Mortality in Malta during 2024
Key Findings

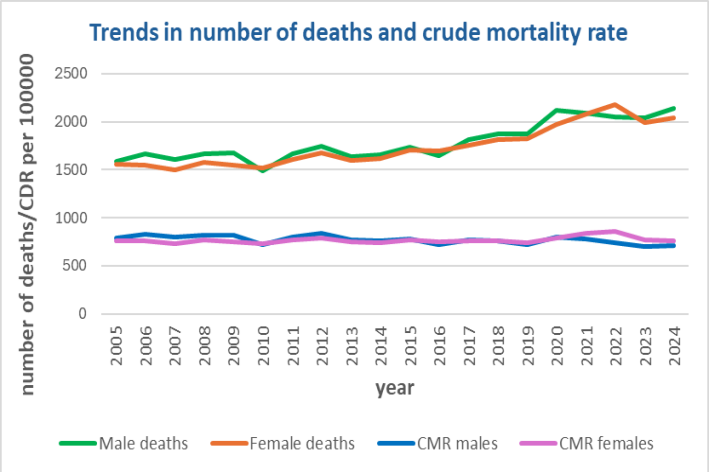
Synopsis

- ***There were 2144 male and 2037 female resident deaths in 2024, an increase in the number of deaths in both genders from the previous year.***
- ***The commonest cause of death was ischaemic heart disease in both genders combined and in males separately. However, for the first time, dementia was the commonest cause of death in females.***
- ***External causes of death dominate in the younger age groups, especially in males.***

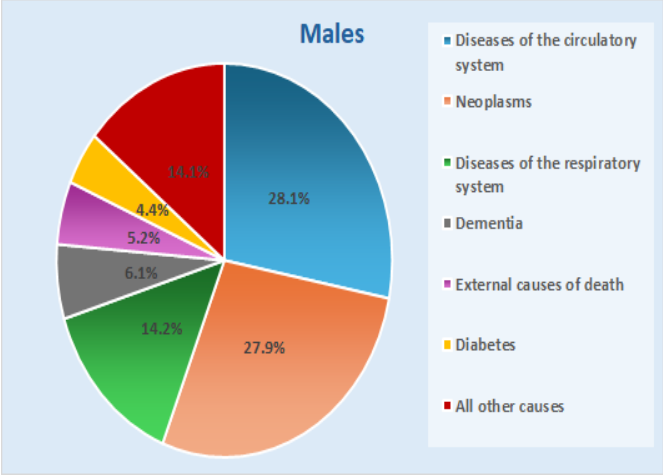
During the year 2024, there were 4181 deaths among residents of the Maltese Islands, dying locally or abroad, an increase of 148 deaths compared to the previous year. As seen in Figure 1, during the past 20 years, the number of deaths has increased. This increase can mainly be explained by population growth and ageing, as the crude mortality rate has remained relatively stable since 2004.

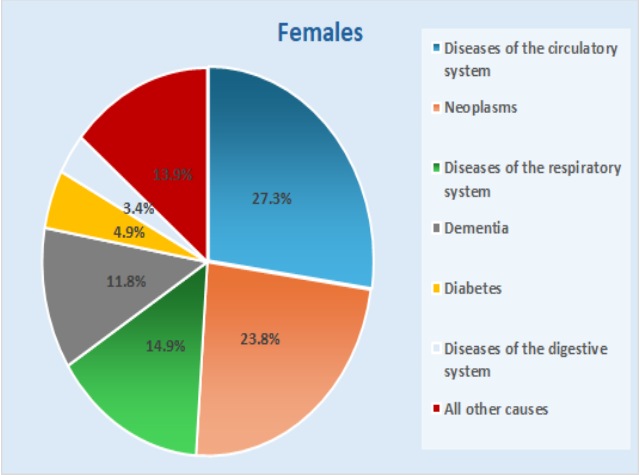
Life expectancy at birth in males remained stable at 81.6 years compared to 2023, but decreased slightly in females, from 85.2 years in 2023 to 85.1 years in 2024. Deaths due to circulatory diseases make up 27.7% of all deaths, followed by neoplasms, which account for 26% of all deaths. Dementia is much more common in females, while external causes of death are commoner in males (Figure 2 and 3)

Figure 1: Trends in the number of deaths and crude mortality rate by gender



Figures 2 and 3:Commonest causes of death by gender





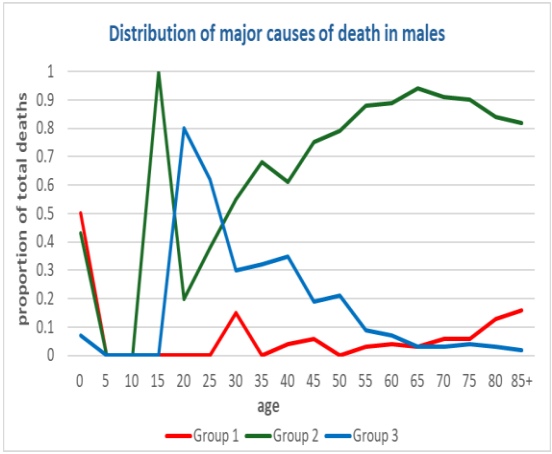
More detailed analysis of causes of death shows that Ischaemic heart disease is the commonest cause of death, followed by dementia and pneumonia, reflecting the ageing population of the Maltese Islands. The commonest cancer deaths were lung cancer in males and breast cancer in females as seen in Table 1. Covid-19 deaths decreased sharply in 2024 and do not feature in the top causes of death.

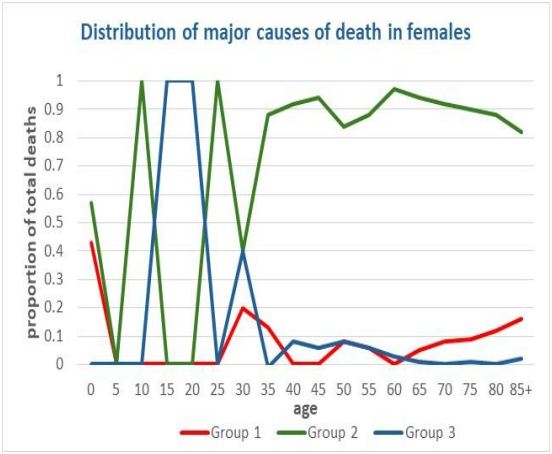
Table 1: Top causes of death in 2024 by gender

Top Causes of death in 2024	M	F	Total	% of Total Deaths
Ischaemic heart disease (I20-I25)	328	216	544	13.0
Dementia (F01-F03, G30, G31.8)	130	240	370	8.8
Pneumonia & other lower respiratory infections (J12-J22)	130	171	301	7.2
Other heart diseases (I26-I51)	99	139	238	5.7
Cerebrovascular disease (I60-I69)	113	111	224	5.4
Malignant neoplasms of trachea, bronchus & lung (C33-C34)	148	56	204	4.9
Diabetes (E10-E14)	95	100	195	4.7
Chronic lower respiratory diseases (J40-J47)	112	58	170	4.1
Malignant neoplasm of the colon, rectum and anus (C18-C21)	63	52	115	2.8
Malignant neoplasm of the pancreas (C25)	61	45	106	2.5
Malignant neoplasm of the breast (C50)	1	91	92	2.2
Hypertensive heart and renal disease (I10-I13)	26	53	79	1.9
Parkinsons disease (G20)	37	22	59	1.4
Falls (W01-W19)	37	19	56	1.3
Prostate (C61)	53	0	53	1.3
Malignant neoplasm of the liver (C22)	31	15	46	1.1
All other causes	680	649	1329	31.8
Total	**2144**	**2037**	**4181**	**100.0**

The main causes of death vary by age group, with non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular deaths and neoplasms being common causes of death in the middle-aged and elderly, while external causes of death, e.g. accidents and overdoses, are common causes of death in younger persons (Figures 4, 5). Figures 4 and 5 show the proportions of deaths by age group and cause of death category. Each age group sums up to 1 unless no deaths were reported in that age group.

Figures 4 and 5:Distribution of causes of death by gender





Group 1: Communicable, maternal, perinatal, & nutritional conditions

Group 2: Non-communicable diseases

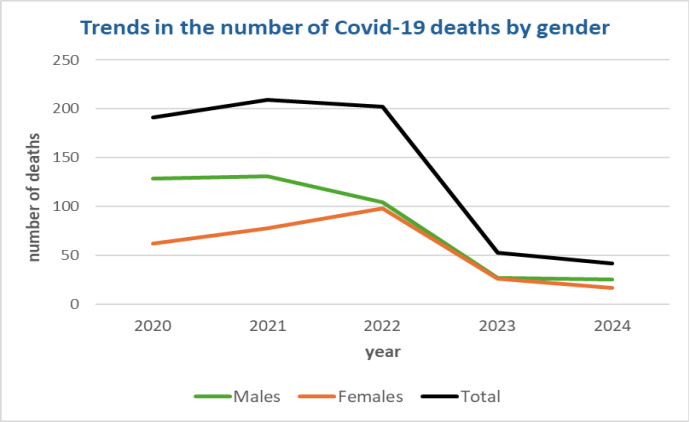
Group 3: External causes

Trends in Mortality from specific causes of death

Covid-19

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, mortality due to Covid-19 remained high from the year 2020 to the year 2022. Mortality has decreased during the years 2023 and 2024 but is still responsible for a number of deaths every year, as can be observed in Figure 6.

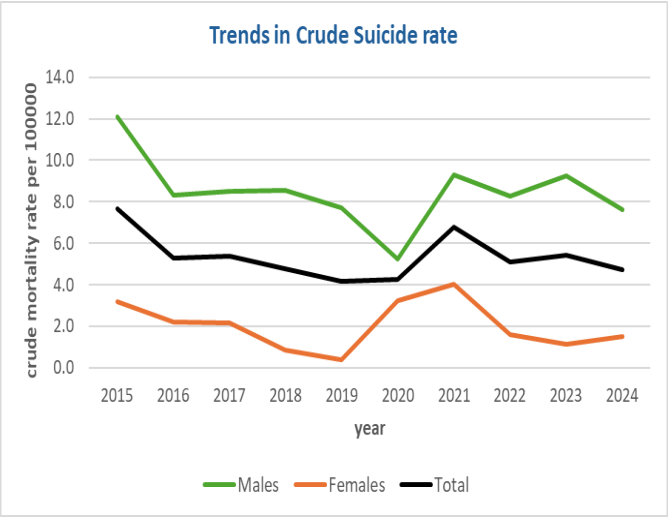
Figure 6: Trends in the number of COVID-19 deaths by gender



Suicides

Trends in crude suicide rate have remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. Rates are much higher in males as can be observed in Figure 7, and all age groups are affected.

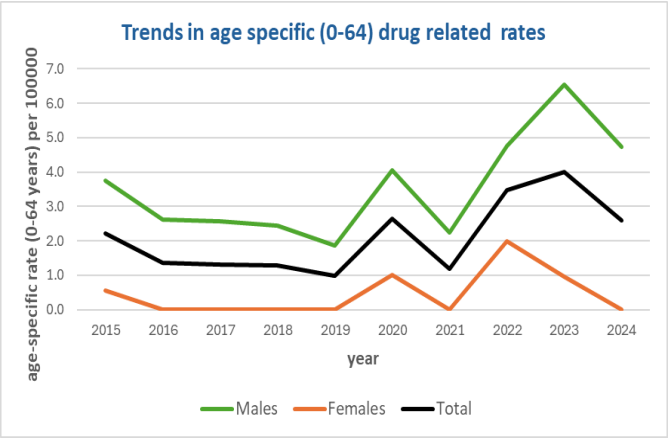
Figure 7: Trends in the crude mortality rate due to suicides



Drug Related Deaths

Trends in illicit drug-related deaths have increased in recent years, reaching a peak in 2023, but have remained high in 2024 (Figure 8). This is mainly seen in the younger age group, in males, with the mean age at death in 2024 being 45 years.

Figure 8: Trends in age specific mortality (0-64 years) rate due to drug related deaths



Methodological notes

Background

The information used to compile this report is based on details obtained from death certificates and supplemented by other sources of information, as well as collaboration with pathologists, public health doctors, police and certifying doctors.
All mortality data on the Maltese Islands is compiled by the Malta National Mortality Registry of the Directorate for Health Information and Research of the Ministry for Health and Active Ageing.
https://dhir.gov.mt/en/registries/deaths/

Classification used

The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health problems – ICD-10 is used to translate diagnoses of diseases from words into alphanumeric codes in order to permit easier storage, retrieval and analysis of the data.

Additional sources of information

National Statistics Office of Malta was the source for mid-year population data for 2024 by gender. **https://nso.gov.mt/**
Eurostat database was the source of information for life expectancy.
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database
ANACod software program was used to compile Figures 4 and 5. (*Analysing mortality and causes of death), ANACoD version 3, WHO 2021.*
https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/classification-of-diseases/services/analysing-mortality-levels-and-causes-of-death

Definitions

Crude Death Rate: This is equal to the total number of registered deaths divided by the total resident mid-yearly population of that year multiplied by 100,000.