

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – Covid-19 related deaths and pre-existing conditions in Northern Ireland: March-November 2020



9:30am Wednesday 23rd December 2020

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published a report on pre-existing conditions associated with Covid-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland.

Between 1st March and 30th September 2020, there were 902 Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland. Covid-19 was the underlying cause of death (that is, the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death) for 807 deaths (89.5% of Covid-19 related deaths).

Pre-existing conditions are defined as any mention on the death certificate of a condition that pre-dated or was independent of Covid-19. The average number of pre-existing conditions was 2.32; slightly higher for males (2.40) compared to females (2.24). There were no pre-existing conditions for 77 of the 902 Covid-19 related deaths (8.5%).

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease was the most common pre-existing condition, appearing in 327 of the 902 Covid-19 related deaths (36.3%). The next most common pre-existing conditions were hypertensive diseases (180) and diabetes (165 deaths).

The main pre-existing condition, the one most likely to cause death in the absence of Covid-19, was dementia and Alzheimer's disease (297), followed by ischaemic heart diseases (81) and chronic lower respiratory diseases (67 deaths).

During October and November 2020, a further 504 Covid-19 related deaths were registered, of which 37 deaths (7.3%) had no pre-existing conditions. At present, there is insufficient information to identify the number and type of pre-existing conditions over this two-month period.

Over the entire period between 1st March and 30th November 2020, there were 1,406 Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland, including 114 deaths (8.1%) without pre-existing conditions.

NISRA

December 2020

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. A detailed report on Covid-19 related deaths and pre-existing conditions can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-related-deaths-and-pre-existing-conditions>
2. Statistics on weekly deaths registered in Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/weekly-deaths>
3. Differences between NISRA's death registration statistics and the daily totals reported via the Department of Health are as follows:
 - The **daily updates** provided by the Department of Health (DoH) count the number of deaths reported by Trusts, where the deceased had a positive test for Covid-19 and died within 28 days, whether or not Covid-19 was the cause of death. DoH figures will not capture all deaths that do not meet this definition. These data are important because they are available earlier, and therefore give a quicker indication of what is happening day by day and are broadly comparable with the figures released daily in other parts of the United Kingdom (UK). The DoH reported 561 deaths associated with Covid-19 by 31st August 2020 (including revisions up to 28th September).
 - These statistics, like the NISRA weekly, provisional death statistics, are based on death registration information collected by the General Register Office, and count all deaths where Covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate by the doctor who certified the death, whether or not Covid-19 was the primary underlying cause of death. The figures include cases where the doctor noted that there was suspected or probable coronavirus infection involved in the death. As a result totals from this source will usually be higher than the relevant daily figures - because the DoH daily updates only include those who have tested positive for the virus.
4. Death statistics based on underlying cause are published quarterly. Latest figures are for deaths registered up to the end of September 2020 and are available at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/registrar-general-quarterly-tables-2020>
5. All media queries to Department of Finance Press Office at dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk or on Tel: 028 90816724. Out of office hours please contact the Duty Press Officer on 028 9037 8110 and your call will be returned.
6. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

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