

NORTHERN IRELAND STATISTICS AND RESEARCH AGENCY

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Associations of Alcohol-specific mortality in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published research examining recent trends and socio-economic associations in alcohol-specific mortality in the Northern Ireland population.

Age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) **are used to directly compare mortality rates for different groups, including males with females, or regions, using the age structure of a standard population.** The alcohol-specific ASMR (per 100,000) in Northern Ireland, for persons aged 15-74 years, increased by 48% from 15.8 in 2001 to 23.4 in 2019. Between 2001 and 2019, male (m) mortality rates for alcohol-specific deaths have been approximately two times higher than female (f) rates. However, mortality rates for females have risen more sharply than for males since 2001, both where alcohol is the underlying cause of death (+41% m, +64% f) and where alcohol is a contributory cause (+76% m, +124% f).

For contributory alcohol deaths in younger persons (aged 16-44 years), the main underlying causes of death were drug-related (38%) and transport accidents (18%). Older adults (aged 45+ years) with alcohol as a contributory factor in deaths had most commonly a chronic condition as the underlying cause of death for example, circulatory (29%) and respiratory illness (16%).

There was notable geographic variation in alcohol deaths (combined underlying and contributory causes). The highest ASMRs (per 100,000) were evident in Belfast (59.9) and Derry and Strabane (49.2) Local Government Districts. There was a five-fold greater alcohol-specific (combined underlying & contributory causes) ASMR in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas.

Alcohol deaths (combined underlying and contributory causes) are observed across a range of socio-economic groups, however, after taking account of other factors, the most at-risk groups are those in households without access to a car; males; those living alone having been separated/divorced or widowed; and persons aged 45-64 years. An excess risk of alcohol death (combined underlying and contributory causes) was associated with urban residence (22%) and with an indication of mental illness (20%).

Females aged 65-74 years (compared to females aged 16-44 years) had a 42% reduced likelihood of alcohol death while males aged 65-74 years had a 23% increased likelihood of alcohol death (compared to males aged 16-44 years).

The research has been funded by the [Economic & Social Research Council](#) via [ADR UK](#) (Administrative Data Research UK) and taken forward by NISRA, who together with the Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (comprising the Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University), form the ADR Northern Ireland (ADR NI).

Today's research findings follow a previous [NISRA-led published research report](#), published in March 2020, analysing the socio-economic associations with drug-related mortality in Northern Ireland.