



LEADING CAUSES OF PREMATURE DEATH

ORANGE COUNTY HEALTH CARE AGENCY
RESEARCH & PLANNING



Of the 17,035 deaths that occurred among Orange County residents in 2010, over a third (37%) were premature – to people less than 75 years of age. These 6,296 premature deaths accounted for a total of 107,398 years of potential life lost (YPLL-75) before the age of 75. This premature loss of life is a critical public health concern, as it is often due to unhealthy behaviors such as poor diet, physical inactivity, alcohol abuse and tobacco use, and thus largely preventable. To better identify those at risk and prevent such loss, this analysis examined premature death in terms of YPLL-75 by gender, age, race/ethnicity, and geography – where people live in the county.

YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST

The leading causes of premature death highlight areas where health care professionals and the community might make a greater impact in preventing premature loss of life. Cancer and heart disease accounted for nearly half (47%) of all premature deaths as measured by total YPLL-75. Unintentional injuries, suicide, and alcoholic liver disease round out the top five causes of premature death in Orange County.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PREMATURE DEATH

Males had higher rates of premature death compared to females for most of the leading causes of premature death:

- Nearly half (45%) of all deaths in males occurred before age 75, compared to only 29% of deaths in females

- Males had nearly four times higher premature death rates for heart disease and homicide compared to females

- Most premature cancer deaths in males were due to lung cancer, while for females breast cancer was the main contributor to premature cancer deaths

AGE DIFFERENCES IN PREMATURE DEATH

Unintentional injuries were the #1 cause of premature death for the three youngest age groups (1-14, 15-24, & 25-44). For children (1-14), motor vehicle crashes were the primary contributor to unintentional injury deaths, while accidental poisoning/drug overdose were the main cause of unintentional injury deaths for both 15-24 and 25-44 year old age groups. For the two older age groups (45-64 & 65-74) the leading cause of premature death was cancer, predominantly lung cancer for both age groups.

LEADING CAUSES OF PREMATURE DEATH

Pre-mature Death Rank	Leading Causes of Premature Death (before age 75 years) 2010	Number of Premature Deaths	Years of potential life lost (YPLL-75)	Overall Death Rank
	All Causes - Premature Death	6,296	107,398	
1	Cancer	2,248	31,867	2
2	Heart Disease	1,133	16,211	1
3	Unintentional Injuries	471	14,475	6
4	Suicide	238	7,221	10
5	Liver Disease	251	4,792	9
6	Stroke	245	3,636	3
7	Diabetes	213	2,949	8
8	Homicide	59	2,369	18
9	Chronic Lower Respiratory Dis.	215	1,918	5
10	Congenital Disorders	36	1,420	20

LEADING CAUSES OF PREMATURE DEATH (YPLL-75) BY AGE GROUP

Age Group	#1 Cause	#2 Cause	#3 Cause	#4 Cause	#5 Cause
1-14 years old	Unintentional Injuries	Cancer	Congenital Disorders	Heart Disease*	Septicemia*
15-24 years old	Unintentional Injuries	Suicide	Cancer	Homicide	Congenital Disorders
25-44 years old	Unintentional Injuries	Cancer	Heart Disease	Suicide	Liver Disease
45-64 years old	Cancer	Heart Disease	Unintentional Injuries	Liver Disease	Suicide
65-74 years old	Cancer	Heart Disease	CLRD	Stroke	Diabetes

* YPLL-75 might be unstable due to small number of premature deaths.

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN PREMATURE DEATH

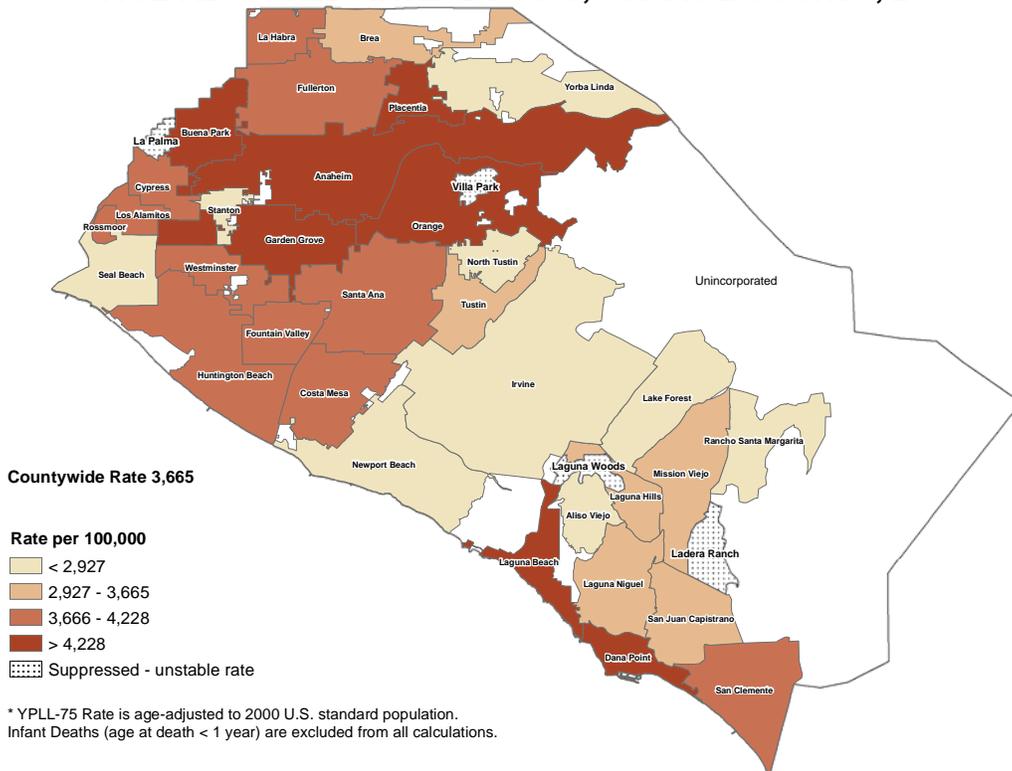
Several notable disparities in premature deaths were also observed for different racial/ethnic groups in Orange County. Black residents had the highest premature mortality rate (YPLL-75: 7,288 per 100,000 population) overall. Whites had the second highest rate at 4,367 followed by Hispanics (3,256), and then Asian/Pacific Islanders (2,371). Each race/ethnic group in the OC had the unenviable distinction of having the highest YPLL-75 rates for at least two of the leading causes of death. Compared to other race/ethnic groups:

- Whites had higher premature death rates due to unintentional injury, suicide, and respiratory diseases
- Asian/Pacific Islanders had higher premature death rates due to stroke and viral hepatitis
- Hispanics had higher premature death rates due to liver disease and diabetes
- Blacks had higher premature death rates due to both cancer and heart disease

GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN PREMATURE DEATH

The highest rates of premature death (as measured by YPLL-75 rates) tended to occur for residents in the north and central cities (e.g., Buena Park, Orange, Garden Grove, Anaheim, Placentia) as well as a few cities in south county (e.g., Dana Point, Laguna Beach, San Clemente). The four cities/areas with the lowest premature mortality rates included: Irvine, Aliso Viejo, Seal Beach, and Yorba Linda. The OC rate was 3,665 per 100,000; 22% lower than the state and 38% lower than the national rate of premature death.

YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 75 (YPLL-75) AGE-ADJUSTED RATE* BY CITY, ORANGE COUNTY, 2010



After cancer and heart disease, unintentional injury (primarily accidental poisoning/drug overdose) was the third leading cause of premature death in OC as measured by YPLL-75. Such accidental deaths were one of the top three causes of premature death for 27 cities. Importantly, unintentional deaths, primarily due to poisoning/drug overdose, was ranked as the #2 contributor to total YPLL-75 for 12 cities/areas and the #1 cause of such premature death for two cities (i.e., Dana Point and San Juan Capistrano).

CONCLUSIONS

While Orange County has lower premature mortality rates compared to the nation and state of California, notable disparities and risk factors were identified for some of our residents. We all have a role to play in promoting more healthful behaviors, such as regular physical activity and a healthful diet, and we must continue our efforts around smoking cessation and the prevention/treatment of drug and alcohol abuse in order to further reduce premature deaths in our county.