

Potentially Avoidable Mortality among First Nations in Alberta

Age Standardized Rates per 1,000 population by First Nations status, preventable vs. treatable, 2000 to 2014

Premature mortality (death under the age of 75) is a common indicator of population health status.^{1,2} In a previous Health Trends Alberta, we reported avoidable premature mortality rates in Alberta by sex: males had higher rates than females for both preventable and treatable premature mortality.

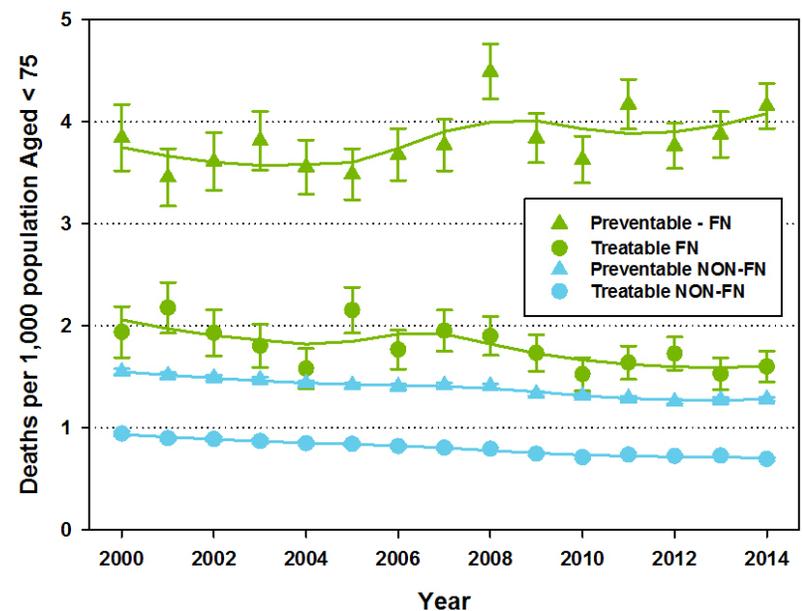
Preventable mortality refers to deaths caused by disease or injury that could potentially have been prevented, while treatable mortality refers to deaths that could have been potentially avoided by effective screening and treatment (hereafter referred to as preventable and treatable mortality). Examples of preventable causes of death include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and motor vehicle injuries. Examples of treatable causes of death are breast cancer, hypertensive heart disease, and thyroid disorders.

Today's edition of *First Nations – Health Trends Alberta*³ describes age standardized rates of avoidable mortality, both preventable and treatable, among First Nations and non-First Nations between 2000 and 2014.

Preventable premature mortality rates high among First Nations

From 2000 to 2014, First Nations had higher rates of both preventable and treatable premature mortality than non-First Nations. The average annual preventable mortality rate among First Nations people (3.8 per 1,000) was approximately 2.7 times higher than the rate among non-First Nations people (1.4 per 1,000); for treatable premature mortality, rates were on average 2.2 times higher compared to non-First Nations (1.8 vs. 0.8 per 1,000).

Over this time period among First Nations under 75, the ten most common causes of potentially avoidable mortality classified as 'preventable' were: i) suicide (10.0 per cent), ii) poisoning (9.4 per cent), iii) ischemic heart disease (8.1 per cent), iv) motor vehicle injuries (6.2 per cent), v) lung cancer (6.0 per cent), vi) alcohol liver disease (5.8 per cent), vii) alcohol-related disorders (4.3 per cent), viii) COPD (3.2 per cent), ix) assault by a sharp object (2.6 per cent), and x) fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver (2.2 per cent). These ten causes accounted for 58 per cent of all preventable premature deaths among First Nations.



1 https://secure.cih.ca/free_products/health_indicators_2012_en.pdf

2 <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/394495>

3 This is the 20th in a series of First Nations-specific Health Trends compiled in collaboration by Alberta Health and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC). To suggest future topics, please contact the AFNIGC (communications@afnigc.ca; 403-539-5775).