

## NHANES III Anthropometric Procedures Video New Tool for Researchers

Researchers who analyze the body measurement data in the National Health and Examination Survey or who want to collect anthropometric data using the standards and methodology developed by the National Center for Health Statistics for this national survey, have a new tool to help them with the release of the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) Anthropometric Procedures Video.

NHANES III is the latest in a series of health examination surveys begun in the early 1960's to measure the health of Americans through detailed interviews, laboratory tests, and direct physical examinations. The examination component consists of medical and dental examinations, as well as physiological measurements, including a comprehensive set of body measurements. The body measurements are used to assess growth and development, establish reference data, set national standards, identify populations and individuals at risk for disease and illness, and to conduct epidemiological research.

The NHANES III Anthropometric video contains the standardized anthropometric procedures used throughout NHANES III for the body measurement component of the survey. The use of these standardized anthropometric procedures are important for health researchers to compare data collected locally and with selected populations to sample of the nation's civilian, noninstitutionalized population covered in NHANES III. A better understanding of the measurement techniques used will also aid in the analysis and use of the findings.

The video outlines the standard-

ized anthropometric procedures for:

- Body weight
- Standing height
- Sitting height
- Upper leg length
- Knee height
- Arm circumference
- Waist circumference
- Buttcks circumference
- Thigh circumference
- Head circumference
- Skinfolds
  - Triceps
  - Subscapular
  - Suprailiac
- Wrist breadth
- Biacromial breadth
- Biiliac breadth
- Elbow breadth

*The NHANES Anthropometric Procedures Video is available from both the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, and the National Technical Information Service. Please contact NCHS for ordering information. For more information about the videotape contact the Data Dissemination Branch 301-436-8500.*

## Alzheimer's Disease Mortality Trends Analyzed in New Reports

New data from the National Center for Health Statistics document for the first time trends in deaths from Alzheimer's disease. A new trend report covers the period 1979-91.<sup>1</sup> The data for 1992 and 1993 appear in the latest report of final mortality data for the nation.<sup>2</sup> Some of the more significant findings:

- Alzheimer's disease accounted for 16,754 deaths in 1993, 98 percent of which were to Americans 65 years of age and older.
- The number of people who died from Alzheimer's in 1993 was nearly twenty times the number

reported in 1979 (857) when the disease was first identified separately as a cause of death. However, the increase probably reflects improvements in reporting and diagnosis of the disease rather than increases in prevalence.

- The overall age-adjusted death rate from Alzheimer's increased to 2.3 deaths per 100,000 in 1993. Rates had increased rapidly from 1979 to 1988 before leveling off between 1988 and 1992.
- Death rates from Alzheimer's increase with age. For Americans ages 65-74 the death rate was nearly 10 deaths per 100,000 population. For persons 75-84 the rate increased to 64 per 100,000 population and for those 85 and over it was almost 228 per 100,000 population.
- Age-adjusted death rates from Alzheimer's were greater for males than for females, but the differences in rates by sex decreased substantially from 1979 to 1993. Age-adjusted rates were nearly two times higher for the white population than for the black population.

In addition to the deaths for which Alzheimer's disease is reported as the underlying or initiating cause of death, Alzheimer's disease is mentioned on many other death certificates as an additional condition contributing to death. Reports are based on information from death certificates completed by funeral directors, attending physicians, coroners, and medical examiners.

## Final Mortality Report for 1993

NCHS has released its annual report on final mortality statistics for 1993. The report presents the latest final data and trends in such key

indicators as life expectancy, infant mortality, and age-adjusted death rates. The report shows leading causes of death for the total population and by age, sex, and race. Firearm and HIV deaths are tracked as well as alcohol- and drug-associated deaths. Some of the highlights from the report include:

- In 1993, the overall age-adjusted death rate in the United States increased for the first time since 1988, interrupting a general decline that has been occurring since 1930.
- The overall increase was primarily due to increases in deaths from heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), HIV, accidents, pneumonia and influenza, diabetes, and stroke.
- Life expectancy in the U.S. declined from 75.8 years in 1992 to 75.5 in 1993, the first decline since 1980. The decline was primarily attributed to the two influenza epidemics of 1993 which resulted in large increases in mortality—particularly for older Americans—from pneumonia and several chronic conditions, including heart disease, COPD, and diabetes.
- Despite the decline in life expectancy in 1993, provisional data for 1994 show life expectancy increasing almost back to the 1992 level (75.7 years).
- Increases were documented for causes of death that disproportionately affect younger people. HIV ranked among the ten leading causes of death for white and black males and females in age groups 1 to 4, 5 to 14, 15 to 24, and 25 to 44 respectively. Also, nearly 1000 children under the age of 15 died as a result of

firearms injuries, including 116 children under age 5 and 841 children between the ages of 5 and 14.

## Current Estimates from the 1994 National Health Interview Survey

The latest edition of Current Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey<sup>3</sup> provides detailed data from that annual survey of the nation's civilian, noninstitutionalized population. The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) monitors the incidence of acute conditions, the prevalence of chronic conditions and disability, episodes of persons injured, restricted activity due to illness, health status, and the use of medical services—including physician contacts and short-stay hospitalizations. Estimates of these health characteristics are shown by age, sex, race, family income, geographic region and place of residence. The comprehensive report also includes the questionnaire used for the full survey as well as the data summarized in Current Estimates.

Among the questions which can be answered by the findings in this report are: how common is the common cold? what's the most prevalent chronic condition? and how often does the average American contact (in person or by telephone) the doctor? The answers to those questions are respectively: the common cold is rather common with 25.4 reported cases per 100 population. Chronic sinusitis is the most frequently reported chronic condition covered in the survey, with almost 35 million Americans reporting this condition. Arthritis is a close second at just over 33 million and other frequent conditions are orthopedic impairments (31 million), hypertension (28 million), and heart disease and hearing impairments (both at 22

million). A physician contact is described as a consultation in person or by phone for examination, treatment or diagnosis. The rate of physician contacts for 1994 is 6.1 doctor visits per person per year. Almost 80 percent of the population had reported a physician contact during the preceding year. In the survey, 37.9 percent of the population rated their health as excellent; 28.5 percent as very good; 23.4, good; and 10.2, fair or poor.

*NCHS publications and assistance in obtaining printed and electronic data products are available from NCHS, Data Dissemination Branch, room 1064, 6525 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, MD 20782. Information about NCHS data products and programs is also available through the NCHS Home Page on the World Wide Web, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm>>. Publications can be downloaded directly from the Home Page and there is an interactive query system to request data or assistance.*

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## References

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2. Gardner P. Advance Report of Final Mortality Statistics, 1993. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 1996;44 (Suppl).
3. Adams PF, Marano MA. Current Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 1994. Vital and Health Statistics Series 10, No. 193. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics.