

27 February 2026
CAUSES OF DEATH
2024

IN 2024, DEATHS FROM DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM INCREASED MORE SIGNIFICANTLY

In 2024, 119,046 people died in the country, 0.1% more than in 2023 (118,947): 118,396 were residents in the country (99.5% of the total) and 650 lived abroad (0.5% of the total).

Diseases of the circulatory system and malignant neoplasms accounted for almost half of the mortality in 2024, having been at the origin of, respectively, 30,055 and 28,280 deaths of residents in Portugal (25.4% and 23.9% of the total mortality of residents in Portugal).

In the group of diseases of the circulatory system, cerebrovascular diseases, also known as strokes, and ischemic heart diseases stood out, causing 9,007 deaths of residents (7.6% of total deaths of residents) and 6,470 deaths (5.5% of total).

In the group of malignant neoplasms, 4,488 deaths caused by malignant neoplasms of the trachea, bronchi and lung stood out, which represented 3.8% of the total deaths of residents. Malignant neoplasms of the colon, rectum and anus accounted for 3.0% of resident mortality in 2024, with 3,564 deaths (2.1% less than in the previous year).

Diseases of the respiratory system caused 14,022 resident deaths, 7.0% more than in the previous year and leading to an increase in the mortality rate from 123.9 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023 to 131.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024. About 26% of the increase in deaths caused by diseases of the respiratory system was associated with the increase in deaths from pneumonia, with 5,283 deaths in 2024.

1. MORTALITY BY CAUSES OF DEATH

Statistics Portugal releases today the statistical results on mortality by causes of death in Portugal in 2024, according to 55 groups of causes of death based on the «OECD Health Data» list of the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD). This information considers the codification of death certificates carried out by the Directorate-General of Health until Jan 28, 2026.

The indicators include the main groups of causes of death by disease, especially diseases of the circulatory system, malignant neoplasms, diseases of the respiratory system, and endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases, as well as deaths from external causes of injury or poisoning.

For each cause of death is indicated the number of deaths by sex, age group, and place of residence of the deceased, as well as some derived indicators: sex ratio at death, average age at the time of death, crude death rate, standardized death rate and average number of potential years of life lost, among others.

This information is available using the Tree-navigation available at Statistics Portugal website, https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_bdc_tree&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2, and choosing the Health/Causes of death. The indicators for the main causes of death are presented in this press release.

2. DISEASES OF THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM AND MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST HALF OF TOTAL MORTALITY

In 2024, 119,046 people died in the country, 0.1% more than in 2023 (118,947) and 6.0% more than before the COVID-19 pandemic (112,334 in 2019). Of the total deaths in the country in 2024, 118,396 were residents of Portugal (99.5% of the total) and 650 of residents abroad (0.5% of the total).

Considering only the deaths of residents, deaths from diseases of the circulatory system and from malignant neoplasms accounted for 49.3% in 2024, close to the values of 2022 (48.9%) and 2023 (49.2%).

Figure 1

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF DEATHS FROM SOME CAUSES OF DEATH, PORTUGAL, 2023 AND 2024

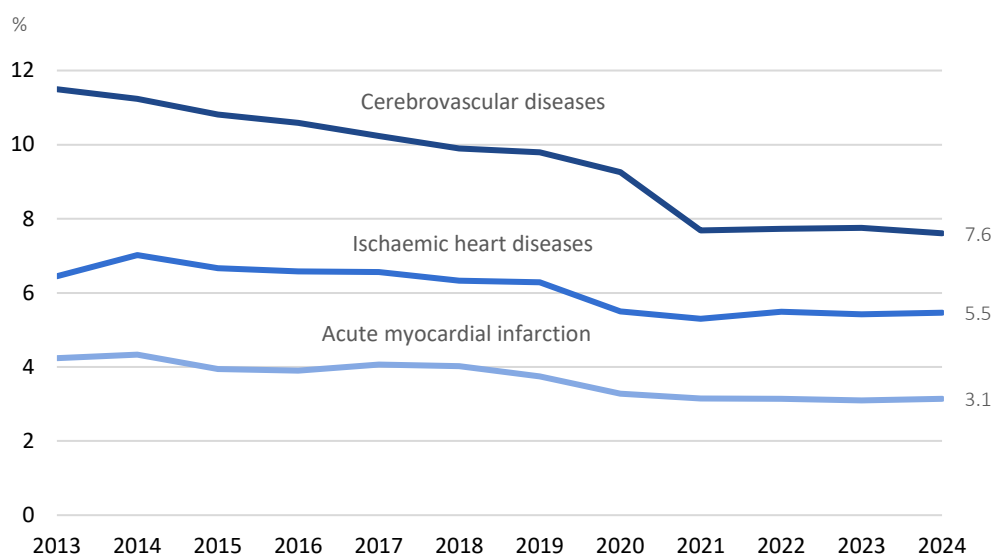
	Number of deaths			Proportion of deaths		
	2023	2024	Variation	2023	2024	Difference
	No.	No.	%	%	%	pp
Diseases of the circulatory system	30 059	30 055	0.0	25.4	25.4	0.0
Cerebrovascular diseases	9 177	9 007	-1.9	7.8	7.6	-0.1
Ischaemic heart diseases	6 414	6 470	0.9	5.4	5.5	0.0
Acute myocardial infarction	3 664	3 721	1.6	3.1	3.1	0.0
Malignant neoplasms	28 166	28 280	0.4	23.8	23.9	0.1
Malignant neoplasms of trachea, bronchi and lung	4 490	4 488	0.0	3.8	3.8	0.0
Malignant neoplasms of colon, rectum and anus	3 639	3 564	-2.1	3.1	3.0	-0.1
Diseases of the respiratory system	13 110	14 022	7.0	11.1	11.8	0.8
Pneumonia	5 042	5 283	4.8	4.3	4.5	0.2

3. CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASES CONTINUED TO CAUSE THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DEATHS, DESPITE THE DECREASE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Diseases of the circulatory system caused 30,055 deaths of residents in Portugal, a number very close to that observed in the previous year (30,059 in 2023), resulting in a mortality rate of 281.0 per 100,000 inhabitants, lower than in the previous year (284,1).

figure 2

PROPORTION OF DEATHS FROM CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASES, ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASES AND ACUTE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION, PORTUGAL, 2013-2024



Of all diseases of the circulatory system, cerebrovascular diseases, also known as strokes, continued to stand out in 2024, having caused the highest number of deaths in the country (9,007 deaths, that is, 7.6% of the total deaths), despite the decrease of 1.9% compared to the previous year. The mortality rate from cerebrovascular diseases was 84.2 deaths of residents per 100,000 inhabitants, lower than in 2023 (86.7).

In 2024, stroke deaths continued to affect mainly women, with a ratio of 78.7 male deaths per 100 female deaths, which, despite the relative improvement in the female condition compared to the previous year (79.7).

Of the total number of deaths due to cerebrovascular diseases, 93.0% were residents aged 65 and over and 81.8% aged 75 and over; 982, or 10.9%, died under 70 years of age. In 2024, 9,710 potential years of life were lost due to cerebrovascular diseases, a figure above the previous year (9,420). The average number of potential years of life lost was 9.9 years (9.3 in the previous year).

4. 0.9% MORE DEATHS DUE TO ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASES

Still in the set of diseases of the circulatory system, there were more deaths of residents due to ischemic heart diseases: 6,470 deaths, 0.9% more than in the previous year, and representing 5.5% of the total deaths of residents in 2024 (5.4% in 2023).

The crude mortality rate of residents from ischemic heart diseases was 60.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024, slightly lower than the previous year (60.6). In 2024, these deaths mainly affected men, with a ratio of 157.9 male deaths per 100 female deaths, higher than in 2023 (146.9).

In 2024, of the total deaths of residents due to ischemic heart diseases, 80.5% were of people aged 65 and over and 62.2% of people aged 75 and over; 1,811, or 28.0%, died under the age of 70. This year, 19,628 potential years of life were lost due to ischemic heart diseases, more than in the previous year (18,937), resulting from the increase in the number of deaths under 70 years of age due to this cause. The average number of potential years of life lost was 10.8 years (10.8 in 2023).

5. 1.6% MORE DEATHS FROM ACUTE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION

In 2024, there were 3,721 deaths of residents due to acute myocardial infarction, representing 3.1% of total mortality and increasing by 1.6% compared to the previous year (3,664 deaths).

The crude mortality rate due to acute myocardial infarction, for residents, was 34.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, with significantly higher values in the age group of 45 years and over (cf. page 6, Figure 3.D).

Deaths of residents due to acute myocardial infarction mainly affected men, with a ratio of 172.8 deaths of men per 100 of women, higher than that observed in the previous year (156.4).

Of the total number of deaths of residents due to acute myocardial infarction in 2024, 77.3% were of persons aged 65 years and over and 57.6% of persons aged 75 and over; 1,196, or 32.1%, died under 70 years of age.

In that year, 13,175 potential years of life were lost due to acute myocardial infarction, more than in the previous year (12,593), resulting from the increase in the number of deaths under 70 years of age due to this cause. The average number of potential years of life lost was 11.0 years (11.0 in 2023).

6. 0.4% MORE DEATHS CAUSED BY MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS

Considering only resident deaths, malignant neoplasms caused 28,280 deaths in 2024, 0.4% more than in the previous year (28,166 deaths in 2023). This set of diseases accounted for 23.9% of resident deaths in 2024.

In 2024, the mortality rate of residents due to malignant neoplasms was 264.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, much higher in the case of men (324.4) than in women (209.6). Also in 2024, 100,547 potential years of life were lost, which is lower than the result of 102,901 years of life lost in 2023.

Of malignant neoplasms, 4,488 deaths caused by malignant neoplasms of the trachea, bronchi and lung stood out (4,490 in 2023), which accounted for 3.8% of the total deaths of residents. These neoplasms continued to affect men and women very differently, with crude mortality rates of 63.7 deaths per 100,000 men and 22.0 deaths per 100,000 women, resulting in a ratio of 264.9 deaths of men per 100 of women. The crude mortality rate due to



malignant neoplasms of the trachea, bronchi and lung was 42.0 deaths per 100,000 residents, with substantially higher values for those aged 45 and over (cf. page 6, Figure 3.E).

Malignant neoplasms of the colon, rectum, and anus accounted for 3.0% of resident mortality in 2024, with 3,564 deaths (2.1% less than in the previous year). These neoplasms continued to affect mainly men, with a ratio of 136.0 deaths of men per 100 of women. The crude mortality rate due to malignant neoplasms of the colon, rectum, and anus was 33.3 deaths per 100,000 residents, with higher values among people aged 55 and over (cf. page 6, Figure 3.F).

7. 7.0% MORE DEATHS FROM DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

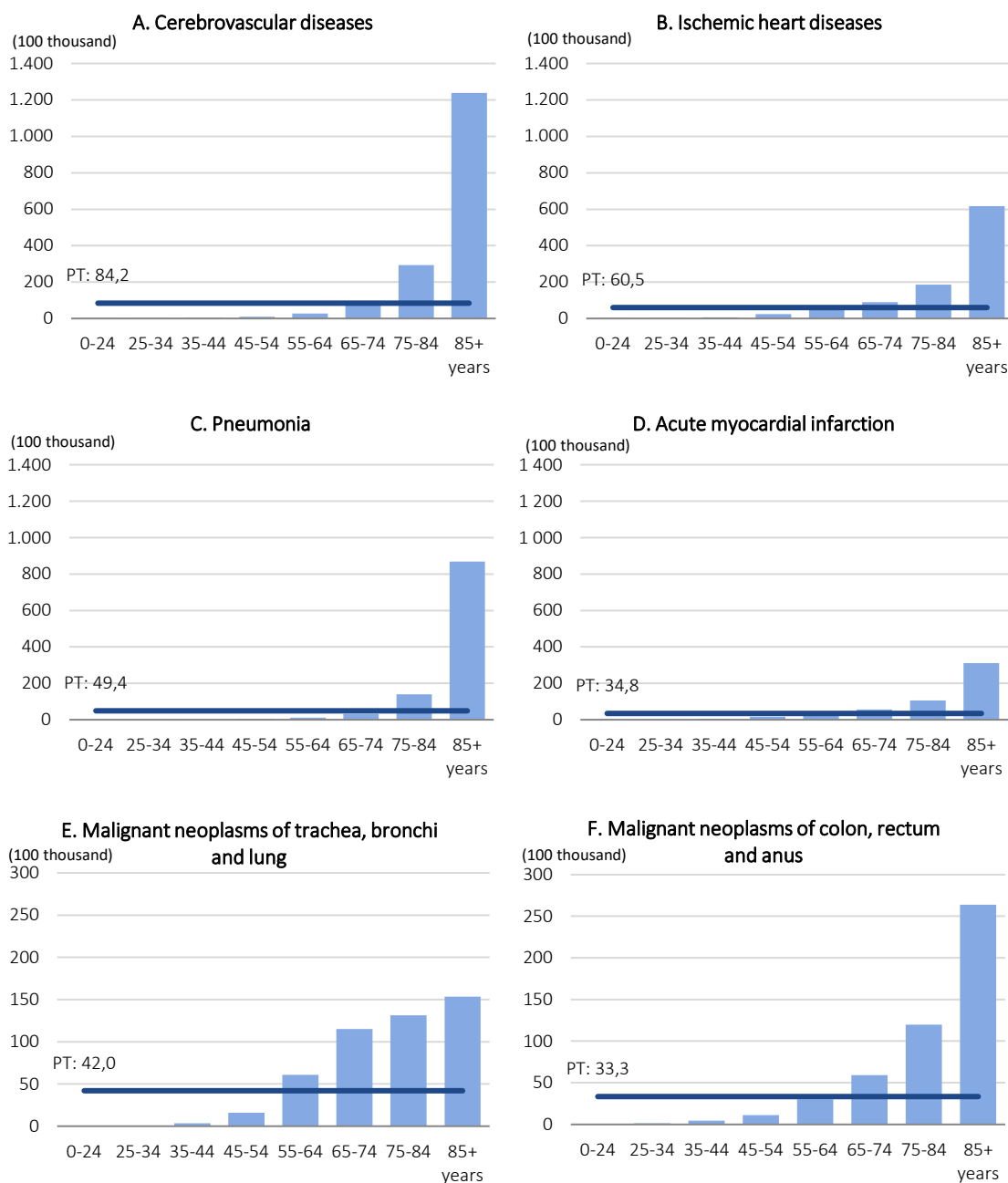
In 2024, diseases of the respiratory system caused 14,022 resident deaths, 7.0% more than in the previous year. The mortality rate from this cause of death increased from 123.9 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023 to 131.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024. It should be noted that, following World Health Organization (WHO) standards, deaths from COVID-19 were not classified or included in the set of respiratory diseases, constituting a separate set of diseases (see technical note). The average number of potential years of life lost due to diseases of the respiratory system decreased from 10.9 in 2023 to 9.4 in 2024.

Around 26% of the increase in deaths caused by diseases of the respiratory system was associated with the increase in deaths from pneumonia, with 5,283 deaths in 2024, which represented 4.5% of the mortality that occurred in 2024 (4.3% in 2023), and result from an increase of 4.8% deaths compared to the previous year. The crude pneumonia mortality rate was 49.4 deaths per 100,000 residents, with substantially higher values among people aged 65 and over (cf. page 6, Figure 3.C).

In 2024, deaths from pneumonia hit men the hardest, with a ratio of 104.2 men per 100 women.

Figure 3

CRUDE MORTALITY RATES FROM SOME DISEASES PER 100,000 INHABITANTS, BY AGE GROUP, PORTUGAL, 2024



TECHNICAL NOTE

Data on deaths from causes of death result from the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. This is information subject to civil registration and collected from the Civil Registry Office through the Integrated System of Civil Registration and Identification (SIRIC) and the Death Certificate Information System (SICO). The General Directorate of Health collaborates with INE by identifying the underlying cause of death and the cause of external death, when there is, and subsequently to the codification of causes of death according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The results of the statistics for 2024 presented in this press release were obtained based on the information of the Information System of Death Certificates available until January 28, 2026. Following WHO standards, deaths due to COVID-19 were not included in the diseases of the respiratory system, constituting a specific category of diseases. In ICD-10, deaths due to COVID-19 were classified according to codes for special uses, corresponding to the following set of codes: U00 to U99.

The 2019 version of ICD-10 was adopted for the 2023 data onwards. Consequently, some conditions can no longer be considered a underlying cause of death and are now coded under 'Ill-defined causes or causes classified elsewhere', while disorders of the foetus and newborn are no longer coded as an underlying cause of death under category P00-P04 (Foetus and newborn affected by maternal factors and complications of pregnancy, labour and childbirth), and it is expected that from 2019 to 2020 there will be a decrease to zero of the P00-P04 codes with an increase in the P07-P08, P20-P21, P28. 5, P95 and P96.9.

SOME CONCEPTS

Potential years of life lost (PVPA): Number of years that theoretically a given population stops living if they die prematurely (before the age of 70). It is the result of the sum of the products of the number of deaths occurred in each age group (O_i) by the difference (A_i) between the upper limit considered (70 years) and the midpoint of the class interval corresponding to each age group.

$$APVP = \sum_i O_i \times A_i$$

Underlying cause of death: Illness or injury that initiates the chain of pathological events leading to death, or circumstances of the accident or act of violence that produce the fatal injury.

External cause: Circumstance in which a particular injury, intoxication or adverse effect occurs.

Average age at death: Quotient between the sum of the product of each midpoint of the age group by the number of observations in each age group and the total number of observations.



Average number of potential years of life lost: Quotient between the number of potential years of life lost and the number of deaths under 70 years of age.

Sex ratio at death: Quotient between male and female deaths per 100 women.

Crude mortality rate: Number of deaths observed during a certain period of time, usually a calendar year, due to a certain cause of death, referred to the average population of that period (estimated in number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants).