditions that use similar healthcare resources, so that the activity and cost-efficiency of different hospitals can be compared. See *DRGs*—diagnosis related groups.

cause of death: From information reported on the medical certificate of cause of death, each death is classified by the underlying cause of death according to rules and conventions of the 10th revision of the International Classification of Diseases. The underlying cause is defined as the disease that initiated the train of events leading directly to death. Deaths from injury or poisoning are classified according to the circumstances of the violence which produced the fatal injury, rather than to the nature of the injury.

cerebrovascular disease: See *stroke*.

chemotherapy: The use of drugs (chemicals) to prevent or treat disease, with the term usually being applied to treatment for cancer rather than for other uses.

cholesterol: see *blood cholesterol*.

chronic: Persistent and long-lasting.

chronic bronchitis: Long-term condition with inflammation of the bronchi, the lung's main air passages, causing frequent coughing attacks and coughing up of mucus.

chronic diseases: Term applied to a diverse group of diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and arthritis (to name a few), that tend to be long-lasting and persistent in their symptoms or development. Although these features also apply to some communicable diseases (infections), the general term chronic diseases is usually confined to non-communicable diseases.

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD): Serious, progressive and disabling long-term lung disease where damage to the lungs, usually due to both *emphysema* and *chronic bronchitis*, obstructs oxygen intake and causes increasing shortness of breath. By far the greatest cause is cigarette smoking.

circulatory disease: See *stroke*.

cirrhosis: Permanently damaged structure of the liver due to extensive death of its cells with resultant scarring. Main causes are chronic alcohol abuse and hepatitis C.

cohort: A group of individuals being studied who have experienced the same event at a specified period in time, e.g. 'birth cohort' refers to people born in the same year.

colonoscopy: A procedure whereby the inside of the large bowel (colon) is viewed using a long flexible tube inserted through the anus.

colorectal cancer: Cancer of the colon (the lower 1.5 to 2 metres of the intestine) or of the rectum (the final 15 cm at the end of the colon, ending with the anus).

communicable diseases (infectious diseases): Diseases or illnesses due to infectious organisms or their toxic products. Communication to a person may occur directly or indirectly via contact with other humans, animals or other environments that harbour the organism.

co-morbidity: When a person has two or more health problems at the same time.

complication: A secondary problem that arises from or occurs with a disease or its treatment (such as surgery), worsening the patient's condition and making treatment more complicated.

confidence interval: A statistical term describing a range (interval) of values within which we can be 'confident' that the true value lies, usually because it has a 95% or higher chance of doing so.

congenital: A condition that is recognised at birth, or that is believed to have been present since birth, including conditions which are inherited or caused by environmental factors.

coronary heart disease: See *ischaemic heart disease*.

crude death rate: See Box 2.6, page 68.

cryptosporidiosis: A disease usually marked by diarrhoea with cramping abdominal pain and other symptoms, caused by *Cryptosporidiosis parvum*, a protozoan parasite and transmitted directly from person to person, or foodborne.

dementia: A general and worsening loss of brain power such as memory, understanding and reasoning.

dentate: Having one or more natural teeth.

depression: A mood disorder with prolonged feelings of being sad, hopeless, low and inadequate, with a loss of interest or pleasure in activities and often with suicidal thoughts or self-blame.

diabetes (diabetes mellitus): A chronic condition in which the body makes too little of the hormone insulin or cannot use it properly. This raises the blood level of the body's major energy source, the sugar glucose, and causes other widespread disturbance of the body's energy processes. For the three main types of diabetes see *Type 1 diabetes*, *Type 2 diabetes* and *gestational diabetes*.

dialysis/haemodialysis: A process used to treat kidney failure. A machine is connected to the patient's bloodstream so it can take on the role of the kidneys by removing excess substances and waste from the blood.

diphtheria: A bacterial infection that usually starts with soreness of the throat and tonsils but which can also affect other parts of the body and become severe enough to block breathing. Preventable by vaccine.

direct bill: The process by which a medical practitioner or optometrist sends the bill for services direct to Medicare, often referred to as bulk billing.

disability: A concept of several dimensions relating to an impairment in body structure or function, a limitation in activities (such as mobility and communication), a restriction in participation (involvement in life situations such as work, social interaction and education), and the affected person's physical and social environment.

disability-adjusted life year (DALY): Years of healthy life lost through premature death or living with disability due to illness or injury.

donovanosis: Donovanosis which was previously called granuloma inguinale, is caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia granulomatis*. It features painless genital ulcers with tissue destruction, and can result in secondary infection and scarring.

DRGs (diagnosis related groups): A widely used type of *casemix* classification system. In the case of Australian acute hospitals, AN-DRGs (Australian National Diagnosis Related Groups) classify admissions into groups with similar clinical conditions (related diagnoses) and similar resource usage. This allows the activity and performance of hospitals to be compared on a common basis. See also *casemix*.

dysthymia: A disorder characterised by constant or constantly recurring chronic depression of mood, lasting at least 2 years.

emphysema: A long-term lung disease where over expansion or destruction of the lung tissue blocks oxygen intake, leading to shortness of breath and other problems.

endoscopy: The viewing of internal parts of the body, such as the inside of the lower bowel (the colon) with a colonoscope.

encephalitis: Inflammation of the brain.

encephalocele: An abnormal protrusion of the brain through a congenital opening in the skull. Encephaloceles can occur with spina bifida or as a separate condition.

enterohaemorrhagic E. coli infection: A disease marked by diarrhoea that can be mild or severe and bloody, and sometimes also the haemolytic-uraemic syndrome (sudden kidney failure and anaemia in children) and other symptoms. It is caused by some types of E. coli bacteria and is usually food-borne.

epidemic: An outbreak of a disease or its occurrence at a level that is clearly higher than previously existed.

epidemiology: The study of the patterns and causes of health and disease in populations, and the application of this study to improve health.

expectation of life: See *life expectancy*.

external cause: Environmental event, circumstance and/or condition as the cause of injury, poisoning and/or other adverse effect. Used in disease classification.

foetal death: Birth of a foetus weighing at least 400 grams (or, where birthweight is unavailable, of at least 20 weeks gestation), which shows no signs of life. Commonly referred to as stillbirth.

foetal death rate: Number of foetal deaths per 1,000 total births (foetal deaths plus live births).

freestanding day hospital facility: A private hospital where only minor operations and other procedures not requiring overnight stay are performed, not forming part of any private hospital providing overnight care.

gastroscopy: A procedure whereby the inside of the stomach is viewed using a flexible tube passed down into it via the mouth.

generalised anxiety disorder: A mental disorder where a person is overly and unrealistically anxious and worried about many things over a long period. One of the group of anxiety disorders.

gestational diabetes: Diabetes which is first diagnosed during pregnancy (gestation). It may disappear after pregnancy but signals a high risk of diabetes occurring later on.

gross domestic product (GDP): A statistic commonly used to indicate national wealth. It is the total market value of goods and services produced within a given period after deducting the cost of goods and services used up in the process of production but before deducting allowances for the consumption of fixed capital.

haemodialysis: See *dialysis*.

handicap: A disadvantage resulting from impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal.

health: Term relating to whether the body (which includes the mind) is in a good or bad state. With good health the state of the body and mind are such that a person feels and functions well, given their circumstances, and can continue to do so for as long as possible. See also *public health*.

health indicator: See *indicator*.

health outcome: A change in the health of an individual or population due to a preventive or clinical intervention.

health promotion: Activities to improve health and prevent disease.

health status: An individual's or population's overall level of health, taking account of various aspects such as life expectancy, amount of disability, levels of disease risk factors and so forth.

heart attack: Life threatening emergency that occurs when a vessel supplying blood to the heart muscle is suddenly blocked completely by a blood clot. The medical term commonly used for a heart attack is *myocardial infarction*. See also *cardiovascular disease*.

heart failure: When the heart cannot pump strongly enough to keep the blood circulating around the body at adequate rate.

hepatitis: Inflammation of the liver, which can be due to certain viral infections, alcohol excess or a range of other causes.

Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b): A bacterial infection of infants and children that can cause meningitis, pneumonia and other serious effects. Preventable by vaccine.

Highly specialised drugs: Under Section 100 of the National Health Act, certain drugs (for example, Cyclosporin) can only be supplied to community patients through hospitals because the hospitals can provide the facilities or staff necessary for the appropriate use of the drugs. These drugs are funded by the Commonwealth separately from the PBS.

Hodgkin's disease (Hodgkin's lymphoma): A cancer marked by progressive painless enlargement of lymph nodes throughout the body. A form of lymphoma. Named after the English physician who described it.

hostel: Establishment for people who cannot live independently but who do not need nursing care in a hospital or nursing home. Hostels provide board, lodging or accommodation and cater mostly for the aged, distressed or disabled. Residents are generally responsible for their own provisions but may be given domestic assistance such as help with meals, laundry and personal care.

hypertensive disease: Occurs when blood pressure is high long term, especially when this leads to damage of the heart, brain or kidneys.

hypomania: A lesser degree of mania characterised by a persistent mild abnormal elevation of mood and increased activity lasting at least 4 days.

hypospadias: A congenital abnormality of the penis, where its opening is on the underside rather than at the end.

immunisation: Inducing immunity against infection by the use of antigen to stimulate the body to produce its own antibodies. See *vaccination*.

impairment: Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

incidence: The number of *new* cases (of an illness or event etc.) occurring during a given period. Compare with *prevalence*.

indicator (health indicator): A key statistic that indicates an aspect of population health status, health determinants, interventions, services or outcomes. Indicators are designed to help assess progress and performance, as a guide to decision making. They may have an indirect meaning as well as a direct one; for example, Australia's overall death rate is a direct measure of mortality but is often used as a major indicator of population health.

Indigenous: A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated.

inflammation: Local response to injury or infection, marked by local redness, heat, swelling and pain. Can also occur when there is no clear external cause and the body reacts against itself, as in the *auto-immune* disorders.

International Classification of Diseases: The World Health Organization's internationally accepted classification of death and disease. The 10th Revision (ICD-10) is currently in use. In this report, causes of death classified before 1979 under previous revisions have been reclassified to ICD-10 by the AIHW.

intervention (for health): Any action taken by society or an individual which 'steps in' (intervenes) to improve health, such as medical treatment and preventive campaigns.

insulin: Hormone that is produced by the pancreas and regulates the body's energy sources, most notably the sugar glucose.

ischaemia: Reduced or blocked blood supply. See also *ischaemic heart disease*.

ischaemic heart disease: *Heart attack* and *angina* (chest pain). Also known as *coronary heart disease*.

length of stay: Duration of hospital stay, calculated by subtracting the date the patient is admitted from the day of separation. All leave days, including the day the patient went on leave, are excluded. A same-day patient is allocated a length of stay of 1 day.

life expectancy: An indication of how long a person can expect to live. Technically it is the number of years of life remaining to a person at a particular age if death rates do not change.

listeriosis: A disease which normally appears in otherwise healthy people as an acute, mild fever, sometimes with influenza-like symptoms, caused by the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes* and usually foodborne. It can cause more severe symptoms in newborns, the elderly, people with poor immunity and pregnant women (in whom it can also cause abortion).

low birthweight: Birth of a baby weighing less than 2,500 grams.

lymphoma: A cancer of the lymph nodes. Lymphomas are divided into two broad types, *Hodgkin's disease/lymphoma* and *non-Hodgkin's lymphoma* (NHL).

major diagnostic categories (MDCs): A high level of groupings of patients used in the AN-DRG classification.

malignancy: See *cancer*.

mammogram: X-ray of the breast. May be used to assess a breast lump or as a screening test in women with no evidence of cancer.

mania: A mental disorder where the person is overexcited, overactive and excessively and unrealistically happy and expansive. It is the opposite of depression and can alternate with it in the same person in what is known as *bipolar affective disorder* (formerly known as manic depression).

manic depression; manic depressive disorder: See *bipolar affective disorder; mania; and depression*.

measles: A highly contagious infection, usually of children, that causes flu-like symptoms, fever, a typical rash and sometimes serious secondary problems such as brain damage. Preventable by vaccine.

median: The midpoint of a list of observations ranked from the smallest to the largest.

Medicare: A national, government-funded scheme that subsidises the cost of personal medical services, and that covers all Australians to help them afford medical care.

melanoma: A cancer of the body's cells that contain pigment (melanin), mainly affecting the skin.

meningitis: Inflammation of the brain's covering (the meninges), as can occur with some viral or bacterial infections.

mental disorders: Disturbances of mood or thought that can affect behaviour and distress the person or those around them, so the person cannot function normally. Includes *anxiety disorders, depression and schizophrenia*.

metastasis: The spread of a cancer from its original site to other parts of the body.

morbidity: Refers to ill health in an individual and to levels of ill health in a population or group.

mortality: Death.

motor neurone disease: A disease of the nervous system with progressive wasting of muscles, weakness and paralysis.

multiple sclerosis: One of the most common nervous system disorders, with varied symptoms such as loss of control of limbs, sudden vision problems and disturbed sensations.

mumps: A contagious viral disease marked by acute and painful swelling of the saliva-producing glands, often similarly affecting the testicles and sometimes other parts.

musculoskeletal: Relating to the muscles, joints and bones.

myocardial infarction: Term still commonly used to mean a *heart attack*, but more correctly refers only to those heart attacks which have caused some death of heart muscle.

neonatal death: Death of an infant within 28 days of birth.

neonatal mortality rate: Number of neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births.

neural tube defects: Defects such as spina bifida and anencephalus that have arisen in the neural tube, the part of the embryo that develops into the brain and spinal cord.

neurosis/neurotic disorders: A broad category of mental disorders with anxiety as their main feature and whose symptoms are mostly exaggerations of normal emotions or behaviour. Includes *anxiety disorders*, *obsessive-compulsive disorder*, stress reactions and other problems.

non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: A range of cancers of the lymphatic system (lymph glands and the channels they are linked to) which are not of the Hodgkin's variety.

non-admitted patient: A patient who receives care from a recognised non-admitted patient service/clinic of a hospital.

nursing homes: Establishments which provide long-term care involving regular basic nursing care to chronically ill, frail, disabled or convalescent people or senile inpatients.

obesity: Marked degree of overweight, defined as body mass index 30 and over. See also overweight.

obsessive-compulsive disorder: A form of anxiety disorder where repeated and unwanted thoughts and impulses disturb and dominate a person. Often involves rituals such as excessive-hand washing, checking and counting, which in turn cause anxiety if they are prevented or out of control.

occasion of service: Occurs when a patient receives some form of service from a functional unit of the hospital, but is not admitted.

ophthalmology: A medical specialty dealing with eye diseases.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): An organisation of 24 developed countries, including Australia.

osteoarthritis: A chronic and common form of arthritis, affecting mostly the spine, hips, knees and hands. It first appears from the age of about 30 and is more common and severe with increasing age.

osteoporosis: Thinning and weakening of the bone substance, with a resulting risk of fracture.

outcome (health outcome): A health-related change due to a preventive or clinical intervention or service. (The intervention may be single or multiple and the outcome may relate to a person, group or population or be partly or wholly due to the intervention.)

overweight: Defined as a body mass index 25 and over but less than 30. See also obesity.

panic disorder: Marked by panic attacks (episodes of intense fear or discomfort) that occur suddenly and unpredictably.

Pap smear: Papanicolaou smear, a procedure to detect cancer and pre-cancerous conditions of the female genital tract.

parasuicide: The deliberate or ambivalent act of self-damage which is potentially life-threatening, but not resulting in death.

pathology: General term for the study of disease, but often used more specifically for diagnostic services which examine specimens, such as samples of blood or tissue.

patient-days: The number of full or partial days of stay for patients who were admitted for an episode of care and who underwent separation during the reporting period. A patient who is admitted and separated on the same day is allocated 1 patient-day.

performance indicators: Measures of the efficiency and effectiveness of health services (hospitals, health centres, etc.) in providing health care.

perinatal: Pertaining to or occurring in the period shortly before or (usually 28 days) after birth.

perinatal death: Foetal or neonatal death.

perinatal mortality rate: Number of perinatal deaths per 1,000 total births (foetal deaths plus live births).

peripheral vascular disease: Pain in the legs due to an inadequate blood supply to them.

pertussis (whooping cough): A highly infectious bacterial disease of the air passages marked by explosive fits of coughing and often a whooping sound on breathing in. Preventable by vaccine.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS): A national, government-funded scheme that subsidises the cost of a wide range of pharmaceutical drugs, and that covers all Australians to help them afford standard medications.

phobia: A form of anxiety disorder in which there is persistent, unrealistic fear of an object or situation and which interferes with the person's life as they seek to avoid the object of their fear. Different phobias include fear of heights, flying, open spaces, social gatherings, animals such as spiders and snakes, etc.

poliomyelitis (polio): Muscle paralysis, wasting and deformity of limbs after infection by a common virus (poliovirus) that can damage the so-called motor nerves in the spinal cord. Preventable by vaccine.

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): A form of anxiety disorder in which a person has a delayed and prolonged reaction after being in an extremely threatening or catastrophic situation such as a war, natural disaster, terrorist attack, serious accident or witnessing violent deaths.

potential years of life lost (PYLL): Number of potential years of life lost in a population as a result of premature death.

prescription drugs: Pharmaceutical drugs available only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner and available only from pharmacies.

prevalence: The number or proportion (of cases, instances, etc.) present in a population at a given time. Compare with *incidence*.

prevention (of disease): Action to reduce or eliminate the onset, causes, complications or recurrence of disease.

principal diagnosis: The diagnosis describing the problem that was chiefly responsible for the patient's episode of care in hospital.

principal procedure: The most significant procedure that was performed for treatment of the principal diagnosis.

private health insurance: See Box 5.5, page 262.

private hospital: A privately owned and operated institution, catering for patients who are treated by a doctor of their own choice. Patients are charged fees for accommodation and other services provided by the hospital and relevant medical and paramedical practitioners. Includes private freestanding day hospital facilities.

private patients: Persons admitted to a private hospital; or persons admitted to a public hospital who decide to choose the doctor(s) who will treat them and to have private ward accommodation. This means they will be charged for medical services, food and accommodation.

prostate cancer: Cancer of the prostate, the male organ that sits next to the urinary bladder and contributes to the semen (sperm fluid).

psychiatric hospitals: Establishments devoted primarily to the treatment and care of inpatients with psychiatric disorders.

psychosis: A broad grouping for a more severe degree of mental disturbance, often involving fixed, false beliefs known as delusions.

public health: Term variously referring to the level of health in the population, to actions that improve that level or to related study. Activities that aim to benefit a population tend to emphasis prevention, protection and health promotion as distinct from treatment tailored to individuals with symptoms. Examples include provision of a clean water supply and good sewerage, conduct of anti-smoking education campaigns and screening for diseases such as cancer of the breast and cervix.

public hospital: A hospital controlled by a State or Territory health authority. In Australia public hospitals offer free diagnostic services, treatment, care and accommodation to all who need it.

public patient: A patient admitted to a public hospital who has agreed to be treated by doctors of the hospital's choice and to accept shared ward accommodation. This means the patient is not charged.

quintile: A group derived by ranking the population according to specified criteria and dividing it into five equal parts.

radiology: The use or study of X-rays and other rays to help view internal parts of the body as a guide to diagnosis as well as to treatment and its progress.

real expenditure: Expenditure expressed in terms which have been adjusted for inflation (for example, in 1989–90 dollars). This enables comparisons to be made between expenditures in different years.

recurrent expenditure: Expenditure on goods and services which are used up during the year, for example, salaries. It may be contrasted with capital expenditure, such as expenditure on hospital buildings and large-scale diagnostic equipment, the useful life of which extends over a number of years.

refraction: The eye's ability to bend light rays that enter it, to form an image at the back of the eye.

renal dialysis: A treatment for kidney failure where the patient is connected to a machine which does the kidneys' work by filtering the blood to control its contents.

revascularisation ('re-vesseling'): Restoring adequate blood flow to the heart or other part of the body, usually after the supply has been reduced or blocked, as in *angina* or a *heart attack*. Revascularisation includes methods such as *angioplasty* and *bypass graft surgery*.

rheumatic fever: An acute, serious disease that affects mainly children and young adults and can damage the heart valves, the heart muscle and its lining, the joints and the brain. Is brought on by a reaction to a throat infection by a particular bacterium. Now very rare in the non-Indigenous population but is still at unacceptably high levels among Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. See *rheumatic heart disease*.

rheumatic heart disease: Disease from damaged heart valves caused by childhood attack of rheumatic fever.

rheumatoid arthritis: A chronic, multi-system disease whose most prominent feature is joint inflammation, most often affecting the hand joints in symmetrical fashion. Can occur in all age groups but most commonly appears between ages 20 to 40 years. Causes not certain but involve *auto-immune* processes.

risk factor: Any factor which represents a greater risk of a health disorder or other unwanted condition or event. Some risk factors are regarded as causes of disease, others are not necessarily so.

rubella (German measles): A contagious viral disease of children and young adults which has mild symptoms but which often causes serious birth defects if it occurs in a mother during the first 3 months of pregnancy. Preventable by vaccine.

salmonellosis: a disease commonly marked by sudden onset of headache, abdominal pain, fever, diarrhoea, nausea and sometimes vomiting, caused by some types of *Salmonella* bacteria and often food-borne.

same-day patients: Admitted patients who are admitted and separated on the same day.

schizophrenia: A group of serious mental disorders where imagined and disordered thoughts are key features, often with problems of behaviour, mood and motivation, and a retreat from social life.

separation: The formal process by which a hospital records the completion of treatment and/or care for an admitted patient. See Box 5.6, page 283.

SF-36: Short Form 36—widely used questionnaire to measure general health and wellbeing.

shigellosis: A disease characterised by acute diarrhoea with fever, nausea and sometimes other symptoms, usually transmitted directly from person to person via the faecal-oral route. It is caused by *Shigella* species bacteria, including *Shigella dysenteriae* 1, the cause of dysentery.

sign (clinical): An indication of a disorder that is detected by a clinician or other observer who examines the person affected. Unlike with *symptoms*, a patient does not necessarily notice or complain of a sign and many signs are detected only with special techniques used by the person doing the examination.

social phobia: A persistent, irrational fear of being the focus of attention, or fear of behaving in a way that will be embarrassing or humiliating.

statistical significance: An indication from a statistical test that an observed difference or association may be significant or 'real' because it is unlikely to be just due to chance. A statistical result is usually said to be 'significant' if it would occur by chance only once in twenty times or less often.

stent: A metal mesh tube that is expanded within an artery at a point of narrowing and left there to hold the artery open.

stillbirth: See *foetal death*.

stroke: When an artery supplying blood to the brain suddenly becomes blocked or bleeds. Often causes paralysis of parts of the body normally controlled by that area of the brain, or speech problems and other symptoms.

substance use disorders: Result from harmful use and/or dependence on illicit or licit drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs.

suicide: Deliberately ending one's own life.

symptom: Any indication of a disorder that is apparent to the person affected. Compare with *sign (clinical)*.

tetanus: A serious infection with a bacterial nerve poison causing spasm of the jaw muscles (lockjaw) and body muscles generally, from a bacterium entering through a wound. The disease is preventable by vaccine.

thrombolysis: Emergency 'clot-busting' drug treatment for a heart attack.

TIA, transient ischaemic attack: A 'mini' *stroke*, with temporary problems in speech or paralysis that last for 24 hours or less, often only minutes. A strong warning sign of a more severe stroke.

Torres Strait Islander: A person of Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as a Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

Type 1 diabetes: A form of *diabetes* usually arising in childhood or youth ('juvenile onset'), marked by a complete lack of insulin and needing insulin replacement for survival.

Type 2 diabetes: The most common form of *diabetes*, occurring mostly in people aged 40 years and over and marked by reduced or less effective insulin.

tuberculosis: A bacterial disease that affects the lungs especially, with serious fever-like symptoms and destruction of tissue. It can spread to other parts of the body, causing secondary problems and often death if not treated.

underweight: Defined as a body mass index less than 18.5.

unstable angina: A form of *angina* that is more dangerous than normal *angina* but less so than a heart attack. It can feature chest pain that occurs at rest; and in someone who already has *angina* it can be marked by new onset of chest pain with exertion or pain that accelerates by coming on more easily, more often or for longer than previously.

vaccination: The process of administering a vaccine to a person to produce immunity against infection. See *immunisation*.

ventricular septal defect: A congenital defect of the heart that occurs as an abnormal opening in the wall that separates the left and right main pumping chambers (the ventricles).

whooping cough: See *pertussis*.

yersiniosis: a disease typically involving acute diarrhoea, fever, and other abdominal symptoms, caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* and *Yersinia enterocolitica* and often food-borne.