

28 Overseas-born young people

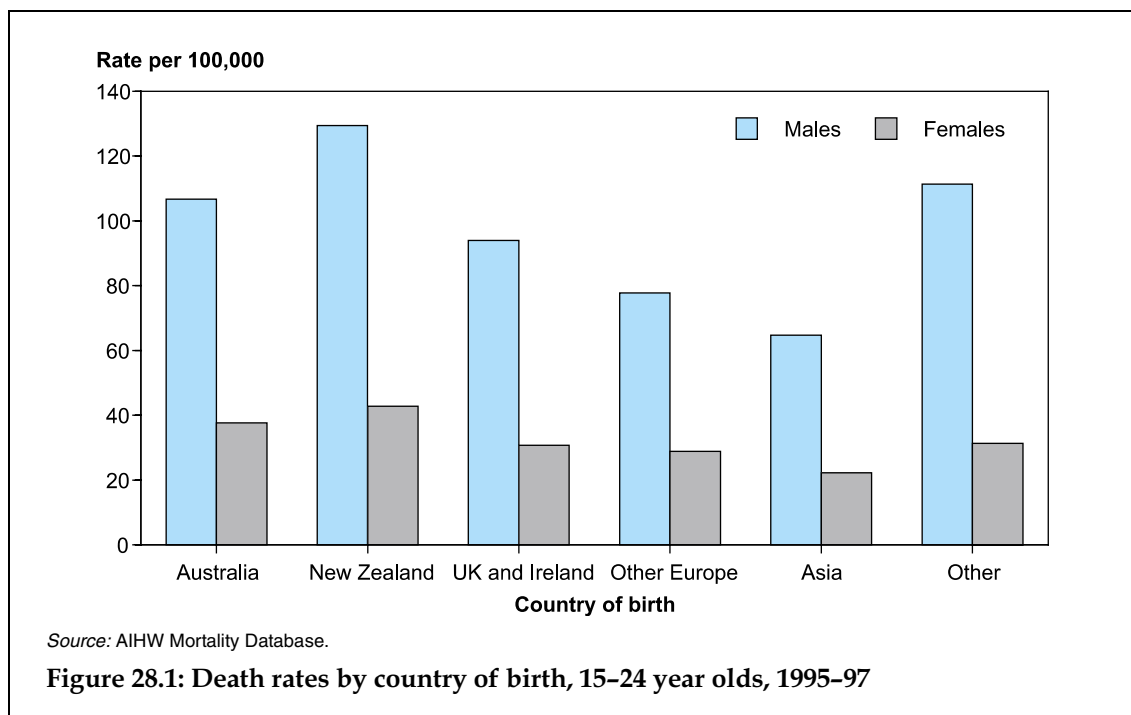
This chapter provides some information on the health of young people born outside Australia compared with those born in Australia. A number of publications have shown that adults born outside Australia tend to have better health than those born in Australia (AIHW 1998; Mathers 1994). This health advantage is often termed the 'healthy migrant effect', where those in good health are more likely to meet eligibility criteria and be willing or able to migrate. Social, cultural or behavioural factors may also contribute.

Following is some information on the health status and health service use of young people born overseas. Results are shown for the death and hospitalisation rates of these young people compared with those born in Australia. The country of birth groups are: Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Ireland, other Europe, Asia, and other (using the Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics – ASCCSS).

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Mortality

Mortality rates between Australian and overseas-born young people are compared below. To increase the reliability of the estimates, 3 years of data have been pooled (1995 to 1997) due to the small number of deaths in some cases.



- Young males born in New Zealand had the highest death rates for the period 1995–97, with a rate of nearly 130 per 100,000. The other two groups of males with rates over 100 per 100,000 were Australian-born, and the 'other' group (107 and 111 per 100,000 respectively). Asian-born males had the lowest death rates, at 65 per 100,000.
- There was a similar ranking between countries of birth groups for young females: New Zealand-born young females had the highest rate (43 per 100,000), followed by Australian-born young women (38 per 100,000). Asian-born young women had the lowest rate at 22 per 100,000.

Table 28.1: Selected causes of death by country of birth, 15–24 year olds, 1995–97

Cause of death ^(a)	Australian-born		Other		Rate ratio
	Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000	
Motor vehicle accidents	1,038	15.4	144	11.4	1.4
<i>All transport</i>	<i>1,569</i>	<i>23.2</i>	<i>227</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>1.3</i>
Suicide	1,172	17.3	179	14.1	1.2
Violence	136	2.0	39	3.1	0.7
<i>All injury</i>	<i>3,417</i>	<i>50.6</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>43.7</i>	<i>1.2</i>
Mental	325	4.8	45	3.5	1.4
Other	1,184	17.5	142	11.2	1.6
Total	4,926	72.9	742	58.5	1.2

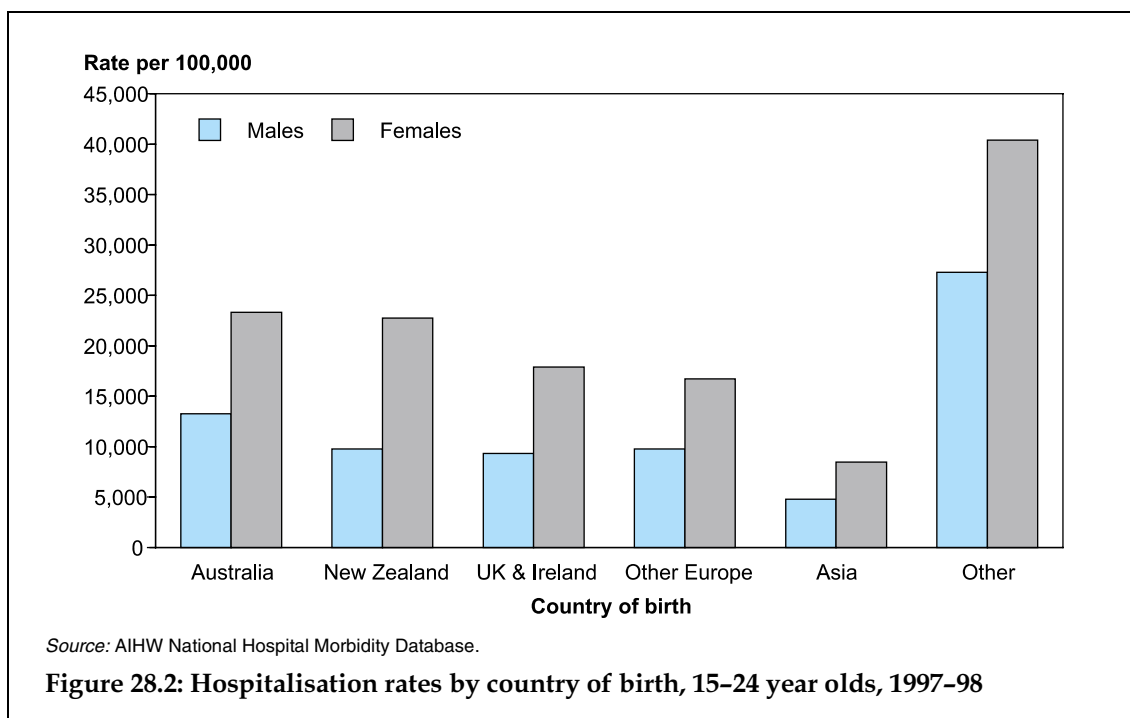
(a) Based on ICD-9 codes.

Source: AIHW Mortality Database.

- The overall death rate for young people aged 15–24 years who were born in Australia was 1.2 times higher than for those born overseas. This difference was not due to any one cause, but was due to differences in death rates for many causes of death.
- The largest cause of death for this age group – injury – also had a rate ratio of 1.2. Within injury, the rate ratio for motor vehicle accidents was 1.4. In contrast to other causes of death, the death rate from violence was lower in Australian-born young people compared to those born overseas (rate ratio 0.7).
- Australian-born young people had death rates from mental disorders 1.4 times higher than for young people born overseas. As discussed in Chapter 9, deaths from mental disorders in this age group are almost all due to drug dependence disorders.

Morbidity

This section includes results on hospitalisations for young people born in Australia compared with those born overseas. Hospitalisations can be affected by many factors, including health status and differences in treatment practices and access to services. Further details on interpretation of hospitalisations data is included in Chapter 6 and in Appendix 3.



- Aside from young people born in 'Other' countries (a category that consists of countries in North and South America, Africa and the Pacific islands), the hospitalisation rates were highest for both young males and females born in Australia, closely followed by New Zealand-born in the case of young females.
- Asian-born young people had the lowest hospitalisation rates, both for males and females.

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Table 28.2: Selected reasons for hospitalisation by country of birth, 15–24 year olds, 1997–98

Principal diagnosis/external cause ^(a)	Australia		Other		Rate ratio
	Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000	
Motor vehicle accidents	4,807	215	942	215	1.0
<i>All transport</i>	<i>11,596</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>1,835</i>	<i>418</i>	<i>1.2</i>
Self-inflicted	4,391	197	888	202	1.0
Violence	5,112	229	956	218	1.1
<i>All injuries</i>	<i>57,369</i>	<i>2,570</i>	<i>8,741</i>	<i>1,991</i>	<i>1.3</i>
Endocrine	4,902	220	452	103	2.1
Mental disorders	29,526	1,323	5,492	1,251	1.1
Respiratory	22,547	1,010	2,551	581	1.7
Obstetric	95,352	8,742	17,203	7,970	1.1
Other	196,166	4,316	29,518	2,673	1.6
Total	405,862	18,180	63,957	14,571	1.2

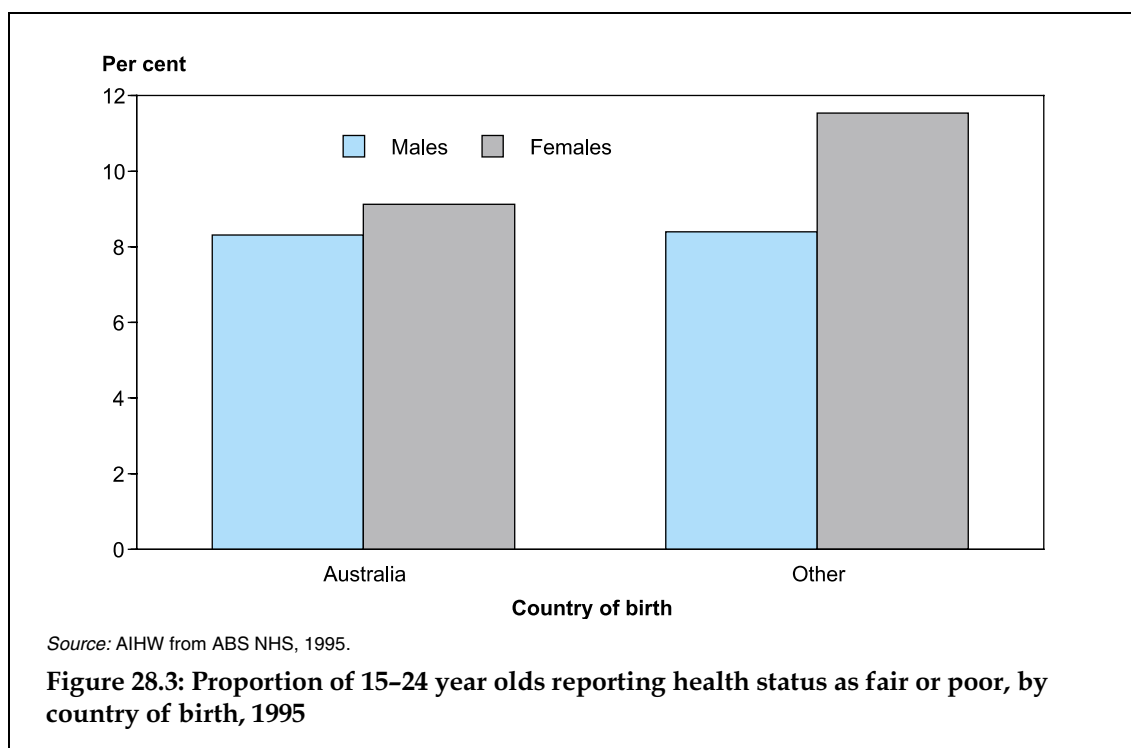
(a) Based on ICD-9 codes.

Source: AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database.

- Overall, in 1997–98 the hospitalisation rate for young people born in Australia was 1.2 times higher than those born overseas.
- The largest subgroup of hospitalisations shown in Table 28.2 was for obstetrics. There was not a great deal of difference in the hospitalisation rates for obstetric reasons between Australian-born and overseas-born young women – the Australian-born group's rate was 1.1 times higher than that for the overseas-born group.
- For injuries, a significant group of hospitalisation for this age group, Australian-born young people had hospitalisation rates 1.3 times higher than young people born overseas.

Health status

This section compares the reported health status of young people born in Australia with those born overseas. Figure 28.3 shows the proportion of young people who classified their health at the lower end of the scale – as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’. Further details on this measure of health status are included in Chapter 3 of this report.



- Young females born overseas were more likely to report their health as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ than young females born in Australia – 11.5% of the group compared with 9.1%.
- For young males, there was very little difference in the proportion reporting their health at the lower end of the scale, with both groups having around 8% of the group reporting their health as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’.

References

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 1998. Australia’s health 1998: the sixth biennial health report of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. AIHW Cat. No. AUS 10. Canberra: AIHW.
- Mathers C 1994. Health differentials among adult Australians aged 25–64 years. Health Monitoring Series No. 1. Canberra: AIHW.
- Mathers C 1996. Health differential among young Australian adults. Health Monitoring Series No. 4. Canberra: AIHW.