

Prevalent illnesses beyond the top causes of death



While the leading causes of death in Australia include cardiovascular disease, cancer, dementia, respiratory diseases, diabetes, and liver disease, there are other prevalent illnesses that significantly impact the population but may not always be reflected in mortality statistics. These include:

Disease and Cause	Examples	Deaths 2023 ¹	Prevalence 2023	Earliest detection age	Did you know
<p>Mental and behavioural conditions:</p> <p>Refers to a wide range of disorders that affect mood, thinking, and behaviour. These conditions can impact how individuals feel, think, and interact with others, and they can vary in severity.²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety disorders • Bipolar disorder • Schizophrenia • Obsessive-compulsive disorder • Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder • Eating disorders 	Can be an underlying and/or associated cause of death.	4.3 million Australians aged 16-85 experienced a mental disorder in the previous 12 months, which is about 22% of the population.	<p>4-17 years: 1 in 7 children and adolescents</p> <p>16-24 years: Nearly 40% of young Australians</p> <p>25-64 years: Around 22% of Australians aged 16-85.</p> <p>65+ years: Mental health conditions are less frequently diagnosed but can include depression, anxiety, and cognitive disorders such as dementia.</p>	<p>Mental health conditions are the most common illnesses reported by GPs in Australia.</p> <p>Nearly 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental illness in any given year.</p> <p>Mental health problems and substance use disorders are the leading cause of disability and poor health.</p>
<p>Musculoskeletal conditions:</p> <p>Are disorders that affect the bones, muscles, joints, and connective tissues. These conditions can cause pain, stiffness, swelling, and decreased mobility, impacting a person's ability to perform daily activities.³</p>	<p>Back problems</p> <hr/> <p>Arthritis</p> <hr/> <p>Osteoporosis</p>	Can be an underlying and/or associated cause of death.	<p>Affecting 15.7% of the population.⁴</p> <hr/> <p>Affecting 14.5% of the population.⁵</p> <hr/> <p>Affecting 3.4% of the population.⁶</p>	<p>Can occur at any age but is more common in adults and older adults.</p> <hr/> <p>Often detected in middle-aged and older adults but can occur in younger individuals as well.</p> <hr/> <p>Typically detected in older adults, particularly postmenopausal women.</p>	<p>Chronic back pain is a leading cause of disability and can significantly impact quality of life.</p> <hr/> <p>Arthritis is a major cause of chronic pain and disability, affecting daily activities and mobility.</p> <hr/> <p>Osteoporosis weakens bones, making them more susceptible to fractures, and is a significant health concern for aging populations.</p>

1 [Causes of Death, Australia](#). Australian Bureau of Statistics, 10 October 2024

2 [Mental illness - types, causes and diagnosis of mental health issues](#). Healthdirect, September 2023

3 [Chronic musculoskeletal conditions, Overview](#). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 13 June 2024

4 [Back problems](#). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 17 June 2024

5 [Chronic musculoskeletal conditions, All arthritis](#). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 17 June 2024

6 [Chronic musculoskeletal conditions, Osteoporosis and minimal trauma fractures](#). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 17 June 2024