

Philippine and Philippine-American Health Statistics, 1994-2018

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Key Findings

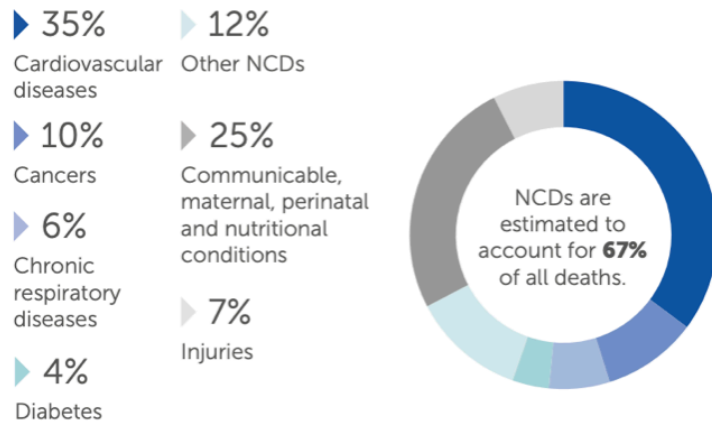
- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) accounts for approximately 20% of deaths among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans, affecting approximately 1 in 6 Filipinos and 1 in 3 Filipino-Americans.
- The second leading cause of death among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans are cancers of the lung, breast, liver and colon, in addition to cancers of the cervix and prostate.
- Filipino-Americans are at 70% increased risk of diabetes compared to other Asian-Americans, and more than half of Filipino-Americans aged 50 and over will develop hypertension — increasing their risk of CVD.
- Health habits such as alcohol consumption, smoking, and poor diet and nutrition have been increasingly implicated in the high rates of CVD and various cancers among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) and cancer are the leading causes of death among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans.¹ High rates of CVD and cancer are partially attributable to health habits such as alcohol consumption, smoking and poor diet.² Additional risk factors include chronic conditions like hypertension and diabetes, which are more highly prevalent among Filipino-Americans compared to other ethnic groups.³

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) accounts for the greatest proportion of deaths among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans.⁴

- In the Philippines, CVD accounts for approximately 20% of total deaths and 35% of premature deaths, affecting 1 in 6 Filipinos and 1 in 3 Filipino-Americans compared to 1 in 3 non-Hispanic White Americans.⁴
- Among Filipino-Americans, the CVD death rate is 396.3 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 192.7 among the general American population.⁵
- The percentage of Filipina women undergoing medically-necessary CVD treatment — such as coronary artery bypass graft or percutaneous coronary intervention — increased from 3% in 1994 to 51% in 2004.⁶

Figure 1: Proportional Mortality Rates

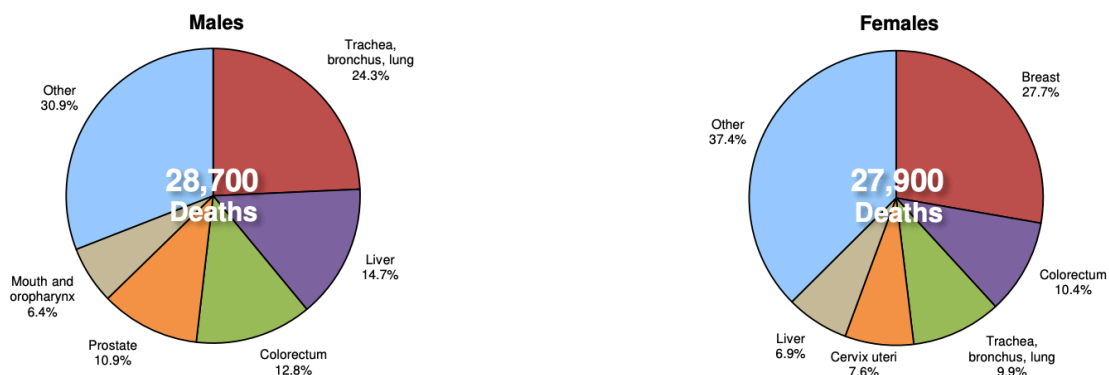


Source: World Health Organization, Non-Communicable Disease Country Profiles: The Philippines

The second leading cause of death among Filipinos and Filipino-Americans are cancers of the lung, breast, liver and colon, in addition to cancers of the cervix and prostate.⁷

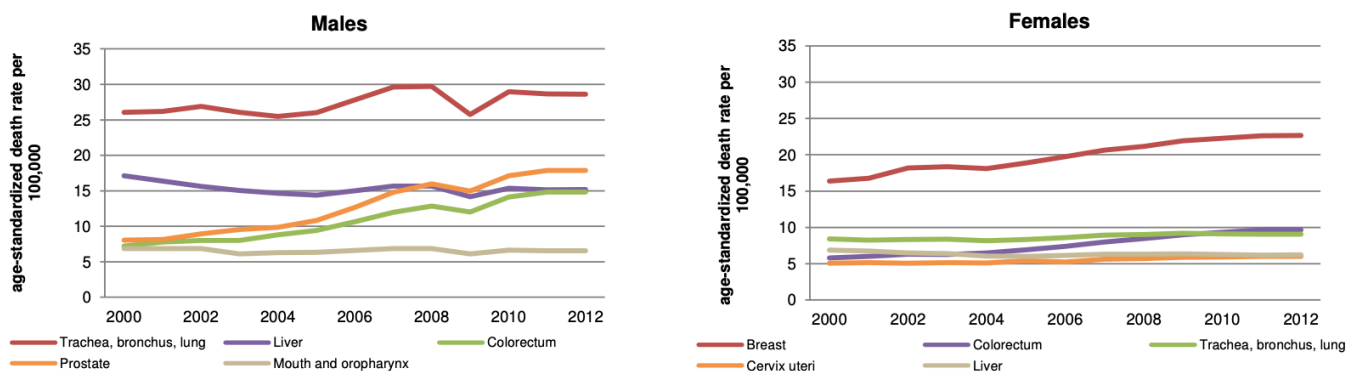
- Cancers of the lung (24.3%), liver (14.7%) and colon (12.8%) comprise the majority of diagnosed cancers among Filipino men, compared to cancers of the breast (27.7%), colon (10.4%) and lung (9.9%) among Filipina women.⁷
- Among Asian-Americans, Filipina-American women have the second highest incidence of breast cancer, while Filipino-American men have the highest incidence of pancreatic cancer, the second highest of lung cancer, and the fifth highest of liver cancer.⁸
- Cancer afflicts 189 out of every 100,000 Filipinos, claiming 300,000 victims per year or four victims every hour.⁹

Figure 2: Cancer Mortality Profile of the Philippines, 2014



Source: World Health Organization, Cancer Country Profiles: The Philippines

Figure 3: Age-Standardized Cancer Mortality Trends



Source: World Health Organization, Cancer Country Profiles: The Philippines

Filipino-Americans are at 70% increased risk of diabetes compared to other Asian-Americans, and more than half of Filipino-Americans aged 50 and over will develop hypertension — increasing their risk of CVD.^{10,11}

- 6% of Filipinos and 16% of Filipino-Americans have Type 2 Diabetes, while 5% of Filipinos and 14% of Filipino-Americans are obese.^{12,13}
- Hypertension afflicts 1 in 4 Filipinos and 3 in 5 Filipino-Americans.¹¹
- Filipino adults (22.3%) are likelier than Chinese (11.3%), Asian Indian (16.9%), Korean (14.0%), Japanese (16.8%), and Vietnamese (15.6%) adults to have multiple chronic conditions.¹⁴

Health habits such as alcohol consumption, smoking, and poor diet and nutrition have been increasingly implicated in the high rates of CVD and various cancers in Filipinos and Filipino-Americans.²

- 80% of Filipino-American men and 50% of Filipina-American women regularly consume alcohol, compared to 13% of Filipino men and 6% of Filipina women.¹⁵
- 28% of Filipinos smoke tobacco cigarettes, compared to 17% of Filipino-Americans.^{5,16}
- The average daily salt intake on the Filipino diet — high in carbs, cholesterol and salt — is 12 grams, eight-fold times greater than the American Heart Association’s recommendation of 1.5 grams of daily salt intake.¹⁷

Summary

This report details statistics on the health outcomes and habits of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans, including health profiles on cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancers, and hypertension and diabetes from 1994 to 2018. Exacerbated by increasing rates of hypertension, diabetes, and obesity, CVD has become the leading cause of death among Filipinos both in the country of origin and abroad. Cancer death rates have also increased, particularly for cancers of the lung, colon, prostate and breast. A poor diet rich in carbs, cholesterol, and salt, combined with increased rates of alcohol consumption smoking, has also been implicated in rise of CVD and cancers among this population.

With a population of nearly 4 million, Filipino-Americans make up the second largest Asian immigrant group in the US. Nevertheless, data on Filipino health is still limited or outdated compared to that on other Asian groups. Given the similar health challenges and complications that Filipinos face, either in their country of origin or the US, it is imperative that further research be conducted in order to provide this population with culturally relevant and appropriate care.

Definitions

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD): A cluster of heart conditions involving narrowed, blocked or diseased blood vessels that can lead to chest pain, blood clots, stroke, or heart attack

Cancer: A disease in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably with the potential to invade other parts of the body and destroy body tissue.

Hypertension: Abnormally high blood pressure

Diabetes: A disease that results in excess sugar in the blood

Death Rate: A measure of the number of deaths among a certain population per unit of time

Incidence: A measure of the probability of specific medical occurrence in a population during a specific window of time.

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