



The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) documents the continued downward trend in the hospitalization rate and average length of stay in its 1986 report from the National Hospital Discharge Survey. The latest in an annual series of life tables from NCHS shows life expectancy trends from 1900 to 1985. A new report updates the figures on height, weight, and body measurements.

## 1986 Hospitalization Report

According to the 1986 annual summary of the National Hospital Discharge Survey, the hospital discharge rate has continued a decline that began in 1983. The 1986 rate was 143 discharges per 1,000 civilian population—a 14 percent decrease in 3 years (see chart).

One factor contributing to the recent decline is the shift of many surgical procedures from inpatient to outpatient settings. The use of diagnosis related groups (DRGs) as the basis for reimbursing hospitals for inpatient care has also had a major impact since its implementation in 1983.

The average length of stay has also declined over a longer period. Average length of stay in 1986 was 6.4 days compared with 7.6 days a decade ago.

During 1986 an estimated 34.4 million inpatients, excluding newborns, were discharged from short-stay, non-Federal hospitals in the United States. The rates per 1,000 population were 121 for males and 164 for females, making the rate for females about 36 percent higher than the rate for males. This difference can be attributed primarily to the large number of women in the childbearing years who are hospitalized for deliveries and obstetrical conditions.

The National Hospital Discharge Survey is based on a sample of records drawn from a sample of the nation's non-Federal, short-stay hospitals. Advance Data No. 145, "1986 Summary: National Hospital Discharge Survey," is available from NCHS.

## Life Expectancy 1900-85

Life expectancy at birth was 74.7 years in 1985, up from 47.3 years at

the turn of the century as documented in the latest annual life table report from NCHS. "Vital Statistics of the United States, 1985, Life Tables" shows life expectancy at birth by sex and race for 1900 to 1985. During that period, life expectancy increased for all Americans, regardless of race or sex. Increases in life expectancy between 1900 and 1985 ranged from 25 years for white males to 40 years for black females. In 1985 life expectancy at birth was 71.9 years, white males; 78.7 years, white females; 65.3 years, black males; and 73.5 years, black females. The data used to prepare these U.S. life tables for 1985 are the final mortality statistics and the estimates of the population by age, race, and sex prepared by the Bureau of the Census.

The life expectancy data produced by NCHS is an essential component in the demographic data base used in health, social, and economic research and in planning. Life tables are a staple ingredient in actuarial, pension, and insurance analyses. In addition, the life tables are certified and frequently used as legal evidence. Copies are available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Order number 017-022-01027-5; Price \$1.50.

## Height and Weight Update

The average adult male weighs 172 pounds. Average weight for women is 144 pounds. The average heights for adult men and women are 69.1 inches and 63.7 inches, respectively. These statistics, along with other body measurements, appear in a new report from NCHS, "Anthropometric Reference Data and Prevalence of Overweight, United States, 1976-1980." Data are based on the second National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which collected data through interviews and health examinations of a sample of the population ages 6 months to 74 years. In addition to height and weight, the report includes measurements of body mass index (weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared), sitting height, triceps and subscapular skinfolds, mid-upper arm circumfer-

ences, and elbow breadth. Head and chest circumferences were taken for children. Data are shown for each of the measurements by age, sex, and race.

The survey showed that about 34 million U.S. adults—over one-quarter of the population—are overweight. Approximately 15 million men (24.2 percent) and 19 million women (27.1 percent) are overweight. The prevalence of overweight is much higher for black women than for white women (43.8 percent compared with 25.1 percent). However, black and white men were about equally likely to be overweight.

Overweight is defined in terms of a weight-adjusted-for-height index or body mass index. Specifically, the definition of overweight is a body mass index equal to or greater than that at the 85th percentile of men and women ages 20-29 years. Severe overweight was marked at the 95th percentile. The rationale for using persons ages 20-29 years as the reference population was that most young adults are relatively lean; the increase in body weight that usually occurs as men and women age is due almost entirely to fat accumulation. This report updates the statistics produced in the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1971-74 and is available from the Government Printing Office. Order number 017-022-01023-2; Price \$4.

## New NCHS Public Use Data Tapes

A number of public use data tapes were recently released by NCHS. Several tapes represent the first release of data from a particular program; others update an annual or periodic data collection. All are available from the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, VA 22161, (703) 487-4650. Price (at 1600 bpi) and order numbers are shown. For selected data files, the cost of the file at 6250 bpi is also shown.

**NHANES I Epidemiologic Followup Study 1982-84.** Four tapes present the data from the followup study to the first National Health and Nutrition Ex-

amination Survey (NHANES I). The followup study was jointly initiated by NCHS and the National Institute on Aging in collaboration with other National Institutes of Health and Public Health Service agencies. The primary purpose of the followup study is to investigate the relationships between physiological, nutritional, behavioral, and demographic characteristics collected at the NHANES I Interview (1971-75) and subsequent morbidity or mortality from specific diseases and conditions.

The followup study was conducted between 1982 and 1984. The study population included the 14,407 persons ages 25-74 years at the time of the NHANES I survey. Tracing was successfully completed on 93 percent of the cohort. Personal interviews including weight, pulse, and blood pressure measurements were conducted with surviving subjects. Interviews with proxy respondents were conducted if the subject was deceased or incapacitated. Hospital and nursing home records were collected for all subjects, and death certificates were obtained for decedents. There are four public use files available from the study:

**Vital and Tracing Status**—contains tracing, vital status, and demographic data for all 14,407 respondents on a master file. PB88-102264; Price \$200

**Interview Tape**—contains information collected from the 12,220 subject and proxy interviews. PB88-121298; Price \$200

**Health Care Facility Record Tape**—contains diagnostic and summary information abstracted from 17,694 hospital and 433 nursing home records. PB88-102280; Price \$200

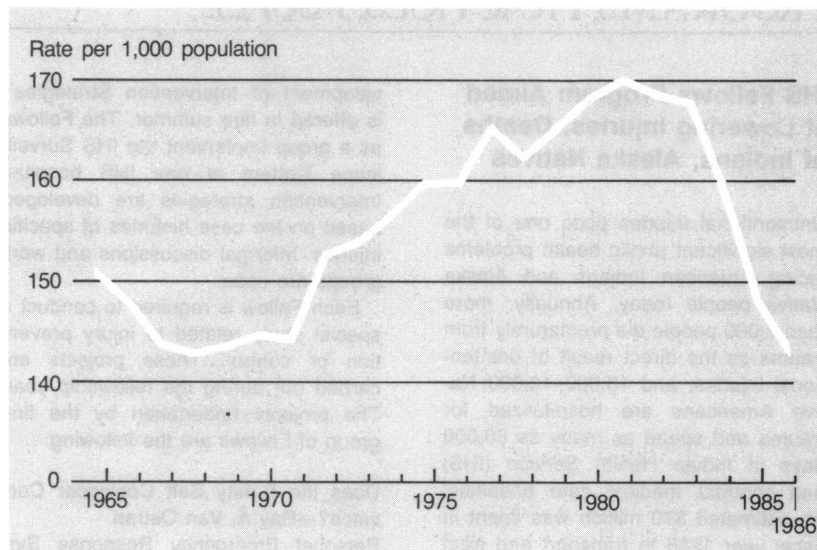
**Mortality Data Tape**—contains death certificate information coded according to ICD-9 multiple cause of death procedures for 1,935 decedents. PB88-102306; Price \$200

All followup study tapes can be linked to the NHANES I public use data tapes.

**1985 Vital Statistics Data Tapes.** Based on data collected through the National Vital Registration System, the 1985 tapes present the official vital statistics for the nation. Individual tapes contain the full vital record (with identifying information removed) or summary data organized by geographic area or cause-of-death for the mortality files. The following files can be ordered:

Nativity, detail, 1985—PB87-230694;

Rates of discharge from short-stay non-Federal hospitals in the United States, 1965-86



Price \$1,900 (6250 bpi, \$1,000)

Nativity, local area, summary, 1985—PB88-102322; Price \$400

Nativity, State summary, 1985—PB88-100433; Price \$200

Mortality, detail, 1985—PB88-101316; Price \$900 (6250 bpi, \$500)

Mortality, local area summary, 1985—PB88-101357; Price \$400

Mortality, cause-of-death summary, 1985—PB88-101332; Price \$600

Mortality, multiple cause-of-death—PB87-235057; Price \$1,700 (6250 bpi, \$900)

Divorce, detail, 1985—PB88-127865; Price \$200

**National Health Interview Survey, 1986.** The 1986 public use data file from the National Health Interview Survey is now available. The file presents data collected in household interviews with a sample of the nation's civilian, noninstitutionalized population. The survey collects data on the prevalence and extent of illness and disability in the population, incidence of acute conditions and injuries, use of health services, and a wide range of other health and demographic characteristics. Order PB88-146139; Price \$600

In addition to the core questionnaire from which is produced the survey's primary data tape, current health topics are added each year to the basic questionnaire. The 1986 special health topics covered vitamin and mineral supplement intake, dental services, information on job history and occupation, functional limitations, and health insurance. For more information or to

order these files, contact NCHS directly.

**1985 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey.** The public use data file of the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey for 1985 has been released. It contains data on visits to office-based physicians including information on symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment. Demographic information on the patient and characteristics of the physician's practice, such as speciality, are collected in this survey. The previous survey was fielded in 1981. Order PB88-103676; Price \$200

**National Hospital Discharge Survey, 1986.** This survey of hospital utilization in the nation's short-stay, non-Federal hospitals is conducted on an annual basis. The 1986 file is PB88-129440; Price \$200

For more information on the activities and publications described in this article, contact the Scientific and Technical Information Branch, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD, 20782; phone (301) 436-8500.

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