

Preventing premature death is one of the most important goals of health care and of public health. Examining the leading causes of death and considering the cost and effectiveness of available prevention methods are, together, a first step toward appropriately allocating scarce health care and public health resources.

The most important causes of premature death are different at different ages and for men and women. This report presents the leading causes of death for men and women in seven age groups (<1 year, 1-14 years, 15-24 years, 24-44 years, 45-64 years, 65-84 years, 85 years and over) during the five-year period, 1991-1995. For selected causes, trends are examined for the ten-year period, 1986-1995, and rates are presented by local health department districts.

Summary

The major findings from this analysis of the leading causes of death in Utah are:

- At all ages, boys and men have higher death rates overall and from most specific causes than girls and women.
- While injuries and suicide are the main threats for younger people, heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases become the main dangers for older people.
- Motor vehicle crashes and suicide are leading causes of death for boys and men from age 15 to age 44.
- Several notable trends were observed, including:
 - Deaths from HIV/AIDS increased dramatically for young men aged 25-44 years.
 - Deaths from motor vehicle crashes increased for boys and men aged 15-24 years.
 - Heart disease death rates decreased for Utahns aged 45-64 and 65-84 years; the decrease was greater for men.