

CHAPTER 2. PARTICIPATING FACILITIES AND DATA REPRESENTIVITY

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For 1999 a total of 14 897 fatal injuries were registered in the NIMSS. This figure differs slightly from the one that appears in the 1999 NIMSS Annual Report because outstanding cases from some mortuaries have since been added to the 1999 database.

For 2000 the caseload increased to 18 876. Fifteen mortuaries in five provinces collected data for the period 1 January to 31 December 2000. In the absence of accurate and reliable routinely collected data, current estimates for the national number of deaths that occur due to non-natural causes range from 68 930² to 80 000³ per annum. This accounts for between 12% and 15% of the more than half a million deaths that occur annually from all causes of death.⁴ Therefore, the data collected by NIMSS in 2000 accounted for between 24% and 29% of all non-natural mortality. The deaths were mainly recorded from urban mortuaries and city-wide coverage was limited to Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Pretoria.

For 2001 the caseload increased to 25 361. Thirty-two mortuaries in six provinces collected data for the period 1 January to 31 December 2001, including 14 Mpumalanga mortuaries, mainly in rural areas. The data collected by NIMSS in 2001 accounted for between 31.7% and 39% of all non-natural mortality. For 2001 NIMSS coverage included five cities, namely Port Elizabeth, East London, Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban. Because the registered cases were not adequately representative of rural areas, the data were not used to calculate national rates.

Sex was known for 25 040 cases, of which 80.5% were male and 19.5% female. Of the 25 024 cases where population group was known, Africans constituted 73.6% of cases, Coloureds 12.3%, Whites 11.2%, and Asians 2.9%. The majority of victims were young adults, with 36.4% of cases being aged 15 to 29, and 35.9% aged 30 to 44 at time of death. Four per cent of the victims were younger than 5 years, 3.8% were 5 - 14 years, 14% were 45 - 59 years and 5.9% were 60 years and older.

In 2001 the NIMSS extended its coverage with the inclusion of surveillance sites in Mpumalanga (including rural mortuaries), East London and Durban. Further expansion will occur in subsequent years until total national case coverage is achieved.

Not all cases had information for every item, and therefore totals in the following graphs and tables vary. Owing to the relatively few cases where date

Table I. Participating mortuaries, 2001 (N = 25 361).

Province	City	Mortuary	TOTAL
Eastern Cape	East London	Mdantsane	482
		Woodbrook	1061
	Port Elizabeth	Gelvandale	626
		Mount Road	318
		New Brighton	747
Gauteng	Johannesburg	Diepkloof	1807
		Germiston	2404
		Johannesburg	2732
		Rodepoort	1359
	Pretoria	Bronkhorstspuit	205
		MEDUNSA	492
		Pretoria	2076
KwaZulu-Natal	Durban	Chatsworth	843
		Gale Street	2372
		Phoenix	1269
Mpumalanga		Balfour	60
		Belfast	46
		Bethal	24
		Carolina	58
		Delmas	59
		Groblersdal	101
		Hazyview	50
		Kwamhlanu	289
		Lydenburg	56
		Nelspruit	174
		Sabie	40
		Standerton	36
		Valksrust	95
		Witbank	408
Northern Cape	Kimberley	Kimberley	355
Western Cape	Cape Town	Salt River	2633
		Tygerberg	2084
TOTAL			25 361

and time of injury were available, date and time of death have been reported instead. While death would have occurred at the time of injury for a majority of cases, some victims will have died hours or days after the injury itself, and this bias must be kept in mind when reading the relevant tables and charts.

² Bradshaw D, Groenewald P, Laubscher R, Nannan N, Nojilana B, Norman R, Pieterse D, Schneider M. Initial burden of disease estimates for South Africa, 2000. Medical Research Council Burden of Disease Research Unit. Technical report (in press).

³ Department of Health. Investigation into the transfer of medicolegal mortuaries from the South African Police Service to provincial Departments of Health: Audit and recommendations (Volume 1). March 2000.

⁴ <http://www.assa.org.za/committees/aids/summarystats.htm>