

## Australians living longer, but dementia and Alzheimer's are a greater risk: Study

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1990 rank		2010 rank		2019 rank
1 Ischaemic heart disease	}	1 Lower-back pain	<u> </u>	1 Lower-back pain
2 Lower-back pain	J	2 Ischaemic heart disease		2 Ischaemic heart disease
3 Stroke	<u> </u>	3 Depressive disorders	<b>]</b>	3 Depressive disorders
4 Road injuries		4 Other musculoskeletal disorders	}	4 Falls
5 Neonatal disorders		5 Falls	]	5 Other musculoskeletal disorders
6 Depressive disorders		6 Neonatal disorders	], /	6 Drug-use disorders
7 Lung cancer		7 Headache disorders	]	7 Anxiety disorders
8 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease		8 Lung cancer		8 Headache disorders
9 Self-harm	1 /AX	9 Self-harm		9 Self-harm
10 Asthma	1// //	10 Anxiety disorders		10 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
11 Falls		11 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease		11 Lung cancer
12 Other musculoskeletal disorders		12 Stroke	]-/. >	12 Diabetes
13 Headache disorders		13 Drug-use disorders		13 Neonatal disorders
14 Anxiety disorders		14 Diabetes	<b>]</b>	14 Stroke
15 Congenital defects	\ /\/`	15 Road injuries	}	15 Mechanical forces
16 Colorectal cancer	N. / De	16 Mechanical forces		16 Asthma
17 Mechanical forces		17 Asthma	]	17 Road injuries
18 Drug-use disorders	1 / Time	18 Age-related hearing loss	<u> </u>	18 Age-related hearing loss
19 Oral disorders		19 Colorectal cancer	]	19 Colorectal cancer
20 Diabetes		20 Congenital defects	<u>,                                    </u>	20 Endometrial, metabolic, blood, and immune disorders
21 Breast cancer		21 Gynaecological diseases		21 Gynaecological diseases
22 Age-related hearing loss		22 Endometrial, metabolic, blood, and immune disorders		22 Alzheimer's disease
23 Gynaecological diseases		23 Alzheimer's disease		23 Oral disorders
24 Alzheimer's disease	- · ·	24 Oral disorders		24 Osteoarthritis
25 Sudden infant death syndrome	- The State of the	25 Osteoarthritis	,	25 Congenital defects
	The same of the sa			Non-communicable diseases Communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases Injuries

Changes in the ranking of age-standardized rate of disability-adjusted life-years between 1990 and 2010 and 2010 and 2019 for the leading causes of diseases, disabilities, and injuries in Australia. Credit: *The Lancet Public Health* (2023). DOI: 10.1016/S2468-2667(23)00123-8

A new analysis of Australia's disease burden reveals Australians are living six years longer than they were 30 years ago, but more people are being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.



Life expectancy at birth in Australia was 77 years in 1990 and had risen to 82.9 years by 2019 according to the data published in *The Lancet Public Health*, which also compared the burden of disease in Australia with 14 similar high socio-demographic (SDI) countries over the same period.

Associate Professor Shariful Islam from Deakin University's Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) said the results revealed some positive health outcomes but also highlighted areas where improvement is needed.

"Australia ranks better for diabetes and stroke than many of the countries in our study, but several diseases, including <u>chronic diseases</u> and diseases in older age groups, as well as risk factors and injuries are worse," Associate Professor Islam said.

"For example, Australia ranks poorly for anxiety and depressive disorders as well as Alzheimer's disease, dementia and falls among the elderly.

"This tells us that despite Australia's strong health care system we need to do better with our primary prevention and health promotion strategies."

The study represents the most extensive analysis of disease burden in Australia using standardized and globally comparable metrics developed by the Global Burden of Disease.

The comprehensive assessment of premature death, morbidity and disability, and the risk factors contributing to <u>poor health</u> in the Australian population analyzed 286 causes of death, 369 diseases and injuries, and 87 behavioral, metabolic, and environmental and occupational risks.



Associate Professor Islam said estimates of disease burden in Australia provide valuable evidence to guide population health policies and health care priorities.

"As <u>life expectancy</u> at birth continues to increase, functional health loss associated with aging, such as <u>low back pain</u>, ischemic heart disease, depressive disorders, falls, and <u>musculoskeletal disorders</u>, continue to contribute to the largest burden of disease in Australia," Associate Professor Islam said.

"The leading cause of deaths in Australia were <u>ischemic heart disease</u>, stroke, tracheal, bronchus, and lung cancer, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

"Poor mental health, drug use disorders, as well as self-harm and interpersonal violence are among the emerging health issues in Australia.

"Preventive and remedial health policies and practices addressing these issues as well as chronic diseases and risk factors are needed to ensure the sustainability of the Australian health care system."

**More information:** The burden and trend of diseases and their risk factors in Australia, 1990–2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019, *The Lancet Public Health* (2023). DOI: 10.1016/S2468-2667(23)00123-8

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