

Appendix B: Key terms and abbreviations

Measures

Years of life lost (YLLs): YLLs are a measure of premature mortality; they estimate the years of potential life lost due to premature death by multiplying the number of deaths at each age by the highest life expectancy possible at the age the deaths occurred. Hence, deaths at a younger age correspond to more YLLs than deaths at an older age. This life expectancy is calculated by looking at the lowest age-specific mortality rates in populations over 5 million people in total and using these to create a theoretical highest possible life expectancy at each age.

Years lived with disability (YLDs): YLDs are a measure of ill health. They are calculated by multiplying the prevalence of a condition by the short- or long-term loss of health associated with it (its disability weighting).

Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs): DALYs are a composite measure summarising the number of healthy years of life lost in a population due to both ill health and deaths. They are created by summing YLLs and YLDs.

Metrics

Crude numbers: The total number of YLLs or YLDs for a given population, with no reference to the underlying population size or structure.

Age-specific rates: The number of YLLs or YLDs for a particular age group as a rate for the number of people in that age group: for example, 500 YLLs per 100,000 5–9 year olds.

Age-standardised rates: As age has a strong relationship with ill health and death, comparing crude rates per 100,000 between areas with different proportions of older people and children can be misleading. Age-standardised rates avoid this by showing what the rate would be if each area in question had the same population structure.

In this briefing, an age-standardised rate refers to one which has been directly age standardised. Directly standardised rates are calculated by segmenting the data into different age categories and creating age-specific rates for each area. These age-specific rates are then applied to the corresponding age groups in what is known as a 'standard population' (a hypothetical or real population, broken down into numbers by different age groups) to create an expected number of YLLs or YLDs. For example, if the age-specific rate for area A was 500 YLLs per 100,000 and there are 5,000 children aged 5–9 in the standard population, we would expect 25 YLLs. The expected numbers of YLLs or YLDs for each age group are summed and then divided by the total standard population to create an overall rate for each area.

Abbreviated cause terms

Several cause names have been abbreviated for use in the text and tables to improve readability. These are as follows:

Cause	Abbreviated term
Alzheimer's disease and other dementias	Dementia
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	COPD
Cirrhosis and other chronic liver diseases	Cirrhosis

Colon and rectum cancer	Bowel cancer
Ischaemic heart disease	IHD
Lower respiratory infections	LRIs
Tracheal, bronchus, and lung cancer	Lung cancer
