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# Methods and conventions

Details of methods used in particular sections of the report are included in the text and boxes, and in footnotes to figures and tables. Some general methods and conventions are described here.

## Effects of rounding

Entries in columns and rows of tables may not add to the totals shown, because of rounding. Unless otherwise stated, derived values are calculated using unrounded numbers.

## Age standardisation

This is a method of removing the influence of age when comparing populations with different age structures—either different populations at one time or the same population at different times. For this report, as for the previous three editions, the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001 has been used as the standard population. The same population was used for males and females to allow valid comparison of age-standardised rates between the sexes. For some international comparisons, the European and/or World Standard Populations have been used. These three populations are summarised in Table A1.

Two different methods of age standardisation can be used: direct and indirect. These are described in more detail below.

### Direct age standardisation

This is the most common method of age-standardisation, and is used in this report for prevalence, hospitalisations and most deaths data. This method is generally used when the populations under study are large and the age-specific rates are reliable. The calculation of direct age-standardised rates has three steps:

Step 1: Calculate the age-specific rate for each age group.

Step 2: Calculate the expected number of cases in each age group by multiplying the age-specific rate by the corresponding standard population for each age group.

Step 3: Sum the expected number of cases in each age group and divide this sum by the total of the standard population to give the age-standardised rate.

### Indirect age standardisation

In situations where populations are small or where there is some uncertainty about the stability of age-specific rates, indirect standardisation is used. This effectively removes the influence of different age structures, but does not provide a measure of prevalence or mortality in terms of a rate. Rather, the summary measure is a ratio of the number of observed cases compared with the number that would be expected if the age-specific rates of the standard population applied in the population under study. Indirect standardisation is typically used in this report for prevalence and mortality by area of residence or socioeconomic status. Calculation of these ratios has the following steps:

Step 1: Calculate the age-specific rates for each age group in the standard population.

Step 2: Apply these age-specific rates to the number of people in each age group of the population under study, and sum these to derive the total expected number of cases in that population.

Step 3: Sum the observed cases in the population under study and divide this number by the expected number derived in step 2. This is the standardised mortality/prevalence ratio (SMR or SPR).

An SMR/SPR of 1 indicates the same number of observed cases as were expected, suggesting rates in the two populations are similar. An SMR/SPR greater than 1 indicates more cases were observed than were expected, suggesting rates in the population under study are higher than in the standard population.

**Table A1: Age composition of the Australian population at 30 June 2001, and of European and World Standard Populations**

Age group (years)	Australia, 30 June 2001	European Standard	World Standard
0	253,031	1,600	2,400
1–4	1,029,326	6,400	9,600
5–9	1,351,664	7,000	10,000
10–14	1,353,177	7,000	9,000
15–19	1,352,745	7,000	9,000
20–24	1,302,412	7,000	8,000
25–29	1,407,081	7,000	8,000
30–34	1,466,615	7,000	6,000
35–39	1,492,204	7,000	6,000
40–44	1,479,257	7,000	6,000
45–49	1,358,594	7,000	6,000
50–54	1,300,777	7,000	5,000
55–59	1,008,799	6,000	4,000
60–64	822,024	5,000	4,000
65–69	682,513	4,000	3,000
70–74	638,380	3,000	2,000
75–79	519,356	2,000	1,000
80–84	330,050	1,000	500
85 and over	265,235	1,000	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,413,240</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>

Sources: ABS 2003; WHO 1996.

## Average annual rates of change

Average annual rates of change or growth rates have been calculated as geometric rates:

$$\text{Average rate of change} = \left( \left( \frac{P_n}{P_o} \right)^{\frac{1}{N}} - 1 \right) \times 100$$

where  $P_n$  = value in later time period

$P_o$  = value in earlier time period

$N$  = number of years between the two time periods.

## Classification of diseases

The classification of deaths follows the 10th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (WHO 1992). Diseases treated in hospitals and the procedures performed during a hospital stay are classified using the 4th edition of the International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM) (NCCH 2004).

## Presenting dates and time spans

Periods based on full calendar years (1 January to 31 December) are written as, for example, 2001 for one year. When there are two or more calendar years in the period, the first and final years are written in full. For example, 2008–2009 is a two calendar-year span and 2007–2009 covers three calendar years.

Periods based on financial years (1 July to 30 June, as with hospital statistics) are written with a second number which is abbreviated: for example, 2006–07 for one financial year, 2006–08 for two and 2006–09 for three. A longer span of financial years is written as ‘In the 10-year period from 1998–09 to 2007–08...’.

Some surveys may be based on other 12-month spans—for example, the general practice BEACH survey is based on collection periods from 1 April to 30 March. These are presented as for financial years; for example, 2001–02 would be a ‘year’ or 12-month period.

## Data subject to revision

This report draws data from a range of administrative and survey datasets, all of which are subject to change. Such changes may arise from the:

- nature of the data collection—for example, notifiable diseases are based on a ‘real-time’ collection of reported cases, and the counts and rates could change daily
- data being updated on a regular cycle—for example, childhood immunisation rates are calculated each quarter
- data being revised as part of a program of maintenance and updates—for example, from 2007 data onwards the ABS will be revising cause-of-death data using information pertaining to coroners’ cases that was not available at the time of original processing
- data being revised because of discovered errors or anomalies.

Wherever possible, the latest version of a dataset has been used; in cases where the data change frequently, the date of the release is noted in the text or table.

## Symbols

\$	Australian dollars, unless otherwise specified
—	nil or rounded to zero
%	per cent
g	gram
kg	kilogram
'000	thousands
m	million
mm Hg	millimetres of mercury
mmol/L	millimoles per litre
n.a.	not available
..	not applicable
..	(for Chapter 9 only) trend data unavailable/not clear
nec	not elsewhere classified
n.p.	not published by the data source
>	more than
<	less than
≥	more than or equal to
≤	less than or equal to
*	value subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes and/or the relative standard error is 25% to 50%
**	value subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes and/or the relative standard error is more than 50%
	supplementary table available online

## References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2003. Australian demographic statistics, September quarter 2002. ABS cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.
- NCCH (National Centre for Classification in Health) 2004. The international statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision, Australian modification (ICD-10-AM). 4th edition. Sydney: University of Sydney.
- WHO (World Health Organization) 1992. International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision, volumes 1 and 2. Geneva: WHO.
- WHO 1996. World health statistics annual, 1995. Geneva: WHO.

# Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCMIS	Aged and Community Care Management Information System
ACFI	Aged Care Funding Instrument
ACHI	Australian Classification of Health Interventions
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AHCA	Australian Health Care Agreement
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANCNPAS	Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey
ANZDATA	Australia and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry
AODTS-NMDS	Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set
AR-DRG	Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Group
ARF	acute rheumatic fever
ART	assisted reproduction technology
AUDIT	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test
AusDiab	Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study
BEACH	Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health
BMI	body mass index
CABG	coronary artery bypass grafting
CHAP	Comprehensive Health Assessment Program
CHD	coronary heart disease
CI	confidence interval
CKD	chronic kidney disease
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
CURF	confidentialised unit record file
CVD	cardiovascular disease
DALY	disability-adjusted life year
DoHA	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
DVA	Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs
eGFR	estimated glomerular filtration rate
ESKD	end-stage kidney disease
FOBT	faecal occult blood test

FTE	full-time equivalent
GDP	gross domestic product
GFR	glomerular filtration rate
GIFT	gamete intra-fallopian transfer
GP	general practitioner
HCV	hepatitis C virus
HDL	high-density lipoprotein
Hib	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HPV	human papillomavirus
HSMR	hospital standardised mortality ratio
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ICD-10	International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision
ICD-10-AM	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification
ICSI	intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection
ICU	intensive care unit
IFG	impaired fasting glucose
IGT	impaired glucose tolerance
IPD	invasive pneumococcal disease
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
ISAAC	International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood
IVF	in-vitro fertilisation
K10	Kessler Psychological Distress Scale–10
LDL	low-density lipoprotein
MRCA	<i>Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004</i>
NATSIHS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
NCSC	National Cancer Statistics Clearing House
NDR	National Diabetes Register
NDSS	National Diabetes Services Scheme
NEHIPC	National E-Health and Information Principal Committee
NHIA	National Health Information Agreement
NHISSC	National Health Information Standards and Statistics Committee
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NHPA	National Health Priority Area
NHPC	National Health Performance Committee
NHPF	National Health Performance Framework

NHS	National Health Survey
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit
NIPS	National Immunisation Program Schedule
NMSC	non-melanoma skin cancer
NPHDC	National Prisoner Health Data Collection
NSMHWB	National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGTT	oral glucose tolerance test
Pap	Papanicolaou (cervical smear test)
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
PCI	percutaneous coronary intervention
PYLL	potential years of life lost
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RHD	rheumatic heart disease
RPBS	Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RSI	relative stay index
SAB	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> bacteraemia
SCN	special care nursery
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	socioeconomic status
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
SMR	standardised mortality ratio
SRCA	<i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988</i>
STI	sexually transmissible infection (sometimes referred to as sexually transmitted infection)
TB	tuberculosis
TFR	total fertility rate
URTI	upper respiratory tract infection
UV	ultraviolet
VEA	Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986
WHO	World Health Organization
YLD	years lost due to disability
YLL	years of life lost (due to premature mortality)

## Places

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
Aust	Australia
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NZ	New Zealand
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

# Glossary

**Aboriginal** A person of Aboriginal descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

**acute** Coming on sharply and often brief, intense and severe.

**acute coronary syndrome** Describes an *acute myocardial infarction (heart attack)* and *unstable angina* when they first present as clinical emergencies with chest pain or other features.

**acute hospitals** Public and private hospitals that provide services mainly to admitted patients with acute or temporary ailments. The average length of stay is relatively short.

**acute myocardial infarction (AMI)** Term still commonly used to mean a *heart attack*, but more correctly refers only to those heart attacks that have caused some death of heart muscle.

**addiction/addictive behaviour** When a person shows a very high dependence on something that is harmful or dangerous to them. It is marked by repeated and compulsive activity that the person finds (or would find) very difficult or impossible to stop. The term is most often applied to addictive drug use, such as with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

**admission** Admission to hospital. In this report, the number of *separations* has been taken as the number of admissions, hence an admission rate is the same as a separation rate.

**admitted patient** A patient who undergoes a hospital's formal admission process.

**adverse event** Incidents involving harm to a person receiving health care. They include infections, falls and other injuries, and reactions or complications due to surgery and other procedures, medical devices or medication, some of which may be preventable. Adverse events in health care can occur inside or outside hospitals and can be the cause of hospitalisation as well. The rate of adverse events treated in hospital is currently used as an indicator of safety in Australia's health system.

**affective disorders** Mood disorders such as *depression*, *mania* and *bipolar affective disorder*. (The term does not include *anxiety disorders*, which are classified as a separate group.)

**age-specific rate** A rate for a specific age group. The numerator and denominator relate to the same age group.

**age standardisation** A method of removing the influence of age when comparing populations with different age structures. This is usually necessary because the rates of many diseases vary strongly (usually increasing) with age. The age structures of the different populations are converted to the same 'standard' structure, then the disease rates that would have occurred with that structure are calculated and compared.

**aids and appliances** Durable medical goods dispensed to ambulatory patients that are used more than once for therapeutic purposes, such as glasses, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and orthopaedic appliances and prosthetics that are not implanted surgically but are external to the user of the appliance. Excludes prostheses fitted as part of admitted patient care in a hospital.

**allied health professionals** Defined as professionals working in audiology, dietetics and nutrition, hospital pharmacy, occupational therapy, orthoptics, orthotics and prosthetics, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology, radiography, speech pathology and social work.

**Alzheimer disease** Condition marked by progressive loss of brain power shown by worsening short-term memory, confusion and disorientation. A form of *dementia*.

**ambulatory care** Care provided to hospital patients who are not admitted to the hospital, such as patients of emergency departments and outpatient clinics. The term is also used to refer to care provided to patients of community-based (non-hospital) health-care services. 'Ambulatory' in these medical contexts implies that the person is 'capable of walking' and is not confined to bed (or, more strictly, a hospital bed).

**anaemia** A reduced level of haemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen in the red blood cells. It has many causes, including bleeding (loss of red blood cells), low production of red blood cells, and processes that damage those red blood cells. It can cause paleness, tiredness and even breathlessness.

**angina** Temporary chest pain or discomfort when the heart's own blood supply is inadequate to meet extra needs, as in exercise. See also *unstable angina* and *cardiovascular disease*.

**angioplasty** A method of reducing a blockage in an artery by opening out a balloon placed inside the artery at the point of narrowing. If the artery is a coronary artery the procedure is technically known as percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA).

**anxiety disorders** A group of mental disorders marked by excessive feelings of apprehension, worry, nervousness and stress. Includes *panic disorder*, various *phobias*, *generalised anxiety disorder*, *obsessive-compulsive disorder* and *post-traumatic stress disorder*.

**AR-DRGs** See *diagnosis related groups*.

**arrhythmia** A disturbed rhythm of the heart beat—either too fast, too slow or irregular.

**arthritis** A group of disorders in which there is inflammation of the joints, which can become stiff, painful, swollen or deformed. The two main types of arthritis are *osteoarthritis* and *rheumatoid arthritis*.

**associated cause(s) of death** Any condition(s), diseases and injuries—other than the *underlying cause*—considered to contribute to a death. See also *cause of death*.

**asthma** A common, chronic inflammatory disease of the air passages that presents as episodes of wheezing, breathlessness and chest tightness due to widespread narrowing of the airways and obstruction of airflow. The symptoms may reverse without treatment, but often treatment is required. Different medications can prevent the episodes or relieve them.

**atherosclerosis** A process in which fatty and fibre-like deposits build up on the inner walls of arteries, often forming *plaques* that can then cause blockages. It is the main underlying condition in *heart attack*, *angina*, *stroke* and *peripheral vascular disease*.

**atrial fibrillation** A condition marked by an irregular, rapid heart beat. It arises because the heart's collecting chambers (atria) stop beating rhythmically and quiver uselessly (fibrillate).

**auto-immune diseases** Diseases such as *rheumatoid arthritis* and *Type 1 diabetes*, in which the immune system reacts against body tissues and damages them.

**available beds** Beds immediately available for use by admitted patients.

**average length of stay (ALOS)** The average of the length of stay for admitted patient episodes.

**avoidable deaths** See *potentially avoidable deaths*.

**benchmark** A standard or point of reference for measuring quality or performance. See also *benchmarking*.

**benchmarking** A continuous process of measuring quality or performance against the highest standards. See also *benchmark*.

**bipolar affective disorder** A mental disorder where the person may be depressed at one time and *manic* at another. Formerly known as *manic depression*.

**blood cholesterol** Fatty substance produced by the liver and carried by the blood to supply the rest of the body. Its natural function is to supply material for cell walls and for steroid hormones, but if levels in the blood become too high this can lead to *atherosclerosis* and heart disease.

**blood pressure** The force exerted by the blood on the walls of the arteries as it is pumped around the body by the heart. It is written, for example, as 134/70 mmHg, where the upper number is the systolic pressure (the maximum force against the arteries as the heart muscle contracts to pump the blood out) and the lower number is the diastolic pressure (the minimum force against the arteries as the heart relaxes and fills again with blood). Levels of blood pressure can vary greatly from person to person and from moment to moment in the same person. See also *high blood pressure/hypertension*.

**body mass index (BMI)** The most commonly used method of assessing whether a person is normal weight, underweight, overweight or obese. It is calculated by dividing the person's weight (in kilograms) by their height (in metres) squared; that is,  $\text{kg} \div \text{m}^2$ . For both men and women, underweight is a BMI below 18.5, acceptable weight is from 18.5 to less than 25, overweight is 25 and above (includes obese), and obese is 30 and over.

**bronchiectasis** An abnormal widening of the lungs' air passages (bronchi). This allows infections to start, and leads to coughing with pus and sometimes blood. It has a number of causes, including *cystic fibrosis*, low antibody levels and infections such as *tuberculosis*, *whooping cough (pertussis)* and *measles*.

**bronchitis** Inflammation of the main air passages (bronchi). May be acute (because of infection) or chronic (most often because of tobacco smoking).

**bulk-billing** The process by which a medical practitioner or optometrist sends the bill for services direct to Medicare, so the patients concerned pay nothing. Also known as direct billing.

**burden of disease and injury** Term referring to the quantified impact of a disease or injury on an individual or population, using the *disability-adjusted life year* (DALY) measure.

**campylobacteriosis** A disease usually marked by diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting for a few days, caused by some types of *Campylobacter* bacteria and often foodborne.

**cancer** A large range of diseases whose common feature is that some of the body's cells become defective, begin to multiply out of control, can invade and damage the area around them, and can also spread to other parts of the body to cause further damage.

**capital consumption** The amount of fixed capital used up each year—otherwise known as depreciation.

**capital expenditure** Expenditure on large-scale fixed assets (for example new buildings and equipment with a useful life extending over a number of years).

**cardiomyopathy** A condition in which there is direct and widespread damage to the heart muscle, weakening it. The condition can be due to various causes such as viral infections and severe alcohol abuse, and it can lead to an enlarged, thickened and dilated heart as well as *heart failure*.

**cardiovascular disease** Any disease of the *circulatory system*, namely the heart (cardio) or blood vessels (vascular). Includes *heart attack*, *angina*, *stroke* and *peripheral vascular disease*. Also known as circulatory disease.

**casemix** The range and types of patients (the mix of cases) treated by a hospital or other health service. This provides a way of describing and comparing hospitals and other services for planning and managing health care. Casemix classifications put patients into manageable numbers of groups with similar conditions that use similar health-care resources, so that the activity and cost-efficiency of different hospitals can be compared. See *diagnosis related groups*.

**cataract** A cloudy or opaque area in the lens of the eye.

**cause of death** From information reported on the medical certificate of cause of death, each death is classified by the underlying cause of death according to rules and conventions of the 10th revision of the International Classification of Diseases. The underlying cause is defined as the disease that initiated the train of events leading directly to death. Deaths from injury or poisoning are classified according to the circumstances of the violence that produced the fatal injury, rather than to the nature of the injury. See also *underlying cause of death*.

**cerebrovascular disease** Any disorder of the blood vessels supplying the brain or its covering membranes. A notable and major form of cerebrovascular disease is *stroke*.

**chemotherapy** The use of drugs (chemicals) to prevent or treat disease, with the term usually being applied to treatment for cancer rather than for other uses.

**child** For the purposes of this report, a person aged under 15 years.

**child mortality rate** The number of deaths in a given period among children aged 1–14 years per 100,000 children of the same age.

**cholesterol** See *blood cholesterol*.

**chronic** Persistent and long-lasting.

**chronic bronchitis** Long-term condition with inflammation of the lung's main air passages (bronchi), causing frequent coughing attacks and coughing up of mucus.

**chronic diseases** Term applied to a diverse group of diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and arthritis, that tend to be long-lasting and persistent in their symptoms or development. Although these features also apply to some *communicable diseases* (infections), the term is usually confined to non-communicable diseases.

**chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)** Serious, progressive and disabling long-term lung disease where damage to the lungs, usually because of both *emphysema* and *chronic bronchitis*, obstructs oxygen intake and causes increasing shortness of breath. By far the greatest cause is cigarette smoking.

**circulatory disease** Alternative name for *cardiovascular disease*.

**circulatory system** The heart and the blood vessels, comprising the system that circulates blood around the body to supply oxygen and nutrients to all body tissues and to carry away waste products from them. Also known as the cardiovascular system.

**cirrhosis** Permanently damaged structure of the liver due to extensive death of its cells with resultant scarring. The main causes are chronic alcohol abuse and hepatitis C.

**cohort** A group of individuals being studied who have experienced the same event at a specified period in time; for example, 'birth cohort' refers to people born in the same year, whereas those in a particular country who experienced the same war could be another cohort.

**colonoscope** See *colonoscopy*.

**colonoscopy** A procedure whereby the inside of the large bowel (colon) is viewed using a long flexible tube (*colonoscope*) inserted through the anus.

**colorectal cancer** Cancer of the colon (the lower part of the intestine, usually 1.5 to 2 metres) or of the rectum (the final 15 cm of the colon, ending with the anus).

**communicable diseases (infectious diseases)** Diseases or illnesses due to infectious organisms or their toxic products. Communication may occur directly or indirectly through contact with other humans, animals or other environments that harbour the organism.

**comorbidity** When a person has two or more health problems at the same time.

**complication** A secondary problem that arises from a disease, injury or treatment (such as surgery) that worsens the patient's condition and makes treatment more complicated.

**condition (health condition)** A broad term that can be applied to any health problem, including symptoms, diseases, and various risk factors such as high blood cholesterol, obesity and so forth. Often used synonymously with *disorder* or *problem*.

**confidence interval (CI)** A statistical term describing a range (interval) of values within which we can be 'confident' that the true value lies, usually because it has a 95% or higher chance of doing so.

**congenital** A condition that is recognised at birth, or that is believed to have been present since birth, including conditions that are inherited or caused by environmental factors.

**constant prices** Dollar amounts for different years that are adjusted to reflect the prices in a chosen reference year. This provides a way of comparing expenditure over time on an equal value-for-value basis without the distorting effects of inflation. The comparison will reflect only the changes in the amount of goods and services purchased—changes in the 'buying power'—not the changes in prices of these goods and services caused by inflation.

**core activity** Term used in discussions of disability, referring to the basic activities of daily living, namely self-care, mobility and communication.

**coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)** Surgical procedure using blood vessel grafts to bypass blockages in the coronary arteries and restore adequate blood flow to the heart muscle.

**coronary artery disease** Disease of the coronary arteries, typically meaning *atherosclerosis*. When this leads to symptoms such as chest pain the result is known as *coronary heart disease*.

**coronary heart disease** Disease due to blockages in the heart's own (coronary) arteries, expressed as *angina* or a *heart attack*. Also known as *ischaemic heart disease*.

**creatinine** A substance found in the bloodstream and whose blood levels can be used to help assess kidney function (for example, see *eGFR*). It is a breakdown product of a substance found in muscle.

**crude death rate** The number of deaths in a given period divided by the size of the corresponding population indexed to 100,000.

**cryptosporidiosis** A disease usually marked by diarrhoea with cramping abdominal pain and other symptoms, caused by *Cryptosporidium parvum* (a protozoan parasite) and transmitted directly from person to person, or foodborne.

**cystic fibrosis** A serious hereditary disease in which mucus from glands is too thick and sticky, affecting the lungs and other organs. The person is prone to frequent chest infections, with related problems such as severe *bronchiectasis* and a much shortened life expectancy.

**DALY** See *disability-adjusted life year*.

**data linkage** The bringing together (linking) of information from two or more different data sources that are believed to relate to the same entity—for example the same individual or the same institution. This can provide more information about the entity and in certain cases it can provide a time sequence, helping to ‘tell a story’, show ‘pathways’ and perhaps unravel cause and effect. The term is used synonymously with ‘record linkage’.

**dementia** A general and worsening loss of higher brain power such as memory, understanding and reasoning.

**dentate** Having one or more natural teeth.

**depression** A mood disorder with prolonged feelings of being sad, hopeless, low and inadequate, with a loss of interest or pleasure in activities and often with suicidal thoughts or self-blame.

**determinant** Any factor that can increase the chances of ill health (risk factors) or good health (protective factors) in a population or individual. By convention, services or other programs that aim to improve health are usually not included in this definition.

**diabetes (diabetes mellitus)** A chronic condition in which the body cannot properly use its main energy source, the sugar glucose. This is due to a relative or absolute deficiency in insulin, a hormone that is produced by the pancreas and helps glucose enter the body’s cells from the bloodstream and then be processed by them. Diabetes is marked by an abnormal build-up of glucose in the blood, and it can have serious short- and long-term effects. For the three main types of diabetes see *Type 1 diabetes*, *Type 2 diabetes* and *gestational diabetes*.

**diabetic nephropathy** Disease of the capillaries of the *glomeruli* in the kidneys, resulting from *diabetes*.

**diagnosis related groups (DRGs)** A widely used type of *casemix* classification system. In the case of Australian acute hospitals, AR-DRGs (Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups) classify admissions into groups with similar clinical conditions (related diagnoses) and similar resource usage. This allows the activity and performance of hospitals to be compared on a common basis. See also *casemix*.

**dialysis/haemodialysis** A process used to treat kidney failure. A machine is connected to the patient’s bloodstream and then filters the blood externally to the body, removing water, excess substances and waste from the blood as well as regulating the levels of circulating chemicals. In doing this the machine takes on the role normally played by the kidneys.

**diphtheria** A bacterial infection that usually starts with soreness of the throat and tonsils but which can also affect other parts of the body and become severe enough to block breathing. It is preventable by *vaccination*.

**direct billing** See *bulk-billing*.

**disability** Described by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health as a concept of several dimensions relating to an impairment in body structure or function, a limitation in activities (such as mobility and communication), a restriction in participation (involvement in life situations such as work, social interaction and education), and the affected person's physical and social environment. Described by the *Oxford concise colour medical dictionary* (1998) as 'a loss or restriction of functional ability or activity as a result of impairment of the body or mind'.

**disability-adjusted life year (DALY)** A year of healthy life lost, either through premature death or equivalently through living with disability due to illness or injury. It is the basic unit used in *burden of disease and injury* estimates.

**disease** A physical or mental disturbance involving *symptoms* (such as pain or feeling unwell), dysfunction or tissue damage, especially if these *symptoms* and *signs* form a recognisable clinical pattern.

**disorder (health disorder)** Used synonymously with *condition*.

**donovanosis** Infectious disease (previously called granuloma inguinale) caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia granulomatis*. It features painless genital ulcers with tissue destruction, and can result in secondary infection and scarring.

**Down syndrome** Condition caused by a genetic defect known as trisomy 21—an extra chromosome 21, making three instead of two. Produces a characteristic facial appearance and shortness, often with heart defects and usually reduced intelligence.

**drug** Any biologically active substance that is taken into the body for medicinal purposes or for performance enhancement, pleasure or stimulation. Excludes food.

**eGFR** A method of estimating the glomerular filtration rate—the amount of blood that the kidneys filter in one minute to clear waste products. The eGFR is based on the levels of *creatinine* in the blood, using a formula that takes into account age, sex and ethnicity.

**emphysema** A chronic lung disease where over-expansion or destruction of the lung tissue blocks oxygen intake, leading to shortness of breath and other problems.

**endoscopy** The viewing of internal parts of the body, such as the inside of the lower bowel (the colon) with a *colonoscope*.

**enterohaemorrhagic E. coli infection** A disease marked by diarrhoea that can be mild or severe and bloody, and sometimes also by haemolytic uraemic syndrome (sudden kidney failure and anaemia in children) and other symptoms. It is caused by some types of *Escherichia coli* bacteria and is usually foodborne.

**epidemic** An outbreak of a disease or its occurrence at a level that is clearly higher than usual, especially if it affects a large proportion of the population.

**epidemiology** The study of the patterns and causes of health and disease in populations, and the application of this study to improve health.

**epilepsy** A disturbance of brain function marked by recurrent fits and loss of consciousness.

**external cause** The term used in disease classification to refer to an event or circumstance in a person's external environment that is regarded as a cause of injury or poisoning.

**faecal occult blood test** See *FOBT*.

**fertility rate** Number of live births per 1,000 females aged 15–49.

**fetal death** Birth of a fetus weighing at least 400 grams (or, where birthweight is unavailable, of at least 20 weeks' gestation), which shows no signs of life. Commonly referred to as stillbirth.

**fetal death rate** Number of fetal deaths per 1,000 total births (fetal deaths plus live births).

**FOBT** Faecal occult blood test: blood in a person's faeces may be a sign of bowel cancer but if the blood is not obvious (that is, it is 'occult', meaning secret) it can be detected using the FOBT. The test is the central part of Australia's National Bowel Screening Program, in which testing kits are being sent out to Australians aged 50, 55 and 65 years, and free test results are later sent to the participants and to the general practitioner they have nominated.

**free-standing day hospital facility** A private hospital where only minor operations and other procedures not requiring overnight stay are performed, and which does not form part of any private hospital providing overnight care.

**full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce or workload** A standard measure of the size of a workforce that takes into account both the number of workers and the hours that each works. For example, if a workforce comprises two people working a full-time 35 hours a week and two working half time, this is the same as three working full time—an FTE of three.

**gastroscopy** A procedure whereby the inside of the stomach is viewed using a flexible tube passed down into it through the mouth.

**generalised anxiety disorder** A mental disorder where a person is overly and unrealistically anxious and worried about many things over a long period. One of the group of *anxiety disorders*.

**gestational diabetes** *Diabetes* which is first diagnosed during pregnancy (gestation). It may disappear after pregnancy but signals a high risk of diabetes occurring later on.

**glomeruli (singular glomerulus)** Part of the basic filtering units of the kidney, the *nephrons*.

**glomerulonephritis** Inflammation of the *glomeruli*.

**gout** Disease of excess uric acid in the blood causing attacks of joint pain (most often in the big toe) and other problems.

**gross domestic product (GDP)** A statistic commonly used to indicate national wealth. It is the total market value of goods and services produced within a given period after deducting the cost of goods and services used up in the process of production but before deducting allowances for the consumption of fixed capital.

**haemodialysis** See *dialysis*.

**health** Term relating to whether the body (which includes the mind) is in a good or bad state. With good health the state of the body and mind are such that a person feels and functions well, and can continue to do so for as long as possible. See also *public health*.

**health indicator** See *indicator*.

**health outcome** A change in the health of an individual or population due wholly or partly to a preventive or clinical intervention.

**health promotion** Activities to improve health and prevent disease, often described as the process that helps individuals and communities to increase control over the *determinants* of health.

**health status** An individual's or population's overall level of health, taking into account various aspects such as *life expectancy*, amount of *disability*, levels of disease *risk factors* and so on.

**heart attack** Life-threatening emergency that occurs when a vessel supplying blood to the heart muscle is suddenly blocked completely by a blood clot. The medical term commonly used for a heart attack is *myocardial infarction*. See also *cardiovascular disease*.

**heart failure** When the heart functions less effectively in pumping blood around the body. It can result from a wide variety of diseases and conditions that can impair or overload the heart, such as heart attack, other conditions that damage the heart muscle directly (see *cardiomyopathy*), *high blood pressure*, or a damaged heart valve.

**hepatitis** Inflammation of the liver, which can be due to certain viral infections, alcohol excess or a range of other causes.

**Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) infection** A bacterial infection of infants and children that can cause meningitis, pneumonia and other serious effects. It is preventable by vaccination.

**high blood pressure/hypertension** The definition of high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) can vary but a well-accepted one is from the World Health Organization: a systolic blood pressure of 140 mmHg or more or a diastolic blood pressure of 90 mmHg or more, or [the person is] receiving medication for high blood pressure. Also see *blood pressure*.

**highly specialised drugs** Under Section 100 of the National Health Act, certain drugs (for example cyclosporin) can be supplied to community patients only through hospitals because only hospitals can provide the facilities or staff necessary for the appropriate use of the drugs. These drugs are funded by the Australian Government separately from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

**Hodgkin disease (Hodgkin lymphoma)** A cancer marked by progressive painless enlargement of lymph nodes throughout the body. A form of *lymphoma*.

**hostel** Establishment for people who cannot live independently but who do not need nursing care in a hospital or nursing home. Hostels provide board, lodging or accommodation and cater mostly for the aged, distressed or disabled. Residents are generally responsible for their own provisions but may be given domestic assistance such as help with meals, laundry and personal care.

**hypertension** See *high blood pressure*.

**hypertensive disease** Disease occurring when *high blood pressure* (hypertension) is severe or prolonged enough to cause damage to the heart, brain or kidneys.

**illness** A state of feeling unwell, although the term is also often used synonymously with disease.

**immunisation** Inducing immunity against infection by the use of an antigen to stimulate the body to produce its own antibodies. See *vaccination*.

**impaired glucose tolerance** Condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but less than required for a diagnosis of diabetes, and which signals an increased risk of developing *Type 2 diabetes*.

**impairment** Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

**incidence** The number of new cases (of an illness or event, and so on) occurring during a given period. Compare with *prevalence*.

**indicator** A key statistical measure selected to help describe (indicate) a situation concisely, to track change, progress and performance, and to act as a guide to decision making. It may have an indirect meaning as well as a direct one; for example, Australia's overall death rate is a direct measure of mortality but is often used as a major indicator of population health. Taking this point further, time spent watching TV may be used as one indicator of physical inactivity.

**Indigenous** A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated.

**infant** A child aged less than 1 year.

**infant mortality rate** The number of deaths among children aged less than 1 year in a given period, per 1,000 live births in the same period.

**inflammation** Local response to injury or infection, marked by local redness, heat, swelling and pain. Can also occur when there is no clear external cause and the body reacts against itself, as in *auto-immune diseases*.

**influenza ('flu')** An acute contagious viral respiratory infection marked by fevers, muscle aches, headache, cough and sore throat.

**insulin** Hormone that is produced by the pancreas and regulates the body's energy sources, most notably the sugar glucose.

**International Classification of Diseases** International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. The World Health Organization's internationally accepted classification of death and disease. The 10th Revision (ICD-10) is currently in use. In this report, causes of death classified before 1979 under previous revisions have been reclassified to ICD-10 by the AIHW. ICD-10-AM is the Australian modification of ICD-10, used for diagnoses and procedures recorded for patients admitted to hospitals.

**intervention (for health)** Any action taken by society or an individual which 'steps in' (intervenes) to improve health, such as medical treatment and preventive campaigns.

**ischaemia** Reduced or blocked blood supply. See also *ischaemic heart disease*.

**ischaemic heart disease** *Heart attack* and *angina* (chest pain). Also known as *coronary heart disease*. See also *ischaemia*.

**Kessler Psychological Distress Scale – 10 items (Kessler-10; K10)** A survey device that is used to measure non-specific psychological distress in people. It uses 10 questions about negative emotional states that survey participants may have had in the 4 weeks leading up to their interview. It is only used for people aged 18 years and over.

**kidney replacement therapy** Having a functional kidney transplant or receiving regular *dialysis*.

**length of stay** Duration of hospital stay, calculated by subtracting the date the patient is admitted from the day of separation. All leave days, including the day the patient went on leave, are excluded. A same-day patient is allocated a length of stay of 1 day.

**life expectancy** An indication of how long a person can expect to live, depending on the age they have already reached. Technically, it is the number of years of life remaining to a person at a particular age if death rates do not change. The most commonly used example is life expectancy at birth.

**listeriosis** A disease which normally appears in otherwise healthy people as an acute, mild fever, sometimes with influenza-like symptoms, caused by the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes* and usually foodborne. It can cause more severe symptoms in newborns, the elderly, people with poor immunity and pregnant women (in whom it can also cause abortion).

**long-term condition** A term used in the ABS National Health Surveys to describe a health condition that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 6 months. See also *chronic diseases*.

**low birthweight** Weight of a baby at birth that is less than 2,500 grams.

**lymphoma** A cancer of the lymph nodes. Lymphomas are divided into two broad types, *Hodgkin disease* lymphomas and *non-Hodgkin lymphomas*.

**Major Diagnostic Categories (MDCs)** A high level of groupings of patients used in the *AR-DRG* classification. See also *diagnosis related groups*.

**malignancy** See *cancer*.

**mammogram** X-ray of the breast. It may be used to assess a breast lump or as a screening test in women with no evidence of cancer.

**mania** A mental disorder where the person is overexcited, overactive and excessively and unrealistically happy and expansive. It is the opposite of depression and can alternate with it in the same person in what is known as *bipolar affective disorder* (formerly known as *manic depression*).

**manic depression, manic depressive disorder** See *bipolar affective disorder, mania* and *depression*.

**measles** A highly contagious infection, usually of children, that causes flu-like symptoms, fever, a typical rash and sometimes serious secondary problems such as brain damage. It is preventable by *vaccination*.

**median** The midpoint of a list of observations that have been ranked from the smallest to the largest.

**Medicare** A national, government-funded scheme that subsidises the cost of personal medical services for all Australians and aims to help them afford medical care.

**melanoma** A cancer of the body's cells that contain pigment (melanin), mainly affecting the skin. Survival rates are very high for those whose melanoma is detected and removed early, but low if not.

**meningitis** Inflammation of the brain's covering (the meninges), as can occur with some viral or bacterial infections.

**mental illness** Disturbances of mood or thought that can affect behaviour and distress the person or those around them, so the person has trouble functioning normally. They include *anxiety disorders, depression* and *schizophrenia*.

**metastasis** The spread of a cancer from its original site to other parts of the body.

**monitoring (of health)** As used in this report, ‘monitoring’ refers to a process of keeping a continuous and close watch over important aspects of the public’s health and health services through various measurements, and then regularly reporting on the situation, so the health system and society more generally can plan and respond accordingly. The term is often used interchangeably with *surveillance*, although surveillance may imply more urgent watching and reporting, as in the surveillance of infectious diseases and their epidemics. Monitoring can also be applied to individuals, as in hospital care where a person’s condition is closely assessed over time.

**morbidity** Refers to ill health in an individual and to levels of ill health in a population or group.

**mortality** Death.

**motor neurone disease** A serious disease of the nervous system with progressive wasting of muscles, weakness and paralysis.

**multiple sclerosis** One of the most common nervous system disorders, with serious and varied symptoms such as poor coordination and loss of control of limbs, sudden vision problems and disturbed sensations.

**mumps** A contagious viral disease marked by acute and painful swelling of the saliva-producing glands, often similarly affecting the testicles and sometimes other parts.

**musculoskeletal** Relating to the muscles, joints and bones.

**myocardial infarction** See *acute myocardial infarction*.

**neonatal death** Death of an infant within 28 days of birth.

**neonatal mortality rate** Number of neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births.

**neoplasm** An abnormal (‘neo’, new) growth of tissue. Can be ‘benign’ (not a cancer) or ‘malignant’ (a cancer). Same as a *tumour*.

**nephron** The kidney’s basic filtering unit.

**nephropathy** Any disease of the kidney.

**neural tube defects** Defects such as spina bifida and anencephalus that have arisen in the neural tube, the part of the embryo that develops into the brain and spinal cord.

**neurosis/neurotic disorders** A broad category of mental disorders with anxiety as their main feature and whose symptoms are mostly exaggerations of normal emotions or behaviour. They include *anxiety disorders*, *obsessive-compulsive disorder*, *stress* reactions and other problems.

**non-admitted patient** A patient who receives care from a recognised non-admitted patient service/clinic of a hospital, including emergency departments and outpatient clinics.

**non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL)** A range of cancers of the lymphatic system (lymph glands and the channels they are linked to) that are not of the Hodgkin variety.

**non-Indigenous** People who have declared they are not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. Used interchangeably with *other Australians*.

**nursing homes** See *residential aged care facilities*.

**obesity** Marked degree of overweight, defined for population studies as a *body mass index* of 30 or over. See also *overweight*.

**obsessive-compulsive disorder** A form of *anxiety disorder* where repeated and unwanted thoughts and impulses disturb and dominate a person. Often involves rituals such as excessive hand washing, checking and counting, which in turn cause anxiety if they are prevented or out of control.

**occasion of service** Occurs when a patient receives some form of service from a functional unit of a hospital, but is not admitted.

**older person** For the purposes of this report, a person aged 65 years or over.

**ophthalmology** A medical specialty dealing with eye diseases.

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** An organisation of 30 developed countries, including Australia.

**osteoarthritis** A chronic and common form of *arthritis*, affecting mostly the spine, hips, knees and hands. It first appears from the age of about 30 and is more common and severe with increasing age.

**osteoporosis** Thinning and weakening of the bone substance, with a resulting risk of fracture.

**other Australians** People who are not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, or whose status is not known. Used interchangeably with *non-Indigenous*.

**outcome (health outcome)** A health-related change due to a preventive or clinical intervention or service. (The intervention may be single or multiple, and the outcome may relate to a person, group or population, or be partly or wholly due to the intervention.)

**out-of-pocket costs** The total costs incurred by individuals for health-care services over and above any refunds from Medicare and private health insurance funds.

**overweight** Defined for the purpose of population studies as a *body mass index* of 25 or over. See also *obesity*.

**P value** The probability that an observed difference has arisen by chance alone. By convention, a P value of 0.05 or less is usually considered *statistically significant* because the difference it relates to would occur by chance alone only one in twenty times or less often.

**palliative care** Care designed for patients with a terminal illness. The emphasis is on relieving symptoms and achieving the best possible quality of life under the circumstances for the patient, their family and carers.

**panic disorder** Marked by panic attacks (episodes of intense fear or discomfort) that occur suddenly and often unpredictably.

**Pap smear/Pap tests** Papanicolaou smear, a procedure to detect cancer and pre-cancerous conditions of the female genital tract.

**parasuicide** The deliberate or ambivalent act of self-damage which is potentially life-threatening, but does not result in death.

**pathology** General term for the study of disease, but often used more specifically for diagnostic services which examine specimens, such as samples of blood or tissue.

**patient days** The number of full or partial days of stay for patients who were admitted for an episode of care and who underwent separation during the reporting period. A patient who is admitted and separated on the same day is allocated one patient day.

**patient transport services** Organisations engaged mainly in providing transport of patients by ground or air, along with health (or medical) care. These services are often provided during a medical emergency but are not restricted to emergencies. The vehicles are equipped with lifesaving equipment operated by medically trained personnel. Includes public ambulance services or flying doctor services, such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Care Flight. Also includes patient transport programs such as patient transport vouchers or support programs to assist isolated patients with travel to obtain specialised health care.

**performance indicators (of the health system)** Measures (*indicators*) that can relate to the health system as a whole or to parts of it such as hospitals, health centres and so forth. The measures include accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, responsiveness, continuity of care and safety.

**perinatal** Pertaining to or occurring in the period shortly before or after birth (usually up to 28 days after).

**perinatal death** Fetal or neonatal death.

**perinatal mortality rate** Number of perinatal deaths per 1,000 total births (fetal deaths plus live births).

**peripheral vascular disease** Pain in the legs due to an inadequate blood supply to them.

**peritoneal dialysis** Treatment in which a solution is pumped into the abdominal cavity, where the body's own peritoneum—the lining of that cavity—acts as a dialysis filter to remove waste products and water.

**pertussis (whooping cough)** A highly infectious bacterial disease of the air passages marked by explosive fits of coughing and often a whooping sound on breathing in. It is preventable by vaccination.

**Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)** A national, government-funded scheme that subsidises the cost of a wide range of pharmaceutical drugs, and that covers all Australians to help them afford standard medications.

**phobia** A form of *anxiety disorder* in which there is persistent, unrealistic fear of an object or situation and which interferes with the person's life as they seek to avoid the object of their fear. Phobias include fear of heights, flying, open spaces, social gatherings, and animals such as spiders and snakes.

**plaque (atherosclerotic)** A localised area of *atherosclerosis*, especially when raised or built up, and that may cause blockages in arteries.

**pneumoconiosis** A lung disease resulting from inhaling certain dusts, mostly in the workplace, such as silica, asbestos and coal dust. The dust particles settle deep in the lungs and the body responds by making scar tissue that leads to progressive shortness of breath.

**pneumonia** Inflammation of the lungs as a response to infection by bacteria or viruses, with the air sacs becoming flooded with fluid, and inflammatory cells and affected areas of the lung becoming solid. Pneumonia is often quite rapid in onset and marked by a high fever, headache, cough, chest pain and shortness of breath.

**poliomyelitis (polio)** Muscle paralysis, wasting and deformity of limbs after infection by a common virus (poliovirus) that can damage the so-called motor nerves in the spinal cord. It is preventable by vaccination.

**population attributable fraction (PAF)** The proportion (fraction) of a disease, illness, disability or death in a population that can be attributed to a particular *risk factor* or combination of risk factors. For example, the PAF for cigarette smoking in contributing to lung cancer deaths has been consistently put at around 80% or more in Australia, meaning that if nobody smoked in Australia there would be 80% fewer deaths from lung cancer. Also known as an aetiological (causal) fraction.

**post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** A form of *anxiety disorder* in which a person has a delayed and prolonged reaction after being in an extremely threatening or catastrophic situation such as a war, natural disaster, terrorist attack, serious accident or witnessing violent deaths.

**potential years of life lost (PYLL)** Number of potential years of life lost in a population as a result of premature death.

**potentially avoidable deaths** Deaths below the age of 75 years from a specified range of conditions where death is considered to be largely avoidable today, given existing health and social systems. For example, such deaths due to HIV/AIDS, injuries and lung cancer could be avoided through prevention; those due to asthma, appendicitis and a range of other types of cancer could be avoided through treatment; and those through coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes could be avoided through a combination of prevention and treatment. The rate of potentially avoidable deaths in Australia is currently being used as an indicator of the health system's effectiveness.

**potentially preventable hospitalisations (PPHs)** Hospital separations from a specified range of conditions where hospitalisation is considered to be largely preventable if timely and adequate care were provided through population health services, primary care and outpatient services. The PPH conditions are classified as vaccine-preventable, chronic and acute. Respective examples include *influenza* and *pneumonia*, *diabetes* complications and *COPD*, and dental and kidney conditions. The rate of PPHs is currently being used as an indicator of the effectiveness of a large part of the health system, other than hospital inpatient treatment.

**prescription drugs** Pharmaceutical drugs available only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner and available only from pharmacies.

**prevalence** The number or proportion (of cases, instances, and so forth) present in a population at a given time. Compare with *incidence*.

**prevention (of ill health or injury)** Action to reduce or eliminate the onset, causes, complications or recurrence of ill health or injury.

**principal diagnosis** The diagnosis listed in hospital records to describe the problem that was chiefly responsible for the patient's episode of care in hospital.

**private hospital** A privately owned and operated institution, catering for patients who are treated by a doctor of their own choice. Patients are charged fees for accommodation and other services provided by the hospital and relevant medical and allied health practitioners. The term includes private *free-standing day hospital facilities*.

**private patient (in hospital)** Person admitted to a private hospital, or person admitted to a public hospital who decides to choose the doctor(s) who will treat them or to have private ward accommodation. This means they will be charged for medical services and accommodation.

**problem (health problem)** Another poorly defined term often used synonymously with *condition* or *disorder*. May also be used more specifically to refer to symptoms and other health factors that a person or the doctor perceives as a concern—a problem—that needs attention; and which, for example, the person may record in a survey or their doctor may list in clinical notes to form a ‘problem list’.

**prostate cancer** Cancer of the prostate, the male organ that sits next to the urinary bladder and contributes to the semen (sperm fluid).

**psychiatric hospitals** Establishments devoted mainly to the treatment and care of admitted patients with mental illness.

**psychosis** A broad grouping for a more severe degree of mental disturbance, often involving fixed, false beliefs known as delusions.

**public health** Term variously referring to the level of health in the population, to actions that improve that level or to related study. Activities aimed at benefiting a population tend to emphasis prevention, protection and health promotion as distinct from treatment tailored to individuals with symptoms. Examples include provision of a clean water supply and good sewerage, conduct of antismoking education campaigns, and screening for diseases such as cancer of the breast and cervix.

**public hospital** A hospital controlled by a state or territory health authority. In Australia public hospitals offer free diagnostic services, treatment, care and accommodation to all Australians who need them.

**public patient** A patient admitted to a public hospital who has agreed to be treated by doctors of the hospital’s choice and to accept shared ward accommodation. This means that the patient is not charged.

**quintile** A group derived by ranking the population of people or elements according to specified criteria and dividing it into five equal parts. The term can also mean the cut-points that make these divisions—that is, the 20th, 50th and 75th percentiles—but the first use is the more common one.

**radiology** The use or study of X-rays and other rays to help view internal parts of the body as a guide to diagnosis as well as to treatment and its progress.

**real expenditure** Expenditure expressed in terms which have been adjusted for inflation (for example, in 1989–90 dollars). This enables comparisons to be made between expenditures in different years.

**record linkage** See *data linkage*.

**recurrent expenditure** Expenditure on goods and services that are used up during the year—for example, salaries. It may be contrasted with *capital expenditure*.

**refraction** The eye’s ability to bend the light rays that enter it, to form an image at the back of the eye.

**renal dialysis** See *dialysis/haemodialysis*.

**residential aged care facilities** Establishments which provide long-term care involving regular basic nursing care to chronically ill, frail, disabled or convalescent people, or senile inpatients. Also known as nursing homes.

**revascularisation ('re-vesselling')** Restoring adequate blood flow to the heart or other part of the body, usually after the supply has been reduced or blocked, as in angina or a *heart attack*. Revascularisation includes methods such as *angioplasty* and *coronary artery bypass graft surgery*.

**rheumatic fever** An acute, serious disease that affects mainly children and young adults and can damage the heart valves, the heart muscle and its lining, the joints and the brain. Is brought on by a reaction to a throat infection by a particular bacterium. Now very rare in the non-Indigenous population, it is still at unacceptably high levels among Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. See *rheumatic heart disease*.

**rheumatic heart disease** Chronic disease from damaged heart valves caused by earlier attack(s) of *rheumatic fever*.

**rheumatoid arthritis** A chronic, multisystem disease whose most prominent feature is joint inflammation and resulting damage, most often affecting the hand joints in symmetrical fashion. Can occur in all age groups but most commonly appears between ages 20 and 40 years. Its causes are not certain but involve *auto-immune* processes.

**risk factor** Any factor which represents a greater risk of a health disorder or other unwanted condition or event. Some risk factors are regarded as causes of disease, others are not necessarily so. Along with their opposites, protective factors, risk factors are known as *determinants*.

**rubella (German measles)** A communicable disease of children and young adults which has mild symptoms but which often causes serious birth defects if it occurs in a mother during the first 3 months of pregnancy. It is preventable by vaccination.

**salmonellosis** A disease commonly marked by sudden onset of headache, abdominal pain, fever, diarrhoea, nausea and sometimes vomiting, caused by some types of salmonella bacteria and often foodborne.

**same-day patients** Admitted patients who are admitted to hospital and separated on the same day.

**schizophrenia** A group of serious mental disorders where imagined and disordered thoughts are key features, often with problems of behaviour, mood and motivation, and a retreat from social life.

**screening (for health)** A systematic method of detecting *risk factors* or suspicious abnormalities among people who are symptom-free, so that health problems can be either prevented or followed up, diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Screening is usually done through special programs aimed at higher risk groups in the population. A variant of screening often known as case-finding is where clinicians opportunistically look for risk factors or abnormalities in people seeing them for other reasons, as when many doctors routinely measure blood pressure in all patients consulting them.

**Section 100 drugs** See *highly specialised drugs*.

**separation** The formal process by which a hospital records the completion of an episode of treatment and/or care for an admitted patient.

**shigellosis** A communicable disease characterised by acute diarrhoea with fever, nausea and sometimes other symptoms, usually transmitted directly from person to person via the faecal–oral route. It is caused by *Shigella* species bacteria, including *Shigella dysenteriae 1*, the cause of dysentery.

**SIDS** Sudden infant death syndrome, also known as cot death. It refers to the sudden and unexpected death of an infant where the cause is unknown.

**sign (clinical)** An indication of a disorder that is detected by a clinician or other observer who examines the person affected. Unlike with *symptoms*, a patient does not necessarily notice or complain of a sign and many signs are detected only with special techniques used by the person doing the examination.

**sleep apnoea** When a person repeatedly stops breathing during sleep. It has the same cause as snoring—reduced airflow at the back of the mouth—but is more extreme. More common in males and the obese, it leads to poorer mental functioning during the day and a greater risk of accidents.

**statistical significance** An indication from a statistical test that an observed difference or association may be significant or ‘real’ because it is unlikely to be due just to chance. A statistical result is usually said to be ‘significant’ if it would occur by chance only once in 20 times or less often.

**statistics (health)** Numerical description of a population’s health and the factors affecting that health.

**stent** A metal mesh tube that is expanded within an artery at a point of narrowing and left there to hold the artery open.

**stillbirth** See *fetal death*.

**stress** Poorly defined term referring to when a person is under significant psychological or physical pressure—real or perceived, acute or chronic. Among the many examples are illness or injury, bereavement, family problems, work demands or job loss.

**stroke** When an artery supplying blood to the brain suddenly becomes blocked or bleeds. Often causes paralysis of parts of the body normally controlled by that area of the brain, or speech problems and other symptoms.

**substance use disorder** Disorder of harmful use and/or dependence on illicit or licit drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs.

**sudden infant death syndrome** See *SIDS*.

**suicide** Deliberately ending one’s own life.

**surveillance (for health)** See *monitoring*.

**symptom** Any indication of a disorder that is apparent to the person affected. Compare with *sign (clinical)*.

**tetanus** A serious infection in which a bacterial nerve poison causes spasm of the jaw muscles (lockjaw) and body muscles generally. It is caused by a bacterium entering through a wound. The disease is preventable by vaccination.

**thrombolysis** Emergency ‘clot-busting’ drug treatment for a *heart attack*.

**thrombosis** Clotting of blood, with the term usually applied to clotting within a blood vessel due to disease, as in a *heart attack* or *stroke*.

**tinnitus** The sensation of ringing or other sounds in the ears when there is no external source of sound.

**Torres Strait Islander** A person of Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as a Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

**transient ischaemic attack (TIA)** A 'mini' *stroke*, with temporary problems in speech or paralysis that last for 24 hours or less, often only minutes. It is a strong warning sign of a more severe stroke.

**tuberculosis (TB)** A bacterial disease that affects the lungs especially, with serious fever-like symptoms and destruction of tissue. It can spread to other parts of the body, causing secondary problems and often death if not treated.

**tumour** See *neoplasm*.

**Type 1 diabetes** A form of *diabetes* mostly arising among children or younger adults, marked by a complete lack of insulin and needing insulin replacement for survival.

**Type 2 diabetes** The most common form of *diabetes*, occurring mostly in people aged 40 years or over, and marked by reduced or less effective insulin.

**underlying cause of death** The condition, disease or injury initiating the sequence of events leading directly to death; that is, the primary or main cause. Compare with *associated cause(s) of death*.

**underweight** Defined for population studies as a *body mass index* less than 18.5.

**unstable angina** A form of *angina* that is more dangerous than normal angina but less so than a *heart attack*. It can feature chest pain that occurs at rest; and in someone who already has angina it can be marked by new patterns of onset with exertion or by pain that comes on more easily, more often or for longer than previously.

**uraemia** A marker of kidney failure, with a build-up in the blood of urea and related waste products which the kidneys would normally eliminate through the urine.

**vaccination** The process of administering a vaccine to a person to produce immunity against infection. See *immunisation*.

**vector** An insect or other organism that transmits infectious micro-organisms from animal to human or human to human.

**ventricular septal defect** A congenital defect of the heart that occurs as an opening in the wall that separates the left and right main pumping chambers (the ventricles).

**whooping cough** See *pertussis*.

**yersiniosis** A disease typically involving acute diarrhoea, fever and other abdominal symptoms, caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* and *Yersinia enterocolitica* and often foodborne.

**young person** For the purposes of this report, a person aged 15–24 years.

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