



# Methods and conventions

## Methods

Details of methods used in particular sections of the report are included in the text and boxes, and in footnotes to figures and tables. Entries in columns of tables may not add to the totals shown, due to rounding.

Age standardisation has been used to facilitate the comparison of populations with differing age compositions, either different populations at one time or the same population at different times. The 2001 Australian population (ABS 2003) has been used as the standard population for all intra-Australia comparisons. The 1991 Australian population was used for these comparisons in prior editions of *Australia's Health* back to the 1996 edition; some statistics may thus differ slightly from those in previous editions.

The European and the World Standard Populations have been used for some international comparisons. Details of these standard populations are provided.

**Table A4: Age composition of the Australian population at 30 June 2001, and of European and World Standard Populations**

Age group (years)	Australia, 30 June 2001	European Std	World Std
0	253,031	1,600	2,400
1–4	1,029,326	6,400	9,600
5–9	1,351,664	7,000	10,000
10–14	1,353,177	7,000	9,000
15–19	1,352,745	7,000	9,000
20–24	1,302,412	7,000	8,000
25–29	1,407,081	7,000	8,000
30–34	1,466,615	7,000	6,000
35–39	1,492,204	7,000	6,000
40–44	1,479,257	7,000	6,000
45–49	1,358,594	7,000	6,000
50–54	1,300,777	7,000	5,000
55–59	1,008,799	6,000	4,000
60–64	822,024	5,000	4,000
65–69	682,513	4,000	3,000
70–74	638,380	3,000	2,000
75–79	519,356	2,000	1,000
80–84	330,050	1,000	500
85 and over	265,235	1,000	500
Total	19,413,240	100,000	100,000

Sources: ABS 2003; WHO 1996.

Within Australia, most regional comparisons are among states and territories. For within-state comparisons, Australian Bureau of Statistics sources use capital city statistical areas and the rest of each state. Definitions for regional comparisons from other sources are not consistent, and are stated at appropriate places in the text.

Average annual rates of change or growth rates have been calculated as geometric rates:

$$\text{Average rate of change} = ((P_n/P_o)^{1/N} - 1) \times 100$$

where  $P_n$  = value in later time period

$P_o$  = value in earlier time period

$N$  = number of years between the two time periods.

The classification of deaths follows the Tenth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (WHO 1992). Diseases treated in hospitals and the procedures performed during a hospital stay are classified using the second edition of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM) (NCCH 2000).

## Symbols

\$	Australian dollars, unless otherwise specified	nfd	no further definition
\$m	million dollars	n.p.	not published by the data source
–	nil or rounded to zero	npr	not previously reported
%	per cent	ppm	parts per million
g	gram	wk	week
kg	kilogram	>	more than
kJ	kilojoule	<	less than
km <sup>2</sup>	square kilometres	≥	more than or equal to
'000	thousands	≤	less than or equal to
m	million	*	value subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes and/or the relative standard error is 25% to 50%.
mm	millimetre		
mmHg	millimetres of mercury		
mmol/L	millimoles per litre	**	value subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes and/or the relative standard error is more than 50%.
n.a.	not available		
..	not applicable		
nec	not elsewhere classified		

## References

ABS 2003. Australian demographic statistics, September quarter 2002. ABS Cat. No. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

National Centre for Classification in Health (NCCH) 2000. The international statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision, Australian modification (ICD-10-AM). Second edition. Sydney: University of Sydney.

WHO 1992. International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th Revision, Volumes 1 and 2. Geneva: WHO.



# Abbreviations

AACR	Australasian Association of Cancer Registries
ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	angiotensin-converting enzyme
ACIR	Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
ACSQHC	Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care
ADHD	attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AHCA	Australian Health Care Agreements
AHIC	Australian Health Information Council
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AHMC	Australian Health Ministers' Conference
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ALOS	average length of stay
AMD	age-related macular degeneration
ANZDATA	Australia and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry
AR-DRG	Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Group
ARI	acute respiratory infection
ART	assisted reproductive technology
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographic Classification
ASHR	Australian Study of Health and Relationships
ASSADS	Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drugs Survey
ATSIHWIU	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit
AusDiab	Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study
BEACH	Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health
BMI	body mass index
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CABG	coronary artery bypass grafting
CATI	computer-aided/assisted telephone interview
CATI TRG	National Computer Assisted Telephone Interview Technical Reference Group
CHD	coronary heart disease
CJD	Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DALY	disability-adjusted life year
DBP	diastolic blood pressure
DDD	defined daily dose
DEST	Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training

DHAC	Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care
DHFS	Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
DMFT	decayed, missing or filled permanent teeth
dmft	decayed, missing or filled primary teeth
DoHA	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
DRG	diagnosis related group
DVA	Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs
ESRD	end-stage renal disease
GDP	gross domestic product
GIFT	gamete intra-fallopian transfer
GP	general practitioner
HALE	health-adjusted life expectancy
HCV	hepatitis C virus
HDL	high-density lipoprotein
HDSC	Health Data Standards Committee
Hib	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b
HIC	Health Insurance Commission
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HUS	haemolytic uraemic syndrome
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ICD-10-AM	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICPC	International Classification of Primary Care
ICSI	intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection
IFG	impaired fasting glucose
IGT	impaired glucose tolerance
IPD	invasive pneumococcal disease
IVF	in-vitro fertilisation
LDL	low-density lipoprotein
LE	life expectancy
MBS	Medicare Benefits Schedule
MMR	maternal mortality rate
MMR	measles, mumps and rubella
MND	motor neurone disease
MS	multiple sclerosis
MSIC	medically supervised injecting centre
NATSINWP	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Working Party
NCCH	National Centre for Classification in Health
NCHECR	National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research
NCIRS	National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance

NCSCH	National Cancer Statistics Clearing House
NDS	National Drug Strategy
NDSHS	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
NHDC	National Health Data Committee
NHDD	<i>National Health Data Dictionary</i>
NHFA	National Heart Foundation of Australia
NHIG	National Health Information Group
NHIMG	National Health Information Management Group
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NHPA	National Health Priority Area
NHPAC	National Health Priorities Action Council
NHPC	National Health Performance Committee
NHS	National Health Survey
NMSC	non-melanoma skin cancer
NNDSS	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System
OATSIH	Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pap	Papanicolaou (cervical smear test)
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
PCI	percutaneous coronary intervention
PEI	patient episode initiation
PHIAC	Private Health Insurance Administration Committee
PSA	prostate-specific antigen
RFE	reason for encounter
RPBS	Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RSE	relative standard error
RSV	respiratory syncytial virus
SAI	Standards Australia International
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SBP	systolic blood pressure
SCRCSSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SH&FPA	Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia
SHine	Sexual Health Information Networking and Education (South Australia)
SiC	Significant Caries Index
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
SIGNAL	Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance
SIMC	Statistical Information Management Committee
SLA	statistical local area
SLTEC	shiga-like toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i>
SMR	standardised mortality ratio
SPP	Specific Purpose Payment

SPR	standardised prevalence ratio
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TAFE	technical and further education
TB	tuberculosis
TG	triglyceride
TSE	transmissible spongiform encephalopathy
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
URTI	upper respiratory tract infection
vCJD	variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
VTEC	verotoxigenic <i>Escherichia coli</i>
VVCS	Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO-FIC	World Health Organization Family of International Classifications
WHO-ISH	World Health Organization–International Society of Hypertension
YLD	years lost due to disability
YLL	years of life lost (due to premature mortality)

## Places

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
Aust	Australia
Can	Canada
Fra	France
Ger	Germany
Jpn	Japan
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NZ	New Zealand
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USSR	former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia



# 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 coronary syndrome** Describes acute *myocardial infarction (heart attack)* or *unstable angina* when they first present as a clinical emergency with chest pain or other features.
- 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.
- acute** Coming on sharply and often brief, intense and severe.
- addiction/addictive behaviour** When a person shows a very high dependence on something that is harmful or dangerous to them. It is marked by repeated and compulsive activity which the person would or does find very difficult or impossible to stop. The term is most often applied to addictive drug use, such as with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.
- 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.
- affective disorders** Mood disorders such as *depression, mania* and *bipolar affective disorder*. (The term does not include *anxiety disorders*, which are classified as a separate 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-specific rate** A rate for a specific age group. The numerator and denominator relate to the same age group.
- Alzheimer's disease** Condition marked by 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 outpatient clinics. The term is also used to refer to care provided to patients of community-based (non-hospital) health care services.

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

**AN-DRGs** See *diagnosis related groups*.

**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*.

**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*.

**associated cause(s) of death** Any condition(s), diseases and injuries – other than the *underlying cause* – contributing to death. See also *cause of death*.

**asthma** A chronic inflammatory disease of the air passages causing widespread narrowing in them, obstruction of airflow, and episodes of wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath.

**atherosclerosis** A process in which fatty and fibre-like deposits build up on the inner walls of arteries, often forming *plaques*. 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. It 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 and damages 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. It is calculated by dividing the person's weight (in kilograms) by their height (in metres) squared, that is,  $\text{kg} \div \text{m}^2$ . 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 (includes obese), 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).

**bulk billing** The process by which a medical practitioner or optometrist sends the bill for services direct to Medicare. Also known as direct billing.

**CABG** See *coronary artery bypass graft*.

**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 foodborne.

**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.

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

**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*.

**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 *diagnosis related groups*.

**cataract** See Box 2.1 in Chapter 2.

**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 term 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 *cardiovascular disease* (alternative name).

**cirrhosis** Permanently damaged structure of the liver due to extensive death of its cells with resultant scarring. The 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; for example '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 part of the intestine, usually 1.5 to 2 metres) 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.

**comorbidity** 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.

**condition (health condition)** See Box 2.3 in Chapter 2.

**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 artery bypass graft (CABG)** Surgical procedure using blood vessel grafts to bypass blockages in the coronary arteries and restore adequate blood flow to the heart muscle.

**coronary artery disease** Disease of the coronary arteries, typically meaning *atherosclerosis*. When this leads to symptoms such as chest pain the result is known as *coronary heart disease*.

**coronary heart disease** *Heart attack* and *angina*. Also known as *ischaemic heart disease*.

**crude death rate** See Box 2.4 in Chapter 2.

**cryptosporidiosis** A disease usually marked by diarrhoea with cramping abdominal pain and other symptoms, caused by *Cryptosporidium 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.

**determinant** Any factor that can increase the chances of ill health (risk factors) or good health (protective factors) in a population or individual. By convention, services or other programs which aim to improve health may not be included.

**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*.

**diagnosis related groups (DRGs)** 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*.

**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. It is preventable by vaccine.

**direct billing** See *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.

**disorder** See Box 2.3 in Chapter 2.

**donovanosis** Infectious disease (previously called granuloma inguinale) caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia granulomatis*. It features painless genital ulcers with tissue destruction, and can result in secondary infection and scarring.

**emphysema** A chronic 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.

**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 foodborne.

**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.

**epilepsy** A disturbance of brain function marked by recurrent fits and loss of consciousness.

**external cause** Environmental event, circumstance and/or condition as the cause of injury, poisoning and/or other adverse effect. The term is used in disease classification.

**fertility rate** Number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15–49.

**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, and which does not form 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.

**gout** Disease of excess uric acid in the blood causing attacks of joint pain (most often in the big toe) and other problems.

**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*.

**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 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 wholly or partly to a preventive or clinical intervention.

**health promotion** Activities to improve health and prevent disease, often described as the process that helps individuals and communities to increase control over the *determinants* of health.

**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 an 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. It is 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 Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

**Hodgkin's disease (Hodgkin's lymphoma)** A cancer marked by progressive painless enlargement of lymph nodes throughout the body. A form of *lymphoma*.

**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** Disease occurring when high blood pressure (hypertension) is severe or prolonged enough to cause damage to the heart, brain or kidneys.

**illness** see Box 2.3 in Chapter 2.

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

**impaired glucose tolerance** Condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but less than required for a diagnosis of diabetes, and which signals an increased risk of developing *Type 2 diabetes*.

**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** A key statistic chosen to describe (indicate) a situation concisely, help assess progress and performance, and act as a guide to decision making. It 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 *auto-immune diseases*.

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

**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.

**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** Weight of a baby at birth that is less than 2,500 grams.

- lymphoma** A cancer of the lymph nodes. Lymphomas are divided into two broad types, *Hodgkin's disease* lymphomas and *non-Hodgkin's lymphomas* (NHLs).
- major diagnostic categories (MDCs)** A high level of groupings of patients used in the AN-DRG classification. See also *diagnosis related groups*.
- malignancy** See *cancer*.
- mammogram** X-ray of the breast. It 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. It is 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 for all Australians and aims 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. They include *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 serious 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.
- neoplasm** An abnormal ('neo', new) growth of tissue. Can be 'benign' (not a cancer) or 'malignant' (a cancer). Same as a *tumour*.
- 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. They include *anxiety disorders*, *obsessive-compulsive disorder*, *stress reactions* and other problems.
- non-admitted patient** A patient who receives care from a recognised non-admitted patient service/clinic of a hospital.
- 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.
- 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 30 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. 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 does not result 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 death** Foetal or neonatal death.
- perinatal mortality rate** Number of perinatal deaths per 1,000 total births (foetal deaths plus live births).
- perinatal** Pertaining to or occurring in the period shortly before or after birth (usually 28 days) .
- 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. It is 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. Phobias include fear of heights, flying, open spaces, social gatherings, and animals such as spiders and snakes.
- plaque (atherosclerotic)** A localised area of *atherosclerosis*, especially when raised or built up.
- 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. It is 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 5.6 in Chapter 5.
- 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. The term includes private freestanding day hospital facilities.
- private patient** Person admitted to a private hospital, or person admitted to a public hospital who decides 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 emphasize 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 Australians 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 that 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-vesselling')** 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 *coronary artery 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, it is still at unacceptably high levels among Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. See *rheumatic heart disease*.
- rheumatic heart disease** Chronic disease from damaged heart valves caused by earlier attack(s) of *rheumatic fever*.
- rheumatoid arthritis** A chronic, multisystem 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. Its causes are 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 three months of pregnancy. It is 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 foodborne.
- 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 6.1 in Chapter 6.
- 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.

**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 due just 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*.

**stress** Poorly defined term referring to when a person is under significant psychological or physical pressure—real or perceived, acute or chronic. Examples include illness or injury, bereavement, family problems, work demands or job loss.

**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*.

**thrombosis** Clotting of blood, with the term usually applied to clotting within a blood vessel due to disease, as in a *heart attack* or *stroke*.

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

**tinnitus** The sensation of ringing or other sounds in the ears when there is no external source of sound.

**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.

**tuberculosis (TB)** 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.

**tumour** See *neoplasm*.

**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.

**underlying cause of death** The condition, disease or injury initiating the sequence of events leading to death, that is, the primary, chief, main or principal cause. Compare with *associated cause(s) of death*.

**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*.

**vector** An insect or other organism that transmits infectious microorganisms from animal to human or human to human.

**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 foodborne.