

2.13 Community safety

Three parameters of community safety are considered for this measure:

1. experience of personal injury or death as a result of violence
2. experience of threatened violence or a social setting in which violence is common
3. experience of a social setting where there is a lack of security and a perception of danger; for example, where crimes against property or disorderly behaviour are common.

Data sources

Data for this measure come from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, the AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database, the AIHW National Mortality Database and the Australian Institute of Criminology National Homicide Monitoring Program.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The 2002 NATSISS collected information from 9,400 Indigenous Australians across all states and territories of Australia. The sample covered persons aged 15 years and over who were usual residents of private dwellings. It collected information on a wide range of subjects including family and culture, health, education, employment, income, financial stress, housing, and law and justice. The 2002 NATSISS is the second national social survey of Indigenous Australians conducted by the ABS. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS). The ABS plans to conduct the NATSISS every 6 years. The next survey is planned for 2008.

National Hospital Morbidity Database

The National Hospital Morbidity Database is a compilation of episode-level records from admitted patient morbidity data collection systems in Australian hospitals in each state and territory. Information on the characteristics, diagnoses and care of admitted patients in public and private hospitals is provided annually to the AIHW by state and territory health departments.

Data are presented for the six jurisdictions which have been assessed by the AIHW as having adequate identification of Indigenous hospitalisations in 2004–05 – New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. These six jurisdictions represent approximately 96% of the Indigenous population of Australia. Data are presented by state/territory of usual residence of the patient.

Hospitalisations for which the Indigenous status of the patient was not reported have been included with hospitalisations data for non-Indigenous people under the 'other' category. This is to enable consistency across jurisdictions, as public hospitals in some states and territories do not have a category for the reporting of not stated or inadequately recorded/reported Indigenous status.

Hospitalisation data are presented for the 2-year period July 2004 to June 2006. An aggregate of 2 years of data has been used, as the number of hospitalisations for some conditions is likely to be small for a single year.

The principal diagnosis is the diagnosis established to be the problem that was chiefly responsible for the patient's episode of care in hospital. The additional diagnosis is a condition or complaint either coexisting with the principal diagnosis or arising during the episode of care. The term 'hospitalisation' has been used to refer to a separation which is the episode of admitted patient care, which can be a total hospital stay (from admission to discharge, transfer or death) or a portion of a hospital stay beginning or ending a change in a type of care (for example, from acute to rehabilitation). 'Separation' also means the process by which an admitted patient completes an episode of care by being discharged, dying, transferring to another hospital or changing type of care.

National Mortality Database

The National Mortality Database is a national collection of de-identified information for all deaths in Australia and is maintained by the AIHW. Information on the characteristics and causes of death of the deceased is provided by the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages and coded nationally by the ABS. Information on the cause of death is supplied by the medical practitioner certifying the death or by a coroner. The data are updated each calendar year.

Although the identification of Indigenous deaths is incomplete in all state and territory registration systems, four jurisdictions (Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory) have been assessed by the ABS and the AIHW as having adequate identification. These four jurisdictions represent approximately 60% of the Indigenous population of Australia. Data are presented by state/territory of usual residence rather than state/territory where death occurs.

Deaths for which the Indigenous status of the deceased was not reported have been excluded from the analysis.

Data have been combined for the 5-year period 2002–2006 because of the small number of deaths from some conditions each year. Data have been analysed using the year of registration of death for all years. Note that the 2006 edition of this report used year of occurrence of death for all years of analysis except for the latest year of available data, for which year of registration of death was used. Data published in this report may therefore differ slightly from those published in the previous edition for comparable years of data.

National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP)

The Australian Institute of Criminology collects data on all homicides recorded in Australia under the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP). The NHMP was established in 1990 and reports annually by financial year on all homicides recorded in Australia. The Indigenous status of the victim is based on police identification of 'racial appearance' and therefore will underestimate the level of homicide involving Indigenous persons. In addition, data for Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory are not reported. Nevertheless, the NHMP includes useful information on the circumstances surrounding homicides involving Indigenous persons, such as motive for killing, and victim and perpetrator relationship.

Data analyses

Age-standardised rates and ratios have been used where appropriate as a measure of the Indigenous population relative to other Australians. Ratios of this type illustrate differences between the rates among Indigenous people and those of other Australians, taking into account differences in age distributions.

Self-reported data

The 2002 NATSISS collected information on physical and threatened violence, personal stressors experienced in the 12 months before the survey and neighbourhood community problems, which is presented in the following tables and figures.

Victim of physical or threatened violence and personal stressors

- In 2002, approximately 24% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over and 22% aged 18 years and over reported they were a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months.
- After adjusting for differences in age structure, Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over were twice as likely to report being victims of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months as non-Indigenous Australians.
- In 2002, approximately 83% of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over experienced at least one stressor in the previous 12 months, compared with 57% of non-Indigenous Australians (Table 2.13.1). The most common stressors experienced by Indigenous Australians were death of a family member or close friend (47%), alcohol or drug-related problems (25%) and overcrowding at home (21%).

Victim of physical or threatened violence and personal stressors by age

- Indigenous Australians aged 18–24, 25–34 and 35–44 years were more likely to be victims of physical or threatened violence than those in the older age groups (Table 2.13.1). Indigenous Australians aged 18–54 years were twice as likely and those aged 55 years and over were four times as likely as non-Indigenous Australians of the same age to be victims of physical or threatened violence.
- Indigenous Australians aged 55 years and over were slightly less likely to experience stressors than those in the younger age groups. Indigenous Australians were more likely to have experienced at least one stressor in the previous 12 months than non-Indigenous Australians across all age groups (Table 2.13.1).

Table 2.13.1: Issues of community safety, by Indigenous status and age group, persons aged 18 years and over, 2002

	18–24			25–34			35–44			45–54			55+			Total	Total age-standardised ^(a)		
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio
	%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%	%	
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months	33	15	2.2*	26	13	2.0*	23	10	2.3*	16	8	2.0*	11	3	3.7*	22	20	9	2.2*
Mental illness ^(b)	14	9	1.6*	17	9	1.9*	17	9	1.9*	19	9	2.1*	12	6	2.0*	16	11	8	1.4
Death of family member or close friend	45	20	2.3*	46	21	2.2*	46	21	2.2*	47	21	2.2*	50	17	2.9*	47	47	20	2.4*
Alcohol or drug-related problems	25	12	2.1*	25	10	2.5*	27	7	3.9*	25	8	3.1*	20	4	5.0*	25	24	7	3.4*
Abuse or violent crime	13	5	2.6*	12	4	3.0*	13	4	3.3*	10	4	2.5*	7	1	7.0*	11	10	3	3.3*
Witness to violence	17	4	4.3*	16	4	4.0*	16	3	5.3*	13	3	4.3*	12	0 ^(c)	31.7*	15	14	3	4.7*
Trouble with the police	24	6	4.0*	18	4	4.5*	19	3	6.3*	15	3	5.0*	10	1	10.0*	18	16	3	5.3*
Member of family sent to jail/in jail	21	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	n.a.	19	n.a.	n.a.	18	n.a.	n.a.	14	n.a.	n.a.	20	18	n.a.	n.a.
Overcrowding at home	27	n.a.	n.a.	21	n.a.	n.a.	20	n.a.	n.a.	18	n.a.	n.a.	16	n.a.	n.a.	21	20	n.a.	n.a.
Discrimination/racism	16	n.a.	n.a.	19	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	n.a.	18	n.a.	n.a.	13	n.a.	n.a.	18	17	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Total experienced stressors^{(d)(e)}</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>1.4*</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>1.4*</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>1.3*</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>1.3*</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>1.5*</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>1.4*</i>
No stressors reported	16	41	0.4*	15	40	0.4*	18	39	0.5*	18	39	0.5*	23	50	0.5*	17	19	43	0.4*
Total	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	100	..

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Totals are age-standardised, as this measure was found to be associated with age.

(b) Data available for non-remote areas only.

(c) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

(d) Sum of components may be more than total, as persons may have reported more than one type of stressor.

(e) Includes divorce or separation, serious illness or disability, serious accident, not able to get job, lost job, gambling problem and pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Victim of physical or threatened violence and personal stressors by sex

- A slightly higher proportion of Indigenous males aged 18 years and over than Indigenous females aged 18 years and over reported being a victim of physical or threatened violence (21% compared with 19%). Indigenous males and females were twice and three times as likely to be a victim of physical or threatened violence as non-Indigenous males and females respectively (Table 2.13.2).
- A higher proportion of Indigenous females aged 18 years and over reported experiencing at least one stressor in the previous 12 months than Indigenous males (85% compared with 80%) (Table 2.13.2).

Table 2.13.2: Issues of community safety, persons aged 18 years and over, by Indigenous status and sex, 2002

	Males			Females		
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio
	%	%		%	%	
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months ^(a)	21	11	1.9*	19	7	2.7*
Personal stressors experienced in last 12 months						
Mental illness ^(b)	12	7	1.7*	20	9	2.2*
Death of family member or close friend	45	19	2.4*	48	21	2.3*
Alcohol or drug-related problems	22	7	3.1*	27	8	3.4*
Abuse or violent crime	9	2	4.5*	13	4	3.3*
Witness to violence	14	2	7.0*	17	3	5.7*
Trouble with the police	17	3	5.7*	19	3	6.3*
Member of family sent to jail/currently in jail	19	n.a.	n.a.	20	n.a.	n.a.
Overcrowding at home	18	n.a.	n.a.	23	n.a.	n.a.
Discrimination/racism	17	n.a.	n.a.	19	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Total experienced stressors^{(c)(d)}</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>1.4*</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>1.4*</i>
No stressors reported	20	44	0.5*	15	41	0.4*
Total	100	100	..	100	100	..

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Proportions are age-standardised, as this measure was found to be associated with age.

(b) Data collected for non-remote areas only.

(c) Sum of components may be more than total, as persons may have reported more than one type of stressor.

(d) Includes divorce or separation, serious illness or disability, serious accident, not able to get job, lost job, gambling problem and pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Victim of physical or threatened violence and personal stressors by state/territory

- The proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over who were victims of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months ranged from 14% in the Northern Territory to 27% in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 2.13.3).
- Indigenous Australians were two to four times as likely to be a victim of physical or threatened violence as non-Indigenous Australians in all states and territories with the exception of the Northern Territory where the rates were similar (14% and 15%) (Table 2.13.3).
- The proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over who experienced stressors in the previous 12 months ranged from 75% in Tasmania to 88% in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (Table 2.13.3).

Table 2.13.3: Issues of community safety, persons aged 18 years and over, by Indigenous status and state/territory, 2002

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
	Per cent															
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months ^(a)	18*	8*	26*	8*	22*	11*	22*	10*	26*	8*	17*	8*	27*	7*	14*	15*
Selected types of personal stressors experienced in last 12 months																
Mental illness ^(b)	14*	8*	20*	8*	17*	8*	18*	8*	19*	9*	15*	8*	24*	11*	10 ^(c)	7
Death of family member or close friend	44*	20*	42*	20*	49*	19*	47*	18*	47*	22*	35*	20*	51*	21*	53*	21*
Alcohol or drug-related problems	21*	7*	24*	7*	27*	8*	25*	8*	25*	7*	13*	7*	31*	10*	34*	8*
Abuse or violent crime	9*	3*	13*	3*	13*	3*	12*	4*	11*	3*	6*	3*	22*	5*	12*	5*
Witness to violence	9*	3*	13*	2*	17*	3*	14*	3*	16*	2*	6*	2*	16*	3*	29*	5*
Trouble with the police	18*	3*	18*	2*	20*	4*	18*	4*	19*	4*	7*	3*	28*	4*	15*	4*
Member of family sent to jail/currently in jail	17	n.a.	16	n.a.	20	n.a.	26	n.a.	19	n.a.	7	n.a.	21	n.a.	23	n.a.
Overcrowding at home	11	n.a.	14	n.a.	25	n.a.	19	n.a.	20	n.a.	7	n.a.	18	n.a.	45	n.a.
Discrimination/racism	20	n.a.	19	n.a.	18	n.a.	20	n.a.	24	n.a.	7	n.a.	41	n.a.	10	n.a.
<i>Total experienced stressors^(d)</i>	79*	56*	83*	56*	86*	59*	81*	59*	81*	58*	75*	59*	88*	62*	88*	59*
<i>No stressors reported</i>	21*	44*	17*	44*	14*	41*	19*	41*	19*	42*	25*	41*	12*	38*	12*	41*
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total number	74,650	4,849,277	15,629	3,655,501	67,531	2,654,470	35,182	1,406,411	14,070	1,124,503	9,518	337,113	2,255	229,260	32,564	97,255

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

- (a) Proportions are age-standardised, as this measure was found to be associated with age.
- (b) Data collected for non-remote areas only.
- (c) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
- (d) Sum of components may be more than total, as persons may have reported more than one type of stressor.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Victim of physical or threatened violence and personal stressors by remoteness

- The proportions of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over who were victims of physical or threatened violence were similar in remote and non-remote areas (23% and 25% respectively) (Table 2.13.4; Figure 2.13.1).
- Indigenous persons in remote areas were more likely to report having experienced at least one stressor than Indigenous persons in non-remote areas (86% compared with 81%) (Table 2.13.4). Indigenous Australians were more likely to have experienced stressors than non-Indigenous Australians across all remoteness areas (Table 2.13.5).

Table 2.13.4: Issues of community safety, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, by sex, 2002

	Remote	Non-remote	Total
	Per cent		
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months	22.7	25.0	24.3
Personal stressors experienced in last 12 months			
Mental illness ^(a)	n.a.	15.6	n.a.
Death of family member or close friend	55.3	42.1	45.7
Alcohol or drug-related problems	36.5	20.5	24.9
Abuse or violent crime	17.2	8.9	11.2
Witness to violence	30.0	10.3	15.7
Trouble with the police	21.7	17.1	18.4
Member of family sent to jail/currently in jail	25.0	17.4	19.5
Overcrowding at home	41.6	12.6	20.5
Discrimination/racism	16.3	18.2	17.7
<i>Total experienced stressors^{(b)(c)}</i>	<i>85.5</i>	<i>81.0</i>	<i>82.3</i>
No stressors reported	14.5	19.0	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Data collected for non-remote areas only.

(b) Sum of components may be more than total as persons may have reported more than one type of stressor.

(c) Includes divorce or separation, serious illness or disability, serious accident, not able to get job, lost job, gambling problem and pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities.

Source: ABS 2004a.

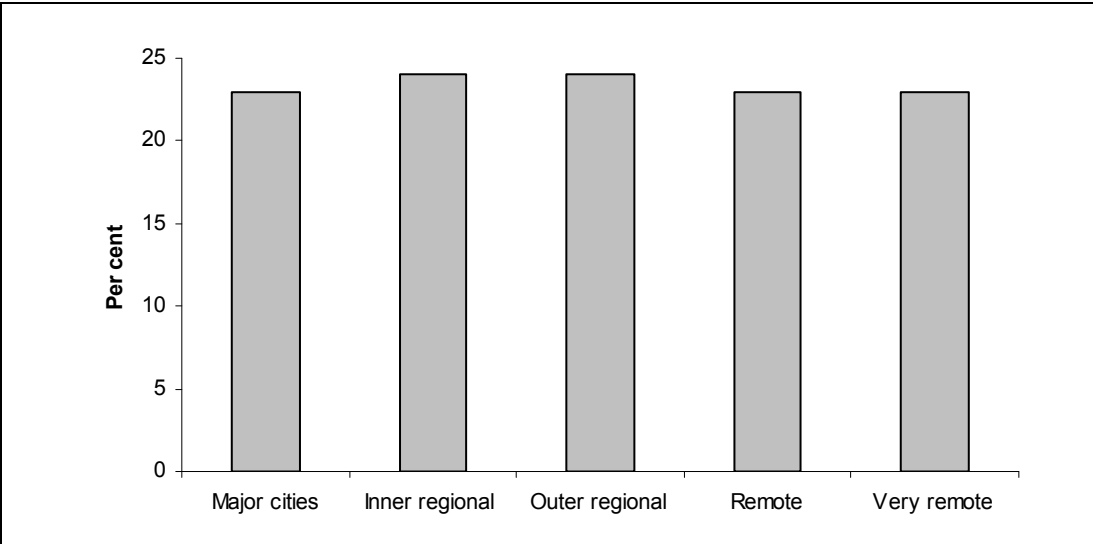
Table 2.13.5: Issues of community safety, persons aged 18 years and over, by Indigenous status and remoteness, 2002

	Major Cities			Inner Regional			Outer Regional			Total non-remote		Remote		Very Remote ^(a)		Total remote		
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
	%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months ^(b)	19	9	2.1*	21	10	2.1*	20	8	2.5*	20*	9*	20	8	2.5*	20	n.p.	20	n.p.
Personal stressors experienced in last 12 months																		
Mental illness ^(c)	19	8	2.4*	18	8	2.3*	11	7	1.6*	16*	8*	n.a.	6 ^(d)	n.a.	n.a.	n.p.	n.a.	n.p.
Death of family member or close friend	42	20	2.1*	43	20	2.2*	44	21	2.1*	43*	20*	51	15 ^(d)	3.4*	58	n.p.	56	n.p.
Alcohol- or drug-related problems	22	8	2.8*	20	7	2.9*	19	6	3.2*	21*	7*	26	8 ^(d)	3.3*	41	n.p.	37	n.p.
Abuse or violent crime	11	3	3.7*	7	3	2.3*	8	3	2.7*	9*	3*	13	6 ^(d)	2.2*	19	n.p.	17	n.p.
Witness to violence	11	3	3.7*	7	3	2.3*	10	2	5.0*	10*	3*	19	3 ^(d)	6.3*	34	n.p.	30	n.p.
Trouble with the police	18	3	6.0*	15	3	5.0*	16	4	4.0*	16*	3*	18	4 ^(d)	4.5*	23	n.p.	22	n.p.
Member of family sent to jail/currently in jail	20	n.a.	n.a.	14	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	19	n.a.	n.a.	28	n.p.	25	n.p.
Overcrowding at home	16	n.a.	n.a.	9	n.a.	n.a.	11	n.a.	n.a.	13	n.a.	25	n.a.	n.a.	50	n.p.	42	n.p.
Discrimination/racism	22	n.a.	n.a.	15	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	n.a.	19	n.a.	17	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.p.	17	n.p.
Total experienced stressors ^{(e)(f)}	83	58	1.4*	81	58	1.4*	79	56	1.4*	81*	57*	80	51	1.6*	88	n.p.	86	n.p.
No stressors reported	17	42	0.4*	19	42	0.5*	21	44	0.5*	19*	43*	20	49	0.4*	12	n.p.	14	n.p.
Total	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	100	100	..	100	n.p.	100	n.p.

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

- (a) Non-Indigenous estimates not available for Very Remote Australia.
- (b) Proportions for victim of physical or threatened violence are age-standardised as this measure was found to be associated with age.
- (c) Data collected for non-remote areas only in the NATSISS.
- (d) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
- (e) Sum of components may be more than total as persons may have reported more than one type of stressor.
- (f) Includes divorce or separation, serious illness or disability, serious accident, not able to get job, lost job, gambling problem and pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

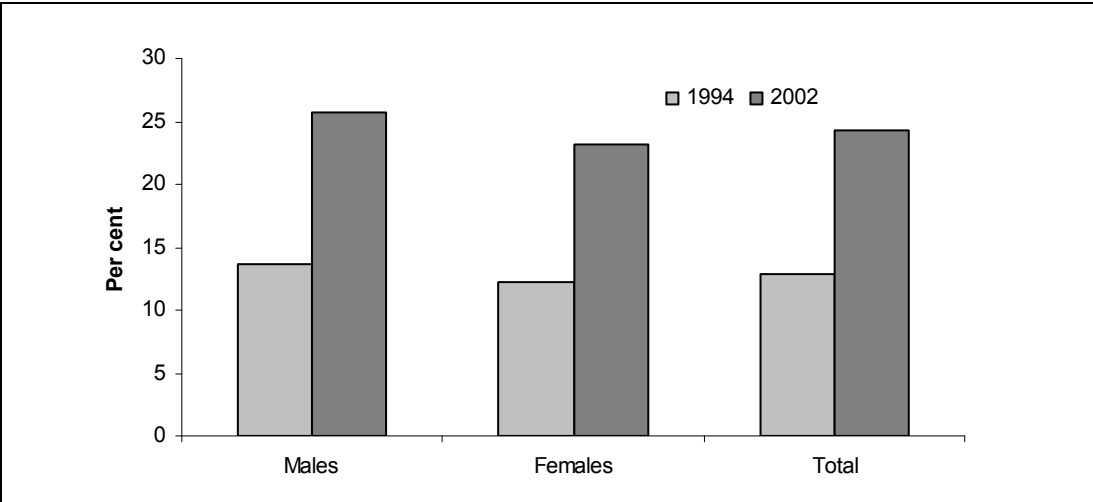


Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Figure 2.13.1: Proportion of Indigenous persons aged 18 years and over reporting they were a victim of physical or threatened violence in previous 12 months, by remoteness, 2002

Time series analyses

- A higher proportion of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over reported being victims of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months in 2002 than in 1994 (24% compared with 13%) (Figure 2.13.2).



Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and 2002 NATSISS.

Figure 2.13.2: Proportion of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over reporting they were victims of physical or threatened violence in previous 12 months, by sex, 1994 and 2002

Victim of physical or threatened violence and witness to violence by selected health and population characteristics

- Indigenous Australians with fair/poor health, a disability or long-term health condition and in the lowest (1st) quintile of household income were more likely to have been a victim of physical or threatened violence as those with excellent health, with no disability and in the highest (5th) quintile of household income (Table 2.13.6).
- Approximately 15% of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over had been a witness to violence in the previous 12 months. Indigenous Australians were five times as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have been a witness to violence. Indigenous Australians in remote areas were nine times as likely to have been a witness to violence as non-Indigenous Australians in remote areas.

Table 2.13.6: Victim of and witness to violence, by selected health and population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 18 years and older, 2002

	Victim of physical or threatened violence				Witness to violence			
	Indigenous	Indigenous age-standardised	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Indigenous age-standardised	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio
	Proportion who were victim of physical or threatened violence				Proportion who were a witness to violence			
Self-assessed health status								
Excellent/good	20	15	9	1.7*	14	13	3	4.3*
Good	24	20	13	1.5*	17	16	4	4.0*
Fair/poor	27	29	16	1.8*	15	16	3	5.3*
Disability or long-term health condition^(a)								
Has disability or long-term health condition	27	26	12	2.2*	12	11	4	2.8*
No disability or long-term condition	20	14	8	1.8*	7	8	2	4.0*
Household income								
1st quintile	27	24	13	1.8*	13	13	4	3.3*
5th quintile	18 ^(d)	14 ^(d)	9	1.6	9 ^(d)	14 ^(d)	2	7.0*
Index of disparity								
1st quintile	24	21	10	2.1*	18	17	4	4.3*
5th quintile	26 ^(d)	18 ^(d)	7	2.6*	8 ^(d)	11 ^(d)	2	5.5*
Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important								
	27	23	13	1.8*	20	19	4	4.8*
Location								
Remote	23	20	7	2.9*	30	28	3	9.3*
Non-remote	23	20	9	2.2*	10	9	3	3.0*
Law and justice^(b)								
Used legal services in last 12 months	69	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Arrested by police in last 5 years	45	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

(continued)

Table 2.13.6 (continued): Victim of and witness to violence, by selected health and population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 18 years and older, 2002

	Victim of physical or threatened violence				Witness to violence			
	Indigenous	Indigenous age-standardised	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Indigenous age-standardised	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio
	Proportion who were victim of physical or threatened violence				Proportion who were a witness to violence			
Incarcerated in last 5 years	43	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Housing								
Owner	15	14	8	1.8*	7	15	2	7.5*
Renter	27	23	13	1.8*	19	9	4	2.3*
Dwelling has structural problems	27	24	n.a.	n.a.	23	10	n.a.	n.a.
Dwelling requires additional bedrooms ^(c)	25	21	n.a.	n.a.	26	12	n.a.	n.a.
Family and culture^(b)								
Involved in social activities in last 3 mths	24	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	16	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Had undertaken voluntary work in last 12 months	26	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Able to get support in time of crisis from someone outside the household	3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	15	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Person removed from natural family	37	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	16	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Relative removed from natural family	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	16	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Currently lives in homelands	23	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Attended cultural event(s) in last 12 mths	26	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	20	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Total	23	20	9	2.2*	15	14	3	4.7*
Total number	58,621	n.a.	1,288,673	n.a.	38,236	n.a.	373,693	n.a.

(continued)

Table 2.13.6 (continued): Victim of and witness to violence, by selected health and population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 18 years and older, 2002

- (a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.
- (b) Data collected for Indigenous Australians only.
- (c) Based on Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness.
- (d) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Neighbourhood/community problems

- In 2002, approximately 74% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported that neighbourhood or community problems were present (Table 2.13.7).
- Dangerous or noisy driving was the most common neighbourhood/community problem reported (45%), followed by theft (43%). Problems involving youth, vandalism/graffiti/damage to property, alcohol and illegal drugs were also common problems reported.

Neighbourhood/community problems by age and sex

- The proportion of Indigenous Australians reporting neighbourhood/community problems was lowest among those aged 55 years and over (69%) (Table 2.13.7) and similar for males and females (73% and 74% respectively) (Table 2.13.8).

Table 2.13.7: Neighbourhood/community problems, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, by age group, 2002

	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54 s	55 years and over	Total
	Per cent					
Neighbourhood/community problem present						
Theft	42.5	41.9	46.0	46.5	37.4	43.0
Problems involving youth	32.3	32.3	32.3	32.3	32.3	32.3
Prowlers/loiterers ^(a)	15.0	15.3	16.2	14.4	11.5	14.8
Vandalism/graffiti/damage to property	33.9	30.5	37.3	32.4	28.5	32.9
Dangerous or noisy driving ^(a)	40.4	48.6	50.5	47.0	40.2	45.4
Alcohol	35.1	33.9	36.0	31.9	26.3	33.5
Illegal drugs	35.9	31.1	34.0	31.1	23.7	32.3
Family violence	20.7	22.4	23.6	21.0	15.4	21.2
Assault	21.5	19.4	21.7	19.1	14.2	19.9
Sexual assault	9.3	7.5	8.8	7.9	5.2	8.1
Problems with your neighbours ^(a)	15.8	13.7	15.0	12.5	9.1	13.9
Levels of neighbourhood conflict	16.3	14.8	16.2	14.1	9.8	14.9
Level of personal safety day or night ^(a)	11.8	12.6	10.0	8.4	8.5	10.8
<i>Total with neighbourhood/community problems</i>	73.6	74.3	75.4	73.4	68.7	73.6
No neighbourhood/community problems reported	24.9	24.9	24.0	25.8	29.4	25.3
Total^(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	82,749	71,139	57,741	38,375	32,201	282,205

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Includes people who did not know or state their neighbourhood/community problems.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Table 2.13.8: Neighbourhood/community problems, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, by sex, 2002

	Male	Female
	Per cent	
Neighbourhood/community problem present		
Theft	43.0	43.0
Problems involving youth	33.0	31.8
Prowlers/loiterers ^(a)	15.6	14.2
Vandalism/graffiti/damage to property	33.1	32.7
Dangerous or noisy driving ^(a)	43.8	46.9
Alcohol	33.1	33.9
Illegal drugs	32.2	32.3
Family violence	19.6	22.6
Assault	20.7	19.1
Sexual assault	7.6	8.6
Problems with your neighbours ^(a)	14.6	13.3
Levels of neighbourhood conflict	15.2	14.5
Level of personal safety day or night ^(a)	10.3	11.2
<i>Total with neighbourhood/community problems</i>	<i>72.9</i>	<i>74.1</i>
No neighbourhood/community problems reported	26.0	24.8
Total^(b)	100.0	100.0
Total number	135,199	147,006

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Includes people who did not know or state their neighbourhood/community problems.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Neighbourhood/community problems by state/territory

- Of the four states and territories for which data on neighbourhood/community problems are presented (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia), Western Australia had the lowest proportion of Indigenous persons reporting neighbourhood/community problems overall (72%). Queensland had the highest proportion of Indigenous persons reporting illegal drugs, family violence, assault and sexual assault as a problem (Table 2.13.9).

Table 2.13.9: Neighbourhood/community problems, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, NSW, Vic, Qld and WA, 2002

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA
	Per cent			
Neighbourhood/community problem present				
Theft	45.5	43.9	43.4	39.2
Problems involving youth	28.0	29.3	33.6	33.0
Prowlers/loiterers ^(a)	15.0	14.7	13.5	17.6
Vandalism/graffiti/damage to property	32.6	31.2	31.5	32.8
Dangerous or noisy driving ^(a)	43.1	44.6	45.6	50.6
Alcohol	30.4	23.1	36.0	35.9
Illegal drugs	31.6	28.6	35.6	30.7
Family violence	15.0	13.1	25.7	21.9
Assault	14.6	12.9	20.9	19.9
Sexual assault	6.3	5.3	12.6	7.2
Problems with your neighbours ^(a)	16.9	12.2	12.2	10.6
Levels of neighbourhood conflict	10.8	8.5	17.1	14.2
Level of personal safety day or night ^(a)	11.6	9.7	8.7	14.7
<i>Total with neighbourhood/community problems</i>	<i>75.0</i>	<i>73.2</i>	<i>74.8</i>	<i>72.3</i>
No neighbourhood/community problems reported	24.7	23.2	24.1	26.5
Total^(b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	83,585	36,189	75,975	15,813

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Includes people who did not know or state their neighbourhood/community problems.

Note: Data for South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory not available for publication because of survey output restrictions.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Neighbourhood/community problems by remoteness

- A higher proportion of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over in remote areas reported most types of neighbourhood/community problems than those in non-remote areas (Table 2.13.10).

Table 2.13.10: Neighbourhood/community problems, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and older, by remoteness, 2002

	Remote	Non-remote
	Per cent	
Neighbourhood/community problem present		
Theft	41.5	43.6
Problems involving youth	47.9	26.5
Prowlers/loiterers ^(a)	n.a.	14.8
Vandalism/graffiti/damage to property	43.5	28.9
Dangerous or noisy driving ^(a)	n.a.	45.4
Alcohol	54.1	25.8
Illegal drugs	46.1	27.1
Family violence	40.9	13.8
Assault	41.1	11.9
Sexual assault	16.7	4.8
Problems with your neighbours ^(a)	n.a.	13.9
Levels of neighbourhood conflict	30.8	8.9
Level of personal safety day or night ^(a)	n.a.	10.8
<i>Total with neighbourhood/community problems</i>	<i>74.2</i>	<i>73.3</i>
No neighbourhood/community problems reported	24.9	25.5
Total^(b)	100.0	100.0
Total number	77,100	205,100

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Includes people who did not know or state their neighbourhood/community problems.

Source: ABS 2004a.

Neighbourhood/community problems by selected health and population characteristics

- Indigenous Australians with a disability or long-term health condition and in the lowest (1st) quintile of household income were more likely to report family violence, assault, sexual assault or personal safety as neighbourhood/community problems than those with no disability/long-term condition and those in the highest quintile of household income (Table 2.13.11, Table 2.13.12).

Table 2.13.11: Neighbourhood/community problems, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, by selected health and population characteristics, 2002

	Neighbourhood/community problem reported			
	Family violence	Assault	Sexual assault	Personal safety day or night ^(a)
	Percent			
Self-assessed health status				
Excellent/good	40.1	44.8	46.4	40.6
Good	33.8	30.3	23.6	30.0
Fair/poor	25.7	24.4	30.0	29.5
Disability or long-term health condition^(b)				
Yes	57.8	55.8	56.1	56.5
No	42.2	44.2	43.9	43.5
Household income				
1st quintile	34.5	35.3	36.3	42.6
5th quintile	2.9	2.5	2.7	3.0
Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important				
	71.4	71.4	52.8	55.6
Location				
Remote	52.8	56.6	56.5	n.a.
Non-remote	47.2	43.4	43.5	n.a.
Law and justice				
Used legal services in last 12 months	27.1	24.7	28.4	29.6
Arrested by police in last 5 years	21.6	22.5	20.9	21.5
Incarcerated in last 5 years	9.5	9.9	6.9	7.6
Housing				
Owner	12.6	11.5	10.4	23.7
Renter	85.1	86.1	86.6	73.6
Dwelling has structural problems	58.4	59.4	61.0	49.5
Dwelling requires additional bedrooms ^(c)	88.7	88.7	88.8	84.2
Family and culture				
Involved in social activities in last 3 months	93.6	94.8	94.3	93.3
Had undertaken voluntary work in last 12 months	29.1	25.7	27.6	41.6
Able to get support in time of crisis from someone outside family	67.6	69.8	68.4	78.2
Has been removed from natural family	8.7	8.4	7.8	14.4
Relative removed from natural family	36.6	35.1	39.7	48.9
Currently lives in homelands	29.5	31.7	27.3	18.5
Attended cultural event(s) in last 12 months ^(a)	82.5	80.3	81.2	64.5
Total^(d)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	59,731	56,046	22,849	22,121

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Excludes people who chose 'not applicable' regarding their disability status.

(c) Based on Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness.

(d) Includes 'not known' or 'not stated' cases.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Table 2.13.12: Selected health and population characteristics, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, by whether reported neighbourhood/community problems, 2002

	Neighbourhood/community problem reported			
	Family violence	Assault	Sexual assault	Personal safety day or night ^(a)
	Per cent			
Self-assessed health status				
Excellent/good	19.3	20.2	8.5	9.9
Good	23.3	20.8	8.2	13.0
Fair/poor	22.1	18.6	7.5	10.3
Disability or long-term health condition^(b)				
Yes	16.8	14.0	5.8	12.9
No	11.0	9.9	4.0	8.9
Household income				
1st quintile (lowest)	20.4	19.6	8.2	12.2
5th quintile (highest)	12.5	9.9	4.4	5.4
Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important	27.8	26.1	10.8	12.7
Location				
Remote	40.9	41.1	16.7	n.a.
Non-remote	13.8	11.9	4.8	n.a.
Law and justice				
Used legal services in last 12 months	28.9	24.7	11.6	15.5
Arrested by police in last 5 years	27.8	27.2	10.3	14.3
Incarcerated in last 5 years	28.4	27.8	7.9	12.5
Housing				
Owner	10.1	8.6	3.2	7.7
Renter	25.9	24.5	10.1	12.5
Dwelling has structural problems	31.3	29.8	12.5	16.4
Dwelling requires additional bedrooms ^(c)	22.9	21.5	8.8	11.4
Family and culture				
Involved in social activities in last 3 months	22.0	20.9	8.5	11.2
Had undertaken voluntary work in last 12 months	22.3	18.5	8.1	14.0
Has been removed from natural family	21.7	19.7	7.5	16.6
Relative removed from natural family	21.7	19.6	9.0	13.7
Currently lives in homelands	28.5	28.8	10.1	12.6
Attended cultural event(s) in last 12 months ^(a)	25.6	23.4	9.7	11.4

(a) Data collected in non-remote areas only.

(b) Excludes people who chose 'not applicable' regarding their disability status.

(c) Based on Canadian National Occupancy Standard for housing appropriateness.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Hospitalisations

- For the period July 2004 to June 2006, there were 9,677 hospitalisations of Indigenous Australians in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined in which assault was recorded as the principal diagnosis. This represented approximately 2.1% of total hospitalisations of Indigenous Australians in these states and territories.
- Overall, in the six states and territories combined, Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for assault at around 12 times the rate of other Australians.

Hospitalisations by age and sex

- Hospitalisation rates for assault were highest among those aged 25–34 and 35–44 years in the Indigenous population and among those aged 15–24 and 25–34 years in the other Australian population. Indigenous males aged 35–44, 45–54, 55–64 and 65 years and over were hospitalised for assault at over 10 times the rate of other males, and Indigenous females aged 25–34 and 35–44 years were hospitalised for assault at over 40 times the rate of other females (Table 2.13.13).

Table 2.13.13: Hospitalisations for principal diagnosis of assault, by Indigenous status, sex and age, NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA and NT, July 2004 to June 2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

	Indigenous				Other ^(e)				Ratio ⁽ⁱ⁾
	Number	No. per 1,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	Number	No. per 1,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	
Males									
0-4	73	1.2	0.9	1.5	220	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.8*
5-14	100	0.8	0.7	1.0	555	0.2	0.2	0.2	3.9*
15-24	1,204	12.7	12.0	13.4	10,142	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.3*
25-34	1,443	21.2	20.1	22.3	7,506	2.8	2.7	2.8	7.7*
35-44	1,229	22.1	20.9	23.3	4,963	1.7	1.7	1.8	12.7*
45-54	426	11.3	10.2	12.4	2,558	1.0	0.9	1.0	11.7*
55-64	101	5.1	4.1	6.1	979	0.5	0.4	0.5	10.8*
65+	27	2.4	1.5	3.3	418	0.2	0.2	0.2	12.8*
Total^(j)	4,603	10.7	10.4	11.1	27,343	1.4	1.4	1.5	7.5*
Females									
0-4	98	1.7	1.4	2.1	157	0.1	0.1	0.2	12.7*
5-14	85	0.8	0.6	0.9	185	0.1	0.1	0.1	9.9*
15-24	1,252	13.6	12.9	14.4	1,405	0.5	0.5	0.6	24.8*
25-34	1,852	25.6	24.4	26.8	1,526	0.6	0.5	0.6	45.6*
35-44	1,269	20.3	19.2	21.5	1,387	0.5	0.5	0.5	42.1*
45-54	410	10.1	9.1	11.0	691	0.3	0.2	0.3	38.8*
55-64	79	3.6	2.8	4.4	266	0.1	0.1	0.1	28.1*
65+	29	2.0	1.2	2.7	248	0.1	0.1	0.1	21.9*
Total^(j)	5,074	10.9	10.6	11.3	5,866	0.3	0.3	0.3	35.3*
Persons									
0-4	171	1.5	1.3	1.7	377	0.2	0.1	0.2	9.2*
5-14	185	0.8	0.7	0.9	740	0.1	0.1	0.2	5.4*
15-24	2,456	13.2	12.6	13.7	11,547	2.2	2.2	2.2	6.0*
25-34	3,295	23.5	22.7	24.3	9,032	1.7	1.6	1.7	14.1*
35-44	2,498	21.2	20.3	22.0	6,350	1.1	1.1	1.1	19.1*
45-54	836	10.7	9.9	11.4	3,249	0.6	0.6	0.6	17.4*
55-64	180	4.3	3.7	5.0	1,245	0.3	0.3	0.3	14.4*
65+	56	2.1	1.6	2.7	666	0.1	0.1	0.1	16.2*
Total^(j)	9,677	10.8	10.6	11.1	33,209	0.9	0.9	0.9	12.3*

(continued)

Table 2.13.13 (continued): Hospitalisations for principal diagnosis of assault, by Indigenous status, sex and age, NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA and NT, July 2004 to June 2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons at the $p < 0.05$ level.

- (a) Data are from public and most private hospitals. Excludes private hospitals in the Northern Territory.
- (b) Categories are based on the ICD-10-AM fifth edition (National Centre for Classification in Health 2006). Causes of injury are based on the first reported external cause as 'assault' ICD-10-AM codes X85–Y09, where the principal diagnosis was 'injury and poisoning' (S00–T98).
- (c) Financial year reporting.
- (d) Data are reported by state/territory of usual residence of the patient hospitalised and are for New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland only. These six jurisdictions are considered to have adequate levels of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Hospitalisation data for these six jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions.
- (e) Includes hospitalisations of non-Indigenous people and those for whom Indigenous status was not stated.
- (f) Age-specific rate per 1,000 population.
- (g) LCL = lower confidence limit.
- (h) UCL = upper confidence limit.
- (i) Rate ratio Indigenous:other.
- (j) Directly age-standardised rates using the Australian 2001 standard population.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Hospital Morbidity Database.

Hospitalisations by state/territory

Table 2.13.14 presents hospitalisations for assault for the 2-year period July 2004 to June 2006 for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. As well as rates and ratios for the six jurisdictions which have been assessed as having adequate identification of Indigenous hospitalisations in 2004–05, unadjusted and adjusted national level data are included in the table. The Australia data are adjusted by applying a completeness factor of 89.4% which is an estimate of the level of Indigenous under-identification in hospital separations data.

- Over the period July 2004 to June 2006, Indigenous Australians in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined were hospitalised for assault at 12 times the rate of other Australians.
- When hospital rates are adjusted at the national level for Indigenous under-identification, Indigenous persons were hospitalised for assault at 14 times the rate of other Australians.
- Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for assault in New South Wales and Victoria at five times the rate of other Australians, in Queensland at 8 times the rate, in South Australia at 18 times the rate, in the Northern Territory at 20 times the rate, and in Western Australia at 23 times the rate.

Table 2.13.14: Hospitalisations for principal diagnosis of assault, by Indigenous status, NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA and NT, July 2004 to June 2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

	Indigenous				Other ^(e)				Ratio ⁽ⁱ⁾
	Number	No. per 1,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	Number	No. per 1,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	
NSW	1,345	4.9	4.6	5.1	11,761	0.9	0.9	0.9	5.4*
Vic	225	3.8	3.3	4.3	8,172	0.8	0.8	0.8	4.7*
Qld	2,030	7.9	7.5	8.2	7,192	0.9	0.9	1.0	8.4*
WA	2,641	19.3	18.5	20.1	3,247	0.8	0.8	0.9	23.2*
SA	821	15.1	14.0	16.2	2,477	0.9	0.8	0.9	17.7*
NT	2,615	22.4	21.5	23.4	360	1.1	1.0	1.2	19.9*
NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, SA & NT	9,677	10.8	10.6	11.1	33,209	0.9	0.9	0.9	12.3*
Australia unadjusted^(j)	9,788	10.5	10.2	10.7	35,153	0.9	0.9	0.9	11.7*
Australia adjusted^{(j)(k)}	10,938	11.7	11.4	11.9	34,003	0.9	0.9	0.9	13.6*

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons at the p < 0.05 level.

(m) Data are from public and most private hospitals. Excludes private hospitals in the Northern Territory.

(n) Categories are based on the ICD-10-AM fifth edition (National Centre for Classification in Health 2006). Causes of injury are based on the first reported external cause as 'assault' ICD-10-AM codes X85–Y09, where the principal diagnosis was 'injury and poisoning' (S00–T98).

(o) Financial year reporting.

(p) Data are reported by state/territory of usual residence of the patient hospitalised and are for New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland only. These six jurisdictions are considered to have adequate levels of Indigenous identification, although the level of accuracy varies by jurisdiction and hospital. Hospitalisation data for these six jurisdictions should not be assumed to represent the hospitalisation experience in the other jurisdictions.

(q) Includes hospitalisations of non-Indigenous patients and those for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(r) Directly age-standardised using the Australian 2001 standard population.

(s) LCL = lower confidence limit.

(t) UCL = upper confidence limit.

(u) Rate ratio Indigenous:other.

(v) Includes Other Territories and Residence State not applicable (e.g. overseas, at sea, no fixed address).

(w) Australian hospitalisation numbers and rates have been adjusted using a national Indigenous under-identification factor of 0.89.

Note: A person can have more than one hospital episode associated with a single assault.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Hospital Morbidity Database.

Time series analyses

Time series data are presented for the four jurisdictions that have been assessed as having adequate identification of Indigenous hospitalisations for all years from 1998–99 to 2005–06 – Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. These four jurisdictions represent approximately 60% of the Indigenous Australian population. New South Wales and Victoria were identified as having adequate identification of Indigenous hospitalisations from 2004–05 onwards; therefore, they were included as part of the current period analysis (2004–05 to 2005–06) but not as part of the time series analyses.

Hospitalisation rates, rate ratios and rate differences between Indigenous and other Australian hospitalisation for assault over the 7-year period 1998–99 to 2005–06 are presented in Table 2.13.15 and Figure 2.13.3.

- Over the period 1998–99 to 2005–06, there were significant declines in the hospitalisation rate for assault among Indigenous males and females. The fitted trend implies an average yearly decline in the rate of around 0.3 per 1,000 which is equivalent to a 12% decline in the rate over the period.
- Over the same period there were no significant changes in the hospitalisation rate for assault for other Australians.
- There were significant declines in both the hospitalisation rate ratios and rate differences between Indigenous and other Australians for assault over the period 1998–99 to 2005–06 (13%), which reflects both a relative and absolute decline in the gap between rates for Indigenous and other Australian hospitalisations from assault.

Note that changes in the level of accuracy of Indigenous identification in hospital records will result in changes in the level of reported hospital separations for Indigenous Australians. Also, changes in access, hospital policies and practices all affect the level of hospitalisation over time. Caution should be used in interpreting changes over time as it is not possible to ascertain whether a change in reported hospitalisation is due to changes in the accuracy of Indigenous identification or real changes in the rate at which Indigenous people are hospitalised. An increase in hospitalisations may reflect better access rather than a worsening of health.

Table 2.13.15: Age-standardised hospitalisation rates, rate ratios and rate differences for assault, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 1998–99 to 2005–06

	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	Annual change ^(a)	% change over period ^(c)
Indigenous number per 1,000										
Males	16.2	15.3	15.2	15.8	14.6	13.6	13.6	13.8	–0.4*	–16.1
Females	16.6	16.1	15.1	15.5	15.0	14.5	15.0	15.1	–0.2*	–9.1
Persons	16.4	15.7	15.1	15.6	14.8	14.1	14.3	14.4	–0.3*	–12.4
Other Australian^(c) number per 1,000										
Males	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.5	—	1.9
Females	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	—	–3.6
Persons	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	—	1.1
Rate ratio^(d)										
Males	11.5	11.1	10.2	10.8	10.5	10.1	9.6	9.1	–0.3*	–17.4
Females	51.4	50.5	45.1	46.5	48.1	46.6	50.5	45.6	–0.4	–5.5
Persons	18.7	18.3	16.4	17.3	17.2	16.9	16.6	15.5	–0.4*	–13.2
Rate difference^(e)										
Males	14.8	13.9	13.7	14.4	13.2	12.3	12.2	12.3	–0.4*	–17.8
Females	16.2	15.7	14.7	15.2	14.7	14.2	14.7	14.7	–0.2*	–9.2
Persons	15.5	14.8	14.2	14.7	13.9	13.2	13.4	13.5	–0.3*	–13.2

* Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < 0.05$ level over the period 1998–99 to 2005–06.

(f) Average annual change in rates, rate ratios and rate differences determined using linear regression analysis.

(g) Per cent change between 1998–99 and 2005–06 based on the average annual change over the period.

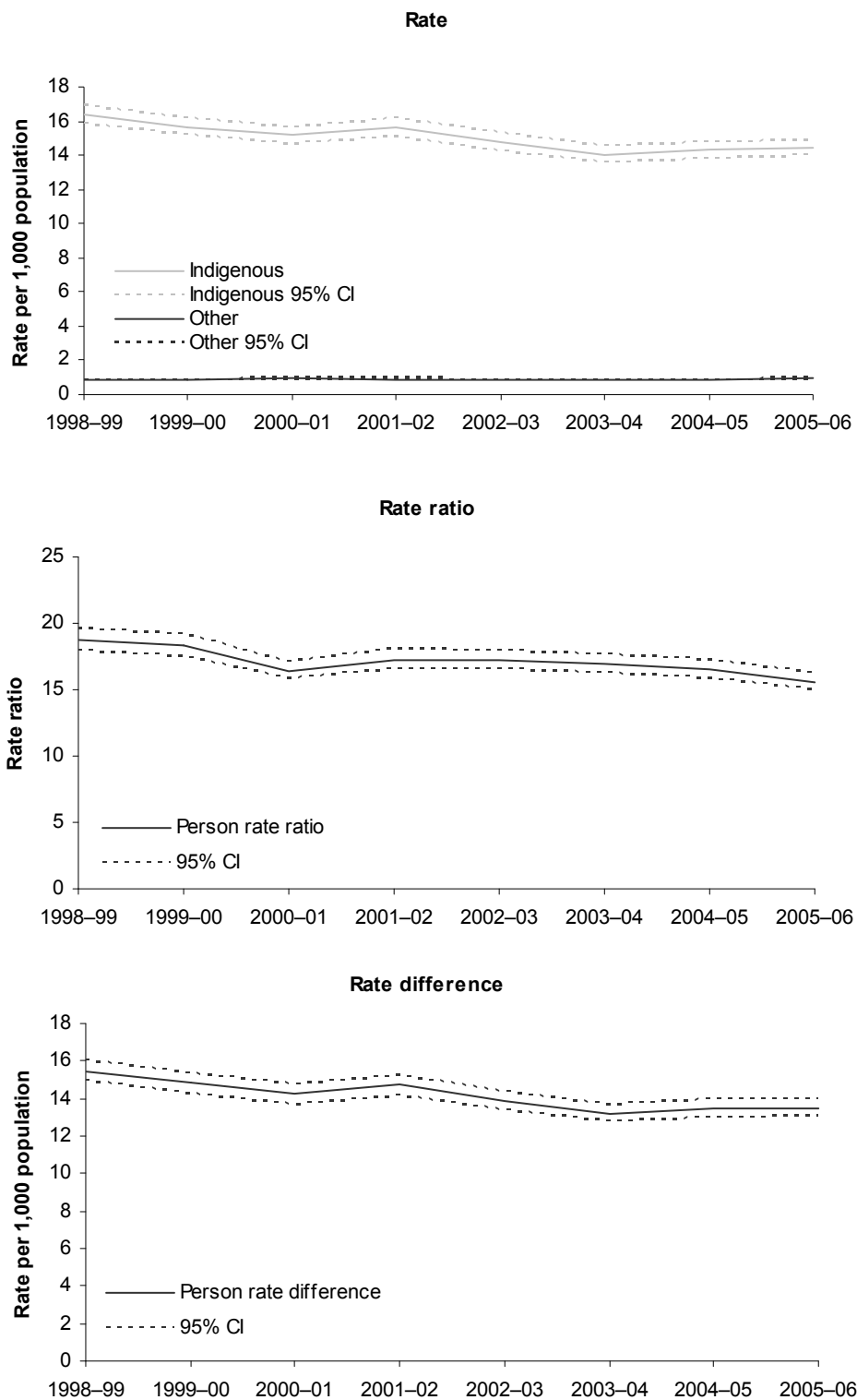
(h) Includes hospitalisations of non-Indigenous people and those for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(i) Hospitalisation rates for Indigenous Australians divided by the hospitalisation rates for other Australians.

(j) Hospitalisation rates for Indigenous Australians minus the hospitalisation rates for other Australians.

Note: Rates have been directly age-standardised using the 2001 Australian standard population.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Hospital Morbidity database.



Source: AIHW analysis of National Hospital Morbidity Database.

Figure 2.13.3: Hospitalisation rates, rate ratios and rate differences between Indigenous and other Australians from assault, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 1998-99 to 2005-06

Mortality

Tables 2.13.16 and 2.13.17 present deaths from assault in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory over the 5-year period 2002–2006.

- Over the period 2002–2006, there were 118 deaths of Indigenous people from assault (homicide) in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined. This represented approximately 1.5% of total deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in these states and territories.
- Indigenous Australians in the four states and territories combined died from assault at nine and a half times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

Mortality by age and sex

- Mortality rates for assault were highest among those aged 15–24, 25–34 and 35–44 years in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (Figure 2.13.4). Indigenous males in these age groups died from assault at between 5 and 16 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians of the same age, and Indigenous females in these age groups died from assault at between 9 and 21 times the rate of non-Indigenous females of the same age (Table 2.13.16).

Table 2.13.16: Deaths from assault (homicide), by Indigenous status, sex and age, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 2002–2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)}

	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous				Ratio ⁽ⁱ⁾
	Number	No. per 100,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	Number	No. per 100,000 ^(f)	LCL 95% ^(g)	UCL 95% ^(h)	
Males									
0–4	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	9	0.8	0.3	1.3	n.p.
5–14	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	6	0.2	0.0	0.4	n.p.
15–24	11	7.7	3.1	12.2	38	1.5	1.0	1.9	5.2*
25–34	21	19.1	11.0	27.3	39	1.5	1.0	2.0	12.7*
35–44	22	25.5	14.9	36.2	43	1.6	1.1	2.0	16.4*
45–54	5	9.0	1.1	17.0	31	1.2	0.8	1.6	7.6*
55–64	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	21	1.0	0.6	1.5	n.p.
65+	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	15	0.7	0.4	1.1	n.p.
Total⁽ⁱ⁾	66	10.4	7.6	13.1	202	1.1	0.9	1.2	9.5*
Females									
0–4	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	11	1.0	0.4	1.6	n.p.
5–14	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	6	0.2	0.0	0.4	n.p.
15–24	14	9.9	4.7	15.1	21	0.8	0.5	1.2	11.7*
25–34	19	16.2	8.9	23.4	20	0.8	0.4	1.1	20.7*
35–44	10	10.5	4.0	16.9	32	1.2	0.8	1.6	9.1*
45–54	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	17	0.7	0.3	1.0	n.p.
55–64	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	7	0.4	0.1	0.6	n.p.
65+	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	11	0.4	0.2	0.7	n.p.
Total⁽ⁱ⁾	52	6.8	4.8	8.8	125	0.7	0.6	0.8	9.9*
Persons									
0–4	5	2.8	0.3	5.2	20	0.9	0.5	1.3	3.2*
5–14	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	12	0.2	0.1	0.4	n.p.
15–24	25	8.8	5.3	12.2	59	1.2	0.9	1.5	7.5*
25–34	40	17.6	12.1	23.1	59	1.1	0.9	1.4	15.4*
35–44	32	17.6	11.5	23.7	75	1.4	1.0	1.7	13.0*
45–54	9	7.7	2.7	12.8	48	0.9	0.7	1.2	8.4*
55–64	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	28	0.7	0.4	1.0	n.p.
65+	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	26	0.6	0.3	0.8	n.p.
Total⁽ⁱ⁾	118	8.5	6.8	10.1	327	0.9	0.8	1.0	9.5

(continued)

Table 2.13.16 (continued): Deaths from assault (homicide), by Indigenous status, sex and age, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 2002–2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)}

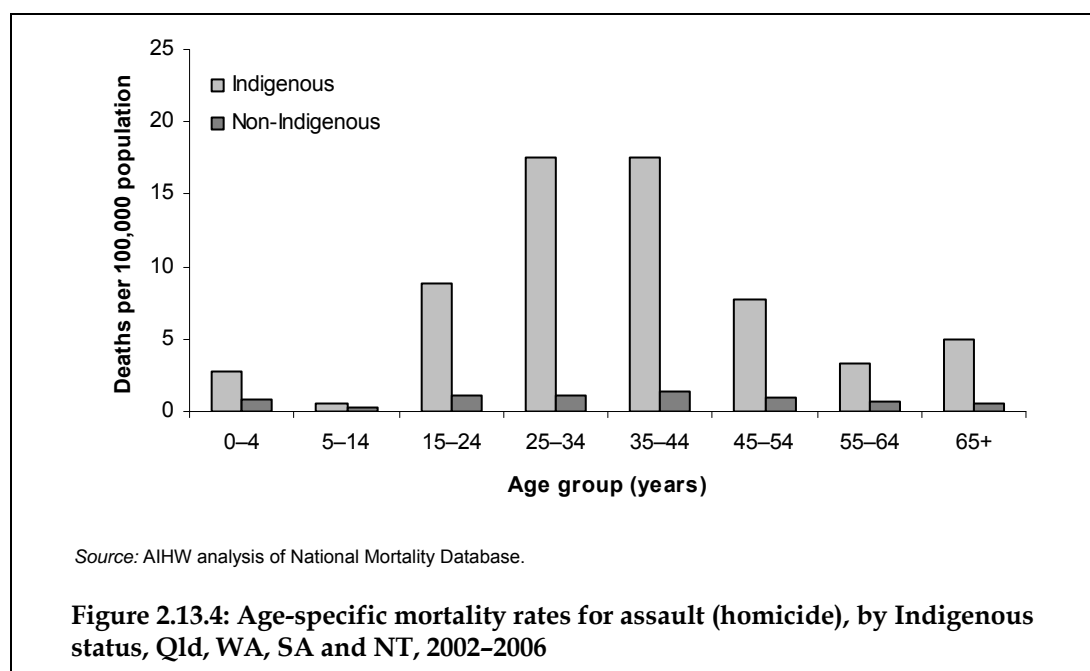
* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons at the $p < 0.05$ level.

n.p. Not published where numbers are less than 5.

- (a) Data are reported for Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have adequate levels of Indigenous identification in mortality data. They do not represent a quasi-Australian figure.
- (b) Data are presented in 5-year groupings because of small numbers each year.
- (c) These data exclude a total of 15 deaths where Indigenous status was not stated.
- (d) Although most deaths of Indigenous Australians are registered, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the Indigenous all-causes mortality rate.
- (e) Deaths are by year of registration.
- (f) Age-specific rate per 100,000 population.
- (g) LCL = lower confidence limit.
- (h) UCL = upper confidence limit.
- (i) Rate ratio Indigenous:non-Indigenous.
- (j) Total includes age not stated. Total rates have been directly age-standardised using the Australian 2001 standard population.

Note: The completeness of identification of Indigenous deaths can vary by age.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.



Mortality by state/territory

- In Queensland and South Australia, Indigenous Australians died from assault at 5 and 6 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians. In the Northern Territory and Western Australia, the rate was 9 and 14 times respectively that of non-Indigenous Australians (Table 2.13.17).

Table 2.13.17: Deaths from assault (homicide), by Indigenous status, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 2002–2006^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous				Ratio ^(h)
	Number	No. per 100,000 ^(e)	LCL 95% ^(f)	UCL 95% ^(g)	Number	No. per 100,000 ^(e)	LCL 95% ^(f)	UCL 95% ^(g)	
Qld	28	4.5	2.7	6.2	168	0.9	0.8	1.0	5.0*
WA	30	9.7	5.9	13.4	67	0.7	0.5	0.9	13.9*
SA	7	6.1	1.2	11.0	77	1.0	0.8	1.3	5.9*
NT	53	16.4	11.6	21.3	15	1.8	0.9	2.8	9.0*
Qld, WA, SA, NT⁽ⁱ⁾	118	8.5	6.8	10.1	327	0.9	0.8	1.0	9.5*

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons at the $p < 0.05$ level.

- (j) Data are presented in 5-year groupings because of small numbers each year.
- (k) These data exclude a total of 15 deaths where Indigenous status was not stated.
- (l) Although most deaths of Indigenous Australians are registered, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the Indigenous all-causes mortality rate.
- (m) Deaths are by year of registration.
- (n) Directly age-standardised using the Australian 2001 standard population.
- (o) LCL = lower confidence limit.
- (p) UCL = upper confidence limit.
- (q) Rate ratio Indigenous:non-Indigenous.
- (r) Data are reported for Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory only. These four jurisdictions are considered to have adequate levels of Indigenous identification in mortality data. They do not represent a quasi-Australian figure. The ABS calculated the completeness of identification of Indigenous deaths for the period 2002–2006 using population estimates as 51% for Queensland, 72% for Western Australia, 62% for South Australia and 90% for the Northern Territory. The completeness of Indigenous identification for avoidable deaths may differ from the estimates for all causes.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.

Time series analyses

Longer term mortality trend data are limited to three jurisdictions – Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, which have over 10 years of reasonable coverage of Indigenous deaths in their recording systems.

There is a consistent time series of population estimates from 1991. Because of changes in the classification and coding of causes of death from ICD-9 (used up until 1996) to ICD-10 (used from 1997 onwards) which affect the comparability of the data, the analysis reported for this indicator has been done for two time periods – 1991–1996 and 1997–2006. Data are presented in 3-year or 4-year groupings because of low numbers of deaths from assault each year.

Because of the late inclusion of a ‘not stated’ category of Indigenous status in 1998 (before which ‘not stated’ responses were included with non-Indigenous deaths), Indigenous mortality rates have been compared with the mortality rates of other Australians (which include deaths of both non-Indigenous people and deaths for which Indigenous status was not stated).

Mortality rates, rate ratios and rate differences between Indigenous and other Australians for assault over the period 1991–1993 to 1994–1996 and 1997–1999 to 2004–2006 are presented in Table 2.13.18 and Figure 2.13.5.

- Over the period 1991–1993 to 1994–1996, there were non-significant declines in recorded mortality for assault for Indigenous Australians in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined. Over the same period there were non-significant increases in mortality rates for assault for other Australians.

- Over the period 1997–1999 to 2004–2006, there were non-significant increases in the mortality rates from assault for Indigenous Australians and significant declines in mortality rates from assault for other Australians over this period.

Fluctuations in the level of Indigenous mortality over time partly reflect changing levels of coverage of Indigenous deaths and population estimates. Given the volatility in the measures of Indigenous mortality, caution should be exercised in assessing trends in Indigenous mortality over time and comparisons between jurisdictions and with the non-Indigenous population.

Table 2.13.18: Age-standardised mortality rates, rate ratios and rate differences for deaths from assault (homicide), WA, SA and NT, 1991–1993 to 1994–1996 and 1997–1999 to 2004–2006

	Deaths		No. per 100,000 ^(a)		Rate ratio ^(c)	Rate difference ^(d)
	Indigenous	Other ^(b)	Indigenous	Other ^(b)		
1991–1996						
1991–1993	78	147	23.2	1.5	15.0	21.7
1994–1996	66	171	18.1	1.7	10.6	16.4
Difference in rates ^(e)	..	..	–5.1	0.2	..	..
1997–2006						
1997–1999	39	156	9.5	1.5	6.2	7.9
2000–2003	101	171	18.3	1.2	14.9	17.1
2004–2006	47	88	10.9	0.8	13.5	10.1
Annual change ^(f)	..	..	0.2	–0.1*	1.1	0.3
% change over period ^(g)	..	..	20.0	–60.8	153.3	35.6

* Represents statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.05$ level over the periods 1991–1993 to 1994–1996 and 1997–1999 to 2004–2006.

(h) Directly age-standardised using the Australian 2001 standard population.

(i) Includes deaths of non-Indigenous people and those for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(j) Mortality rate for Indigenous Australians divided by the mortality rate for other Australians.

(k) Mortality rate for Indigenous Australians minus the mortality rate for other Australians.

(l) Mortality rate for 1994–1996 minus mortality rate for 1991–1993.

(m) Average annual change in rates, rate ratios and rate differences determined using linear regression analysis.

(n) Per cent change between 1997 and 2006 based on the average annual change over the period.

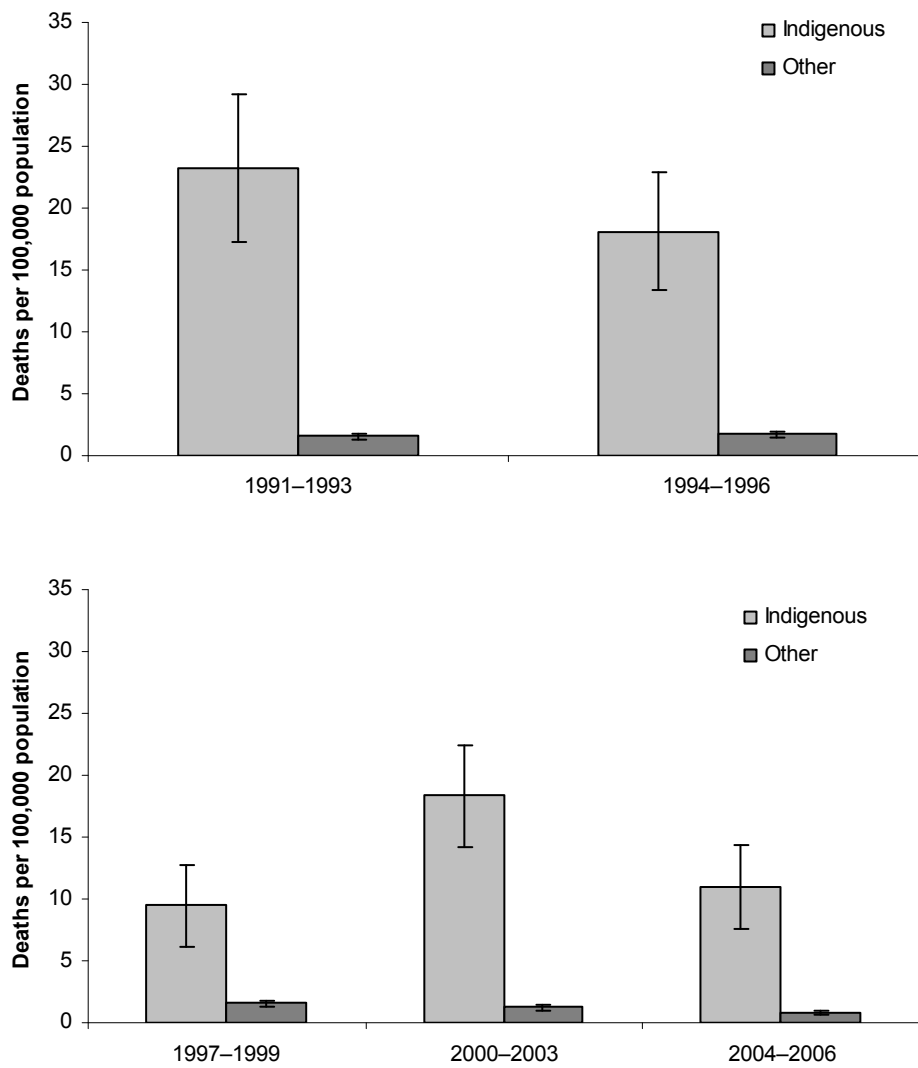
Notes

4. Data are presented in 3-year and 4-year groupings because of the small number of Indigenous deaths from assault each year.

5. The completeness of identification of Indigenous deaths can vary by age.

6. Deaths and rates presented in this table may differ from those presented in the 2006 edition of this report for comparable years because of a change from using year of occurrence of death to year of registration of death for mortality analyses.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.



Note: Because of coding changes from 1CD-9 to ICD-10 between 1996 and 1997, data from 1991-1996 cannot be strictly compared with data from 1997 onwards.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.

Figure 2.13.5: Age-standardised mortality rates from assault (homicide), by Indigenous status, 1991-1993 to 1994-1996 and 1997-1999 to 2004-2006

Additional trends analysis has been presented for Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined from 1998 to 2006 for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in Table 2.13.19 and Figure 2.13.6. Data are presented in 2- or 3-year groupings because of low numbers of deaths from assault each year. Queensland has had adequate identification of Indigenous deaths in its recording systems since 1998, and these have been compared with those of non-Indigenous Australians (excluding deaths for which Indigenous status was not stated).

- Over the period 1998–1999 to 2004–2006, there were non-significant declines in recorded mortality rates in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory combined for Indigenous Australians.
- Over the same period, there were significant declines in recorded mortality rates for non-Indigenous males, females and persons in the four jurisdictions (64% decrease).
- There was a significant decrease in the mortality rate ratios between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians over the period 1998–1999 to 2004–2006 (12% decrease), and no significant changes in the mortality rate differences over the same period.

Table 2.13.19: Age-standardised mortality rates, rate ratios and rate differences for deaths from assault (homicide), Qld, WA, SA and NT, 1998–2006

	1998–1999	2000–2001	2002–2003	2004–2006	Annual change ^(a)	% change ^(b)
Indigenous deaths per 100,000^(c)						
Males	12.4	18.9	13.8	8.1	–0.9	–56.6
Females	9.6	14.1	7.7	6.2	–0.8	–65.4
Persons	10.9	16.6	10.7	7.1	–0.8	–61.7
Non-Indigenous deaths per 100,000^(d)						
Males	1.8	1.7	1.6	0.8	–0.2*	–66.4
Females	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.5	–0.1*	–58.5
Persons	1.5	1.3	1.2	0.7	–0.1*	–63.8
Rate ratio^(e)						
Males	6.7	11.4	8.9	10.1	0.4	42.1
Females	9.1	14.7	8.3	11.9	0.1	8.2
Persons	7.5	12.7	8.6	10.7	–0.1*	–12.4
Rate difference^(f)						
Males	10.5	17.2	12.2	7.3	–0.7	–54.9
Females	8.6	13.2	6.8	5.7	–0.7	–66.2
Persons	9.4	15.3	9.4	6.4	–0.7	–61.3

* Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < 0.05$ level over the period 1998–1999 to 2004–2006.

(g) Average annual change in rates, rate ratios and rate differences determined using linear regression analysis.

(h) Per cent change between 1998 and 2006 based on the average annual change over the period.

(i) Rates have been directly age-standardised using the 2001 Australian standard population.

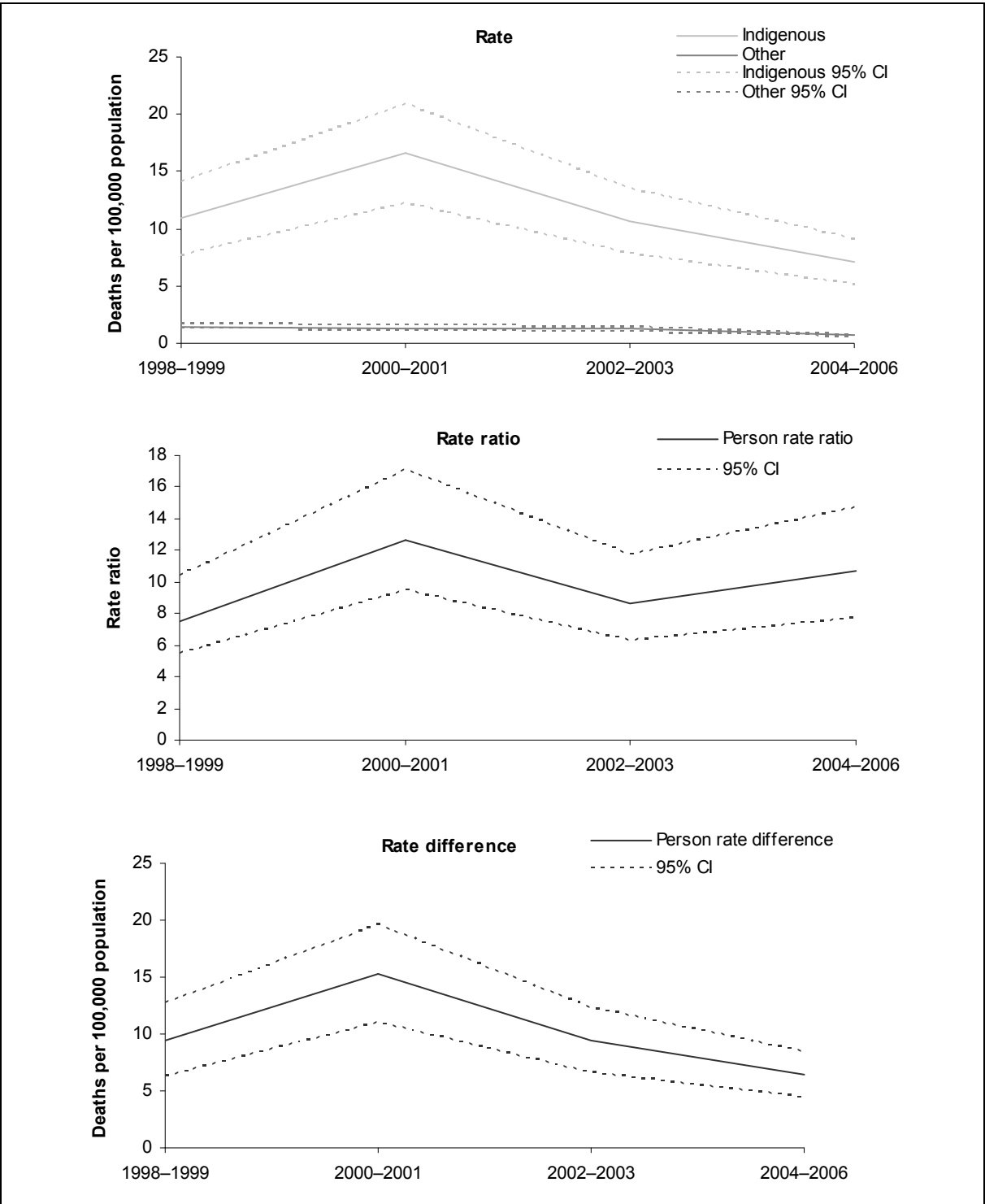
(j) Excludes deaths of those for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(k) Mortality rate for Indigenous Australians divided by the mortality rate for non-Indigenous Australians.

(l) Mortality rate for Indigenous Australians minus the mortality rate for non-Indigenous Australians.

Note: Data are presented in 3-year and 4-year groupings because of the small number of Indigenous deaths from assault each year.

Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.



Source: AIHW analysis of National Mortality Database.

Figure 2.13.6: Mortality rates, rate ratios and rate differences for deaths from assault (homicide) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Qld, WA, SA and NT, 1998-1999 to 2004-2006

Victims of homicide

The National Homicide Monitoring Program collects data on all homicides recorded in Australia. Data for the 5-year periods 1994-95 to 1998-99 and 2001-02 to 2005-06 are presented in Table 2.13.20.

- Over the 5-year period 2001-02 to 2005-06, there were 216 Indigenous victims of homicide recorded, which was higher than the number recorded for the period 1994-95 to 1998-99 (196).
- Indigenous victims represented 14% of total victims of homicide over the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 compared with 12% over the period 1994-95 to 1998-99.
- For approximately 43% of homicides in the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 in which the victim was Indigenous, the homicide involved a male offender and a male victim, and for 34% the homicide involved a male offender and a female victim.
- For approximately 83% of homicides in the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 where the victim was Indigenous, both the offender and the victim were not working. This compared with 41% of homicides where the victim was non-Indigenous.
- Domestic altercation was the most common circumstance surrounding homicides in the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 in which the victim was Indigenous (37%). Alcohol-related arguments surrounded 22% of homicides where the victim was Indigenous. The most common circumstance surrounding homicides in which the victim was non-Indigenous was other arguments (other than domestic or alcohol-related) (41%).
- For approximately 63% of homicides in which the victim was Indigenous, the homicide involved intimate partners or other family members and for 27% the homicide involved friends and acquaintances. The corresponding proportions for homicides involving non-Indigenous victims were 45% and 31% respectively.

Table 2.13.20: Victims of homicide for all jurisdictions where data are available, by Indigenous status, with selected data on circumstances surrounding the homicide, 1994–95 to 1998–99 and 2001–02 to 2005–06

	1994–95 to 1998–99 ^(a)						2001–02 to 2005–06 ^(a)					
	Indigenous victims		Non-Indigenous victims		Total victims ^(b)		Indigenous victims		Non-Indigenous victims		Total victims ^(b)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sex^(c)												
Male offender/male victim	79	41	733	55	812	53	89	43	670	54	759	52
Male offender/female victim	73	38	408	31	481	32	69	34	390	31	459	32
Female offender/male victim	34	18	139	10	173	11	40	20	127	10	167	12
Female offender/female victim	6	3	48	4	54	4	7	3	56	5	63	4
Total	192	100	1,328	100	1,520	100	205	100	1,243	100	1,448	100
Employment status^(c)												
Offender & victim both working	3	2	133	13	136	12	5	3	208	22	213	19
Neither working	135	85	516	51	651	55	134	83	394	41	528	47
Offender working only	11	7	139	14	150	13	10	6	156	16	166	15
victim working only	9	6	228	22	237	20	12	7	202	21	214	19
Total	158	100	1,016	100	1,174	100	161	100	960	100	1,121	100
Circumstance												
Domestic altercation	76	39	354	24	430	26	79	37	367	27	446	28
Alcohol-related argument	53	27	111	8	164	10	48	22	116	9	164	10
Other argument	40	20	709	48	749	45	49	23	549	41	598	38
No apparent motive/unknown	27	14	296	20	323	19	40	19	318	24	358	23
Total	196	100	1,470	100	1,666	100	216	100	1,350	100	1,566	100

(continued)

Table 2.13.20 (continued): Victims of homicide for all jurisdictions where data are available by Indigenous status, with selected data on circumstances surrounding the homicide, 1994–95 to 1998–99 and 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	1994–95 to 1998–99 ^(a)						2001–02 to 2005–06 ^(a)					
	Indigenous victims		Non-Indigenous victims		Total victims ^(b)		Indigenous victims		Non-Indigenous victims		Total victims ^(c)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Victim–offender relationship^(d)												
Intimate partners and other family	111	59	509	40	620	42	128	63	529	45	657	47
Friends & acquaintances	60	32	427	34	487	33	54	27	367	31	421	30
Strangers	6	3	249	20	255	17	16	8	207	18	223	16
Other relationship	10	5	79	6	89	6	1	0	63	5	64	5
Unknown	1	1	7	1	8	1	3	1	16	1	19	1
Total	188	100	1,271	100	1,459	100	202	100	1,182	100	1,384	100
Total^(b)	196	12	1,470	88	1,666	100	216	14	1,350	86	1,566	100

(a) Where an offender has been identified.

(b) Excludes victims where racial appearance, sex, employment status, circumstances or victim–offender relationship data were unknown.

(c) Where more than one offender, victim counted twice across categories if multiple offenders were of different sex or different employment status.

(d) Refers only to relationship between victim and first offender, where identified.

Source: AIHW analysis of Australian Institute of Criminology, National Homicide Monitoring Program, 1989–2006 data.

Data quality issues

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The NATSISS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSISS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and thus overcomes the problems inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSISS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to establish the accuracy of the estimates and differences.

Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Nevertheless, some responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions (ABS 2004a).

Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the General Social Survey. Time series comparisons are available through the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

In remote communities there were some modifications to the NATSISS content in order to accommodate language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities and help respondents understand the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built-in edit checks and sequencing.

Further information on NATSISS data quality issues can be found in the 2002 NATSISS publication (ABS 2004a).

Community safety and family violence data

The sensitive nature of many of the issues surrounding community safety could also influence responses to these questions. Any data that are self-reported are likely to underestimate circumstances in which the respondent may feel frightened or ashamed or be unwilling to admit to the data collector, such as experience of family violence involvement with the police. Any such self-reported figures are likely to underestimate the occurrence of the circumstance in question.

In addition, the NATSISS question on 'family violence' does not directly measure experience of family violence, because it asks about whether certain issues are a problem in the neighbourhood/community. However, these data do provide useful information about the social setting for family violence.

Hospital separations data

Separations

The number and pattern of hospitalisations can be affected by differing admission practices among the jurisdictions and from year to year, and differing levels and patterns of service delivery. In terms of mental health service delivery, there are a number of different service delivery models ranging from ambulatory care in community mental health services and hospitals to non-ambulatory care in hospitals and residential services.

Indigenous status question

Some jurisdictions have slightly different approaches to the collection and storage of the standard Indigenous status question and categories in their hospital collections. The 'not stated' category is missing from several collections. It is recommended that the standard wording and categories be used in all jurisdictions (AIHW 2005).

(continued)

Data quality issues (continued)

Under-identification

The incompleteness of Indigenous identification means the number of hospital separations recorded as Indigenous is an underestimate of hospitalisations involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For several years, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory reported that Indigenous status in their hospital separations data was of acceptable quality (AIHW 2007). The AIHW, however, has recently completed an assessment of the level of Indigenous under-identification in hospital data in all states and territories. Results from this assessment indicate that New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory have adequate Indigenous identification (20% or less overall under-identification of Indigenous patients) in their hospital separations data. It has therefore been recommended that reporting of Indigenous hospital separations data be limited to aggregated information from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. The proportion of the Indigenous population covered by these six jurisdictions is 96%. The following caveats have also been recommended for analysis of hospitalisation data from selected jurisdictions (ABS & AIHW 2005):

- *Interpretation of results should take into account the relative quality of the data from the jurisdictions included (currently a small degree of Indigenous under-identification in data from Western Australia and the Northern Territory and relatively marked Indigenous under-identification in data from South Australia and Victoria).*
- *Data for these six jurisdictions over-represent Indigenous populations in less urbanised and more remote locations.*
- *Hospitalisation data for these six jurisdictions are not necessarily representative of the jurisdictions not included.*

From the AIHW study it was possible to produce correction factors for the level of Indigenous under-identification in hospital data for each jurisdiction and at the national level.

Numerator and denominator

Rate and ratio calculations rely on good numerator and denominator data. The changes in the completeness of identification of Indigenous people in hospital records may take place at different rates from changes in the identification of Indigenous people in other administrative collections and population censuses. Denominators used here are sourced from Experimental estimates and projections: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009 (ABS 2004b).

Mortality data

Deaths

The mortality rate for Indigenous Australians can be influenced by identification of Indigenous deaths, late registration of deaths, and changes to death forms and/or processing systems. Because of the small size of the Indigenous population, these factors can significantly affect trends over time and between jurisdictions.

Indigenous status question

All jurisdictions comply with the standard wording for the Indigenous status question and categories for their death registration forms. However, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory all have slightly different wording from the national standard for the instruction on those with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (ABS & AIHW 2005). Although the wording is only slightly different, it would be ideal to have all jurisdictions asking the question in exactly the same way.

(continued)

Data quality issues (continued)

Under-identification

Almost all deaths in Australia are registered. However, the Indigenous status of the deceased is not always recorded or recorded correctly. The incompleteness of Indigenous identification means the number of deaths registered as Indigenous is an underestimate of deaths occurring in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (ABS 1997). As a result, the observed differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mortality are under-estimates of the true differences.

Although the identification of Indigenous deaths is incomplete in all states and territory registration systems, four jurisdictions (Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory) have been assessed by the ABS and AIHW as having adequate identification. Longer term mortality trend data are limited to three jurisdictions (South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory) with 10 years of adequate identification of Indigenous deaths in their recording systems. The quality of the time series data is also influenced by the late inclusion of a 'not stated' category for Indigenous status in 1998. Before this time, the 'not stated' responses were probably included with the non-Indigenous. The ABS calculated the implied coverage (identification) of Indigenous deaths for the period 2002–2006 using population estimates: New South Wales 45%, Victoria 32%, Queensland 51%, South Australia 62%, Western Australia 72%, Northern Territory 90%, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory were not calculated because of small numbers, Australia 55% (ABS 2007).

Note that different causes may have different levels of under-identification that differ from the 'all cause' coverage estimates. Note also that the quality of the cause of death data depends on every step of the process of recording and registering deaths (including the documentation available at each step of the process) from certification to coding of cause of death. There are also current concerns about data quality for causes of death especially relating to external causes of death to all Australians (not just Indigenous) (ABS 2006).

Numerator and denominator

Rate and ratio calculations rely on good numerator and denominator data. The changes in the completeness of identification of Indigenous people in death records may take place at different rates from changes in the identification of Indigenous people in other administrative collections and population censuses. Denominators used here are sourced from Experimental estimates and projections: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009 (ABS 2004b).

Cause of death coding

Causes of death based on the tenth revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). Mortality coding using ICD-10 was introduced into Australia from 1 January 1997.

National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP)

The NHMP was established in 1990 and reports annually by financial year on all homicides recorded in Australia. The Indigenous status of the victim is based on police identification of 'racial appearance', and therefore will underestimate the level of homicide involving Indigenous persons. In addition, data for Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory are not reported. Nevertheless, the NHMP includes useful information on the circumstances surrounding homicides involving Indigenous persons.

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