

# Glossary

**ABS:** Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**Acute hospitals:** Establishments which provide at least minimal medical, surgical or obstetrical services for inpatient treatment and/or care, and which provide round-the-clock comprehensive qualified nursing service as well as other necessary professional services. Most patients require a relatively short stay.

**Acute myocardial infarction (AMI):** Death of part of the heart muscle caused by blockage of an artery supplying the muscle; a type of heart attack.

**AGPS:** Australian Government Publishing Service.

**AIHW:** Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

**Allied health services:** Services provided by allied health practitioners excluding pharmacists and allied health services provided by hospitals.

**ALOS:** See **Average length of stay**.

**AMI:** See **Acute myocardial infarction**.

**Arrhythmias:** Disturbances of the heart's rhythm.

**Atherosclerosis:** A disease of the arteries in which fatty and scar-like deposits (plaques) form on the inner walls of arteries. It is the most common cause of ischaemic heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease.

**Average length of stay:** The average number of bed-days (q.v.) per admitted patient episode.

**Bed 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.

**Blood pressure:** The pressure of the blood against the walls of the main arteries. The maximum blood pressure (when the heart muscle contracts) is called systolic blood pressure and the minimum, when the heart muscle relaxes, is called diastolic blood pressure. Both are measured in millimetres of mercury (mm Hg). See also **Hypertension**.

**Cerebrovascular disease:** See **Stroke**.

**Coronary heart disease:** See **Ischaemic heart disease**.

**CVD:** Cardiovascular disease. A term describing all diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Also known as diseases of the circulatory system.

**Department of Veterans' Affairs hospitals:** Acute care hospitals operated by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide hospital treatment for eligible veterans and their dependants at Commonwealth expense. Department of Veterans' Affairs hospitals are recorded as public sector hospitals for data reporting purposes.

**Diabetes:** Diabetes mellitus is a collection of closely related diseases characterised by abnormality of insulin levels and impaired glucose tolerance. The two most important forms of diabetes are insulin dependent diabetes mellitus or Type 1 (q.v.) and non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus or Type 2 (q.v.).

**Direct costs:** The health system costs of providing prevention and treatment services for health problems.

**GP:** General practitioner.

**Heart attack:** Occurs when a coronary artery become completely blocked, because a blood clot has formed at a point of narrowing (see **Ischaemic heart disease**). If some heart muscle dies as a result of the lack of blood, the heart attack is referred to as an acute myocardial infarction (q.v.).

**High blood cholesterol:** The risk of cardiovascular disease increases with the total cholesterol level in the blood. Based on the National Heart Foundation's recommendations, high blood cholesterol is defined as 5.5 mmol/L or greater.

**High blood pressure:** See **Hypertension**.

**Hypertension:** A person is classified as having hypertension or high blood pressure if they have a systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 160 mmHg and/or a diastolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 95 mmHg or they are currently being treated for hypertension.

**IDDM:** See **Insulin dependent diabetes mellitus**.

**Incidence:** The number of new cases of a specified disease or condition in a defined time period.

**Indirect costs:** Costs associated with disease and injury other than direct health system costs. These include lost production due to sickness and premature death, as well as costs impacting outside the health care sector (such as caring costs borne by the family, and police and court costs associated with drug abuse, for example).

**Inpatient:** Any person formally admitted by a hospital. Healthy newborn infants are excluded unless they have a stay of more than 10 days, or are the second or subsequent birth in multiple births.

**Institutional:** In this report, denotes the major health care institutions which provide residential care, such as hospitals and nursing homes.

**Insulin dependent diabetes mellitus:** Also referred to as IDDM, Type 1 diabetes or juvenile-onset diabetes. A form of diabetes that most commonly appears under age 40 and is characterised by an absolute insulin deficiency due to the auto-immune destruction of pancreatic islet beta-cells. Type 1 diabetics are prone to ketosis and severe symptoms and are dependent on daily insulin injections to sustain life.

**International Classification of Disease (ICD):** WHO's internationally accepted classification of death and disease — the ninth revision (ICD-9) is currently in use.

**Ischaemic heart disease (IHD):** The most common form of cardiovascular disease, it includes angina and heart attack, and is due to narrowing or blockage of one or more of the coronary arteries which supply the heart with blood. See also **Myocardial infarction**.

**Medical services:** Private medical services excluding those to hospital inpatients. This includes consultations with general practitioners and specialists as well as pathology tests and screening and diagnostic imaging services. It includes services to veterans.

**NIDDM:** See **Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus**.

**Non-inpatient:** Patients not requiring admission to hospital, but who receive treatment in accident and emergency (casualty) departments, undergo short-term specialist treatment (such as minor surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy), receive care from a recognised non-admitted patient service/clinic of a hospital or are treated in their own homes through home nursing programs. Previously referred to as outpatients.

**Non-inpatient occasion of service:** Occurs when a patient attends a functional unit of the hospital for the purpose of receiving some form of service, but is not admitted. A visit for administrative purposes is not an occasion of service.

**Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus:** Also referred to as Type 2 diabetes or adult-onset diabetes. NIDDM constitutes about 85–90% of all diabetes in developed countries and its diagnosis usually occurs after age 40. It can be asymptomatic for many years and persons with NIDDM are not ketosis-prone. Although people with NIDDM are not dependent on insulin injections, insulin may be required to control hypoglycaemia. NIDDM is often, but not always, associated with obesity, and patients need to follow a careful diet and exercise regime.

**Nursing homes:** Establishments which provide long-term care involving regular basic nursing care to chronically ill, frail, disabled or convalescent persons or senile inpatients. In practice, they cater mainly for older people. They must be approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services and/or licensed by the State or Territory, or controlled by government departments.

**Outpatient:** See **Non-inpatient**.

**Over-the-counter drugs (OTC):** Pharmaceutical drugs available without prescription. Examples are cough mixtures, simple analgesics and antacids. Some OTCs can be sold only by pharmacists, but many can be sold through non-pharmacy outlets.

**PBS:** Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

**Peripheral vascular disease:** Is caused by blocked blood flow to the limbs, usually the legs or the feet.

**Pharmaceutical drugs:** Includes prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines.

**Prescription drugs:** Pharmaceutical drugs available only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner. These drugs are also known as Schedule Four (or S-4) drugs after the schedule to the State and Territory Acts of Parliament that regulates the sale and distribution of poisons and drugs. Prescription drugs are available only from pharmacists who are regulated by State and Territory laws whether they work in community or in hospital pharmacies.

**Prevalence:** The number of cases of a given disease or condition present in a given population at a given time. See also: **Incidence**.

**Prevention:** Refers to all health system activities relating to the primary prevention of diseases and injury, including screening for asymptomatic disease within the hospital and medical sectors.

**Private hospitals:** Privately owned and operated institutions approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. Private hospitals cater only for private patients who are treated by a doctor of their own choice and are charged fees for accommodation and medical services. Private hospitals can be classified as acute or psychiatric on the basis of the proportion of acute inpatient services provided.

**Psychiatric hospitals:** Establishments devoted primarily to the treatment and care of inpatients with psychiatric, mental, or behavioural disorders.

**Public health:** The programs, services, and institutions, outside the treatment sectors of the health system, which emphasise the prevention of disease and the health needs of the population as a whole.

**Public hospitals:** As determined by the State or Territory health authority, and includes both recognised and non-recognised hospitals. Recognised hospitals are those nominated by

States and Territories and accepted by the Commonwealth and appearing in schedules to each State/Territory Medicare Agreement (Schedule B in the current Medicare Agreements). They provide free shared-ward accommodation for all who require it and free treatment there by a hospital-appointed doctor. In addition, they provide, to those who are prepared to pay for it (for example, through private insurance), private ward accommodation and the doctor of choice. Thus, public hospitals service much private medical practice as well as public.

**PYLL 75:** Potential years of life lost to age 75 is a measure of premature mortality which estimates total years of life lost to age 75 due to deaths at ages prior to 75 years.

**Recurrent expenditure:** Expenditure which recurs continually or very frequently (for example, salaries). It may be contrasted with capital expenditure, such as the cost of hospital buildings and diagnostic equipment, for which the expenditure is made infrequently.

**Repatriation hospitals:** Acute care hospitals run by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs originally set up to provide hospital treatment for eligible veterans and their dependants at Commonwealth expense.

**Research:** Health and medical research as defined in the Australian Health Expenditure Bulletins (AIHW 1996a).

**Rheumatic heart disease:** Occurs as a result of childhood rheumatic fever which damages the heart valves.

**Separation (or discharge):** Occurs when an inpatient leaves hospital to return home, transfers to another institution, or dies. The number of separations in a year is almost the same as the number of hospital inpatient episodes.

**Stroke:** Also known as cerebrovascular disease. The main type of stroke is due to blockage of an artery supplying blood to the brain (ischaemic stroke), the other (haemorrhagic stroke) by bleeding into the brain or over the surface of the brain.

**Treatment:** Refers to all health system activities relating to the diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation for diseases, injuries and symptoms.