

## Falls-related deaths in Queensland, 2007

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 Data source: Health Statistics Centre, Queensland Health  
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### Key points

- During 2007, 493 Queensland residents died due to an unintentional fall (crude mortality rate, 11.7 per 100,000 population).
- Persons aged over 65 years and over accounted for nearly 95% of the total fall-related deaths in 2007.
- The highest fall-related mortality rate was among persons aged over 85 years and over (age-specific rate, 490 per 100,000 population). The mortality rate was similar for both males and females for all age groups.

### Introduction

Falls among older adults can result in serious consequences, including death due to fall-related injuries. During 2004-05, almost 2,900 Australians died due to unintentional falls, with the mortality rates concentrated in older age groups.<sup>1</sup> The age-standardised Queensland death rate during 2004-05 was 15.0 per 100,000 population, similar to the rates in WA, ACT and NT, but significantly higher than the national average (13.1 per 100,000 population).<sup>1</sup>

The national mortality data is reported in calendar years, therefore this chapter reports on the number and rate of deaths due to unintentional falls registered in 2007 among older Queenslanders.

### Methodology and data capture

Data were extracted on 20 April 2010 by the Health Statistics Centre (HSC) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death, Australia 2007.

Deaths where the underlying cause and/or multiple cause of death met the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) definition for death due to a fall,<sup>1</sup> and flagged as Queensland residents (i.e. usual residence being Queensland), were counted.

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The AIHW definition of a death due to falls includes the following International Classification of Disease (ICD-10-AM) codes:

- **Multiple Cause of Death:** S00–T75, T79 and W00–W19; or X59 and any S02, S21, S22, S32, S42, S52, S62, S72, S82, S92, T02, T08, T10, T12, or T14.2; or
- **Underlying Cause of Death:** W00–W19; or X59 and any S02, S21, S22, S32, S42, S52, S62, S72, S82, S92, T02, T08, T10, T12, or T14.2.

Data were provided according to age and gender groups. The age-specific mortality rates, expressed as per 100,000 population, were calculated using the estimated age and gender-matched resident population in Queensland in 2007, derived from the 2006 Census.

## Data issues

At the time of data extraction, the data excludes Queensland residents who may have died from a fall in Victoria, as deaths registered in Victoria in 2007 had not been provided to the HSC. As such, these figures may under-report the number of deaths.

## Results

There were a total of 493 deaths of Queensland residents in 2007 (crude mortality rate, 11.7 per 100,000 population) due to falls, as summarised in Tables 1 and 2. As this is a crude mortality rate, it should not be compared to age-standardised rates reported elsewhere. Nearly 95% of the falls-related deaths occurred among older adults – 467 deaths were reported among persons aged 65 years and older, as shown in Figure 1.

**Table 1: Number of deaths due to falls in Queensland, 2007**

Age group	Multiple Cause		Underlying Cause		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
< 65	5	0	15	6	26
65-74	5	5	11	8	29
75-84	24	39	41	36	140
85+	36	98	63	101	298
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>493</b>

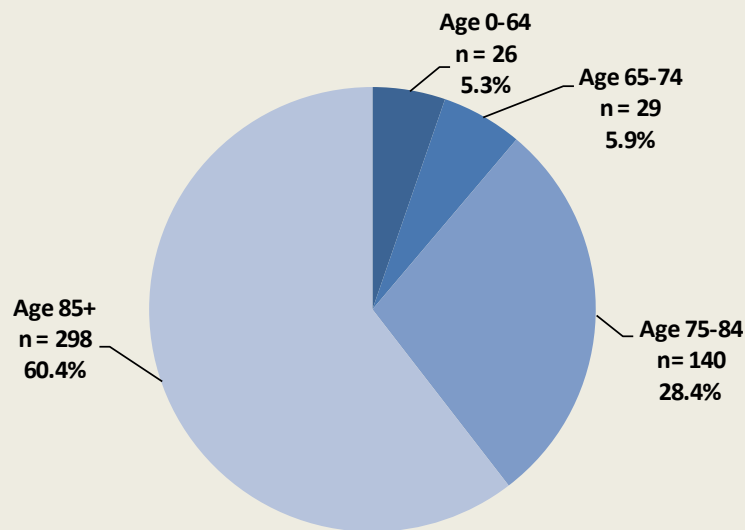


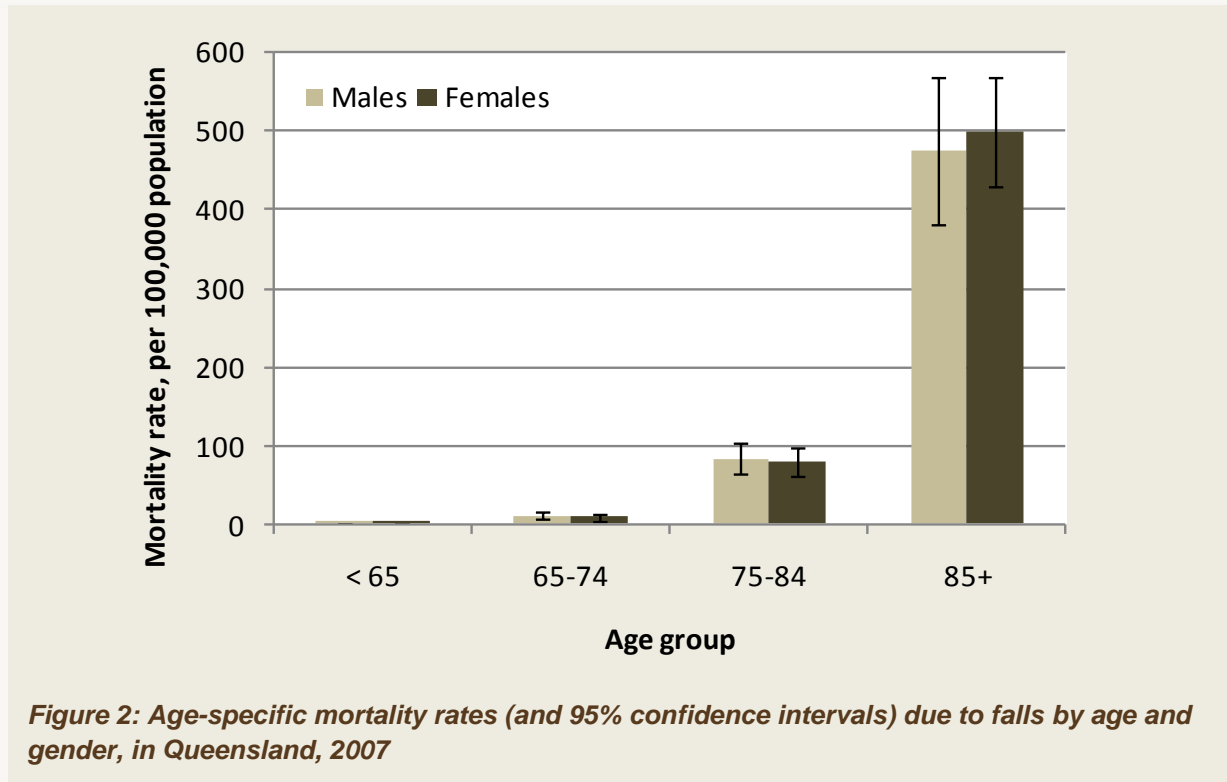
Figure 1: Proportion of deaths due to falls by age, in Queensland, 2007

The age and gender-specific mortality rates, presented in Table 2 and Figure 2, show an increase in mortality among older age groups, particularly among males and females aged 85 years and older (475.7 and 497.9 per 100,000 population, respectively). For all age groups, the mortality rates were similar for both males and females.

Table 2: Age-specific mortality rates due to falls in Queensland, 2007

Age group	Males			Females			All		
	Number of deaths	Estimated Population	Rate per 100,000 <sup>†</sup>	Number of deaths	Estimated Population	Rate per 100,000 <sup>†</sup>	Number of deaths	Estimated Population	Rate per 100,000 <sup>†</sup>
< 65	20	1,857,762	1.1	6	1,827,027	0.3	26	3,684,789	0.7
65-74	16	139,164	11.5	13	139,139	9.3	29	278,303	10.4
75-84	65	77,459	83.9	75	94,655	79.2	140	172,114	81.3
85+	99	20,811	475.7	199	39,964	497.9	298	60,775	490.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>2,095,196</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>2,100,785</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>4,195,981</b>	<b>11.7</b>

<sup>†</sup> Age-specific mortality rate



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### Suggested citation:

Black A (2010). Falls-related deaths in Queensland, 2007. Queensland Health, Brisbane.

### References

1. Henley G, Harrison J. Injury deaths, Australia 2004–05; INJCAT 127. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; 2009.

For additional information and resources on falls prevention, please visit the Queensland Health “Stay On Your Feet®” website at:

[www.health.qld.gov.au/stayonyourfeet](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/stayonyourfeet)

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