Causes of Death

Premature death

Because leading causes of death vary by age, mortality rates by underlying cause alone do not reflect the full societal impact of premature death. Estimating years of potential life lost (YPLL) is a way of quantifying the cost of early death by measuring the number of years between age at death and a standard age such as 75 years.

During 2012, 228,909 years of potential life were lost before age 75 years among Oregon residents. The average potential years of life lost were 60% higher for deaths among males than among females (140,905 vs. 88,004).

Injury (both unintentional and intentional combined) ranks third among causes of death, but first among causes of YPLL. While injuries accounted for 7.9% of all Oregon resident deaths in 2012, they accounted for 25.3% of total YPLL. During the past decade, YPLL due to all causes remained relatively stable.

About the Data: Data source is Oregon Death Certificate Data. Data are based on the underlying cause of death listed on Oregon death certificate. Years of potential life lost for each Oregon death is calculated by subtracting the age at death from 75 years. For example, a person who dies at age 20 years would contribute 55 years to total YPLL, whereas a person who dies at age 80 would contribute nothing to YPLL.

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