British Heart Foundation

# Global Cardiovascular Disease Factsheet

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# Cardiovascular Disease (Heart & Circulatory Diseases)

**Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is an umbrella term for a range of conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels. These can include diseases which are inherited or that a person is born with, as well as those that develop later, such as coronary heart disease, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia.**

- There are around 650 million people living with cardiovascular disease across the world – this number has been rising due to changing lifestyles, an ageing and growing global population, and improved survival rates from heart attacks and strokes – and will continue to rise if these trends continue.
- Globally it's estimated that around 1 in 12 people are living with cardiovascular disease (CVD).
- In 2023 globally it's estimated that there were around 330 million males and 320 million females living with cardiovascular disease.
- In 1990 an estimated 320 million people were living with cardiovascular disease globally; this rose to 400 million in 2000 and 490 million in 2010.
- Since 1991, the estimated number of people living with cardiovascular disease globally has doubled.
- Common cardiovascular conditions include coronary (ischaemic) heart disease (global prevalence estimated at 240 million in 2023), peripheral arterial (vascular) disease (120 million), stroke (105 million) and atrial fibrillation (59 million).
- Each year around 53 million people across the world develop a cardiovascular disease – that's nearly the population of England.

# Global Cardiovascular Disease Prevalence 2023

# Global Deaths from Cardiovascular Disease

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) causes around 1 in 3 deaths globally; an estimated 20 million deaths in 2023 - an average of 55,000 people each day or one death every 1.5 seconds.
- Cardiovascular disease is the world's biggest killer.
- Globally, cardiovascular disease killed an estimated 10.3 million males and 9.6 million females in 2023 – both around one in three.
- Age-standardised death rates from cardiovascular disease have been falling across the world – this is primarily due to improvements in life expectancy. But such trends have led to more people living to an age when it is more common to develop, or die from, cardiovascular disease.

## Biggest Killers Worldwide

NB coverage and accuracy will vary between nations, and 2023 estimates will be modelled on historical mortality data, where official statistics are unavailable. The Lancet's Global Burden of Disease (GBD) has produced 2023 estimates; World Health Organization (WHO) has produced 2021 estimates. We present GBD data on the next page; see references for alternative analysis and rankings by the WHO.

# Biggest Killers Worldwide (GBD 2023 Estimates)

| | MEN | | WOMEN | | TOTAL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Coronary heart disease | 5.0 million | Coronary heart disease | 3.9 million | Coronary heart disease | 8.9 million |
| 2 | **Stroke** | 3.5 million | Stroke | 3.3 million | Stroke | 6.8 million |
| 3 | **COPD** | 1.8 million | COPD | 1.6 million | COPD | 3.4 million |
| 4 | **Lung cancer** | 1.4 million | Alzheimer's and dementia | 1.5 million | Lower respiratory disease | 2.5 million |
| 5 | Lower respiratory disease | 1.3 million | Lower respiratory disease | 1.2 million | Alzheimer's and dementia | 2.2 million |

*COPD = chronic obstructive pulmonary disease*

- In every recent year, bar the COVID-19 pandemic year of 2020, coronary heart disease was the **single** biggest killer globally, and stroke was the second biggest.
- Other common cardiovascular causes of death are hypertensive heart disease, atrial fibrillation and rheumatic heart disease.
- GBD forecasts that CHD and stroke will have the two biggest global disease burdens in 2050 (in DALYs; in 2023 they were #1 and #3).

*DALYs = disability-adjusted life years*

# Highest & Lowest Cardiovascular Death Rates Worldwide

| | HIGHEST | ASDR 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Egypt** | 704 |
| 2 | **Solomon Islands** | 687 |
| 3 | **Afghanistan** | 587 |
| 4 | **Haiti** | 584 |
| 5 | **Sudan** | 575 |

| | LOWEST | ASDR 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Israel | 73.6 |
| 2 | South Korea | 73.7 |
| 3 | Japan | 76.5 |
| 4 | France | 79.6 |
| 5 | Australia | 81.1 |

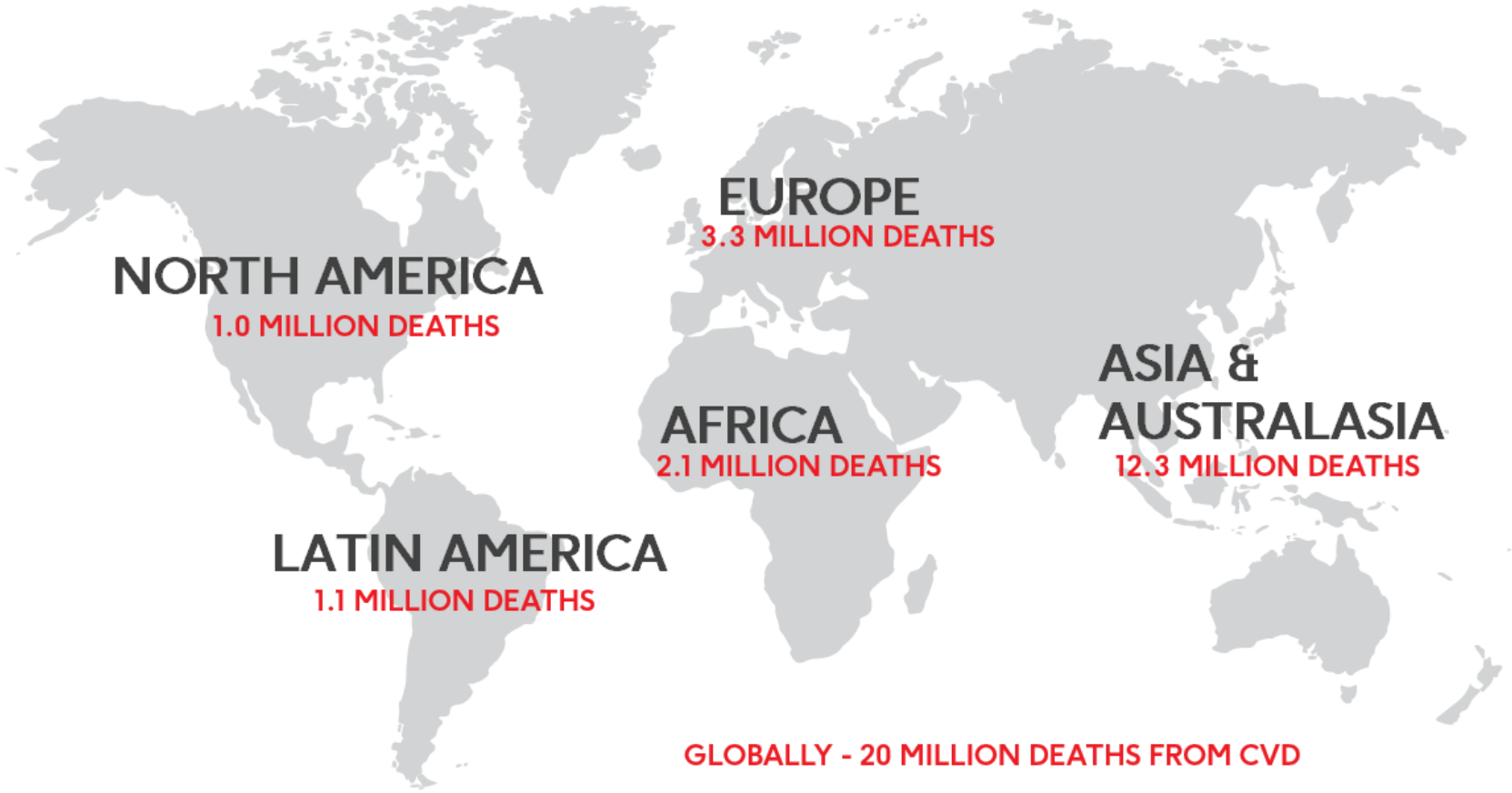
*ASDR = Age-Standardised Death Rates for cardiovascular disease – cardiovascular disease - CVD (equivalent to ICD-10 I00-99)*

*For comparative purposes, the UK ASDR in 2023 was 118 and the global ASDR was 215. Analysis excludes nations with fewer than 100k people.*

*Please note that these are modelled GBD estimates, based on national sources which may have different statistical and clinical definitions.*

- The age-standardised cardiovascular death rate in Egypt is over nine times higher than that of South Korea and Israel.

# Estimated Deaths from Cardiovascular Disease in 2023



# Coronary Heart Disease (Ischaemic Heart Disease; CHD)

- Coronary (ischaemic) heart disease is the most commonly diagnosed heart disease worldwide.
- It's estimated around 240 million people are living with coronary heart disease.
- Globally around 140 million men and 100 million women have coronary heart disease.
- Coronary heart disease kills an estimated nine million people each year - around 1 in 7 deaths globally.
- In 2023 it's estimated that coronary heart disease was the world's single biggest killer.
- Before the coronavirus pandemic, coronary heart disease had been the leading cause of death worldwide for at least 30 years.
- Worldwide, coronary heart disease is now killing more people each year than ever before.
- In 2003, it's estimated that CHD overtook neonatal disorders as the biggest cause of premature mortality worldwide (when defined as deaths before the 70$^{th}$ birthday) and has been #1 each year since (even in 2020).

# Stroke (Cerebrovascular Disease)

- There are an estimated 105 million stroke survivors worldwide.
- Globally around 56 million men and 48 million women are stroke survivors.
- Stroke was the second most common killer globally in 2023, causing an estimated 6.8 million deaths.
- 1 in 9 deaths globally are caused by cerebrovascular disease (stroke).
- Stroke was the second biggest cause of premature mortality worldwide in 2023 (when defined as deaths before the 70$^{th}$ birthday).

# Heart Failure

- It's been estimated that heart failure affects at least 64 million worldwide (and numbers have been increasing).

# Congenital Heart Disease

- Congenital heart disease is a large and rapidly emerging global problem in child health.
- Congenital heart disease is diagnosed in around 1 in 110 births globally, with more diagnoses later in life - that's an estimated 1.2 million babies a year - an average of 3,300 per day (that's one diagnosis estimated every 26 seconds)
- Globally congenital heart disease is the direct cause of at least 300,000 deaths each year, the majority are before the first birthday.
- It's estimated at least 16 million people are living with congenital heart disease worldwide; there are likely to be millions more undiagnosed.

**Our vision is a world where everyone has a healthier heart for longer.**

# Risk Factors

- Globally more than 4 in 5 deaths from cardiovascular disease are associated with modifiable risk factors.
- Modifiable risk factors are often preventable; in most cases risk can be reduced with medical treatment and lifestyle changes **
- Environmental risk factors (e.g. air pollution) also have a significant impact on cardiovascular risk, as well as gender, age, family history and ethnicity.

## Global Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

Associated or attributable burden relating to cardiovascular mortality

| | MODIFIABLE RISK FACTOR & ATTRIBUTABLE BURDEN | 2023 CVD DEATHS | OF CVD BURDEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | High systolic blood pressure (hypertension) | 10.5 million | 55% |
| 2 | Dietary risks (poor diet) | 5.9 million | 31% |
| 3 | Air pollution (ambient particulate matter pollution) | 4.0 million | 21% |
| 4 | High LDL cholesterol (raised cholesterol) | 3.6 million | 19% |
| 5 | Lead exposure (ingestion and inhalation) | 3.4 million | 18% |
| 6 | Tobacco (cigarette smoking; second-hand smoke) | 3.0 million | 15% |
| 7 | Kidney dysfunction (renal failure) | 2.1 million | 11% |
| 8 | High fasting plasma glucose (diabetes) | 1.9 million | 10% |

Other modifiable risk factors include physical inactivity, built environment, non-optimal temperature (low/high) and alcohol misuse.

*NB ** modifiable risk factors are affected by the circumstances in which we live. Our social, physical and commercial environments all have an impact on factors like our access to healthier foods, exposure to environmental risks and health-related behaviours.*

**"As much as 80% of cardiovascular disease can be prevented if we create better infrastructure, expand access to care, rethink the ways we produce and consume food and clean up the air we breathe,"**

*Professor Fausto Pinto, President of the World Heart Federation (WHF)*

# About the British Heart Foundation (BHF)

Far too many of us have felt the pain of losing someone we love to cardiovascular disease, the world's biggest killer. With your support, British Heart Foundation (BHF) powers groundbreaking research to save and improve lives.

Since 1961, your support has helped us fund scientific breakthroughs that are keeping more families together today, from pacemaker technology and portable defibrillators to proving that statins can help save lives. And with your support, our ambitions for the years to come are even bolder.

Every three minutes someone loses their life to cardiovascular disease in the UK. We're dedicated to powering advances in cardiovascular science and healthcare that will bring us closer to the day that everyone has a healthier heart for longer. But we can't do it without your support. Together, the next breakthroughs in diagnosing, treating, and preventing cardiovascular disease are in reach.

This factsheet compiled by the British Heart Foundation, December 2025.
Factsheets also available for the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For any queries contact healthinsights@bhf.org.uk and we will do our best to help

bhf.org.uk/donate

BHF is the **BIGGEST** independent funder of cardiovascular research in the UK

# References

| STATISTIC | REFERENCE |
|---|---|
| CVD here is all heart and circulatory diseases - cardiovascular disease (ICD-10 I00-99), congenital heart/circulatory diseases (Q20-28) and vascular dementia (F01) or ICD10 I00-99 alone, depending on the resource and statistic. | |
| CVD global mortality estimates; prevalence by continent; Modifiable risk factors, attributable burden; country ASDR rankings [2023 estimates] | Global Burden of Disease (2025) estimates for 2023 http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool<br>previously Lindstrom et al (2022) Global Burden of Cardiovascular Diseases and Risks Collaboration, 1990-2021, JACC www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0735109722072497 |
| CVD mortality forecasts | Global Burden of Disease (2024) Forecasts of disease burden through 2050 www.healthdata.org/research-analysis/library/forecasts-disease-burden-through-2050<br>NB World Health Organization (WHO) has previously made CVD projections |
| Biggest killers/mortality rankings | Global Burden of Disease (2025) estimates for 2023 http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool<br>also World Health Organization (2024) Global Health Estimates for 2021 https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death |
| CHD and stroke prevalence, deaths, time trends, premature deaths (based on under-70s mortality ##) | Global Burden of Disease (2025) estimates for 2023 http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool |
| Heart failure prevalence | Bragazzi et al (2019) Burden of heart failure and underlying causes, EJPC https://academic.oup.com/eurjpc/advance-article/doi/10.1093/eurjpc/zwaa147/6133248 |
| Congenital heart disease birth prevalence (incidence) | Liu et al (2019) Global birth prevalence of congenital heart defects 1970–2017: updated systematic review and meta-analysis https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/48/2/455/5345120<br>van der Linde et al (2011) Birth Prevalence of Congenital Heart Disease Worldwide: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis https://www.jacc.org/doi/full/10.1016/j.jacc.2011.08.025<br>BHF analysis of global birth data (estimated) |
| Congenital heart disease prevalence (living with) | Global Burden of Disease (2025) estimates for 2023 http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool |
| World Heart Federation (WHF) quote | https://world-heart-federation.org/news/four-paths-to-better-cardiovascular-health-world-heart-vision-2030/ |

## Please note this definition is relevant to premature mortality in developed nations, but would not be appropriate for the entire globe

For any queries please contact healthinsights@bhf.org.uk and we will do our best to help