

MORTALITY IN TENNESSEE

General Mortality

- The crude death rate for the Tennessee population in 1997 was 979.5 deaths per 100,000 population. This was 1.3% higher than the 1996 rate (966). Comparing 1997 rates for black and whites by gender, black males registered the highest crude death rate (1,092.1 per 100,000), followed by white males (1,024.9), white females (952.4) and black females (892.6).
- The age-adjusted death rate for the Tennessee population in 1997 was 548.5 deaths per 100,000 population. This was 14% higher than the U.S. rate. Respective age-adjusted death rates for whites and blacks in Tennessee were 508.8 and 818.8. Black males had an age-adjusted death rate of 1103.1, which was 65%, 78% and 189% higher than the respective rates for white males, black females, and white females.
- White females registered lower age-specific death rates in 1997 than black females across the age spectrum. The smallest differential occurred at ages 15-19 years (44.5 per 100,000 for white females and 49.4 per 100,000 for black females). Age-specific death rates for black males generally were substantially higher than corresponding rates for white males. But at ages 85 years and older, there was a reversal, with rates for black males (18,700.9 per 100,000) being lower than the corresponding rate for whites (19,116.9). This could represent a real finding related to selective survival among black males or be merely an artifact of more misreporting of age among the oldest black males compared to their white counterparts.
- Life expectancy at birth represents the average number of years a newborn could be expected to live assuming persistence of prevailing mortality conditions. In 1997 life expectancy at birth for the Tennessee population was 74.8 years, the same as in 1996. This compares with the 1997 figure for the U.S. population of 76.5 years.
- In 1997, life expectancy for females in Tennessee was 78.3 years and 71.1 years for males. Respective figures for white females, black females, white males and black males were 79.2, 73.1, 72.2 and 64.3 years. Corresponding figures for the U.S. were 79.9, 74.7, 74.3 and 67.2 years. Life expectancy at age 25 years was 55.1 years for white females compared with 49.9 years for black females, and 48.8 years and 42.1 years for white and black males, respectively. Corresponding figures for the U.S. were 55.8, 51.4, 50.6 and 44.7 years.
- Among elderly males, there is an observed mortality crossover. In contrast to life expectancy at young ages, that for black males surpassed that for white males at ages 80 and 85 years. In 1997, black males at age 80 had a remaining expected lifetime of 7.0 years compared to 6.9 years for their white counterparts. The differential was wider at age 85, with an expected 5.4 years of life remaining for black males compared with 5.1 years for white males. Similar race differentials in