

# Top 10 Causes of Death Aren't Same for Men and Women



By Alex Berezow — April 20, 2017

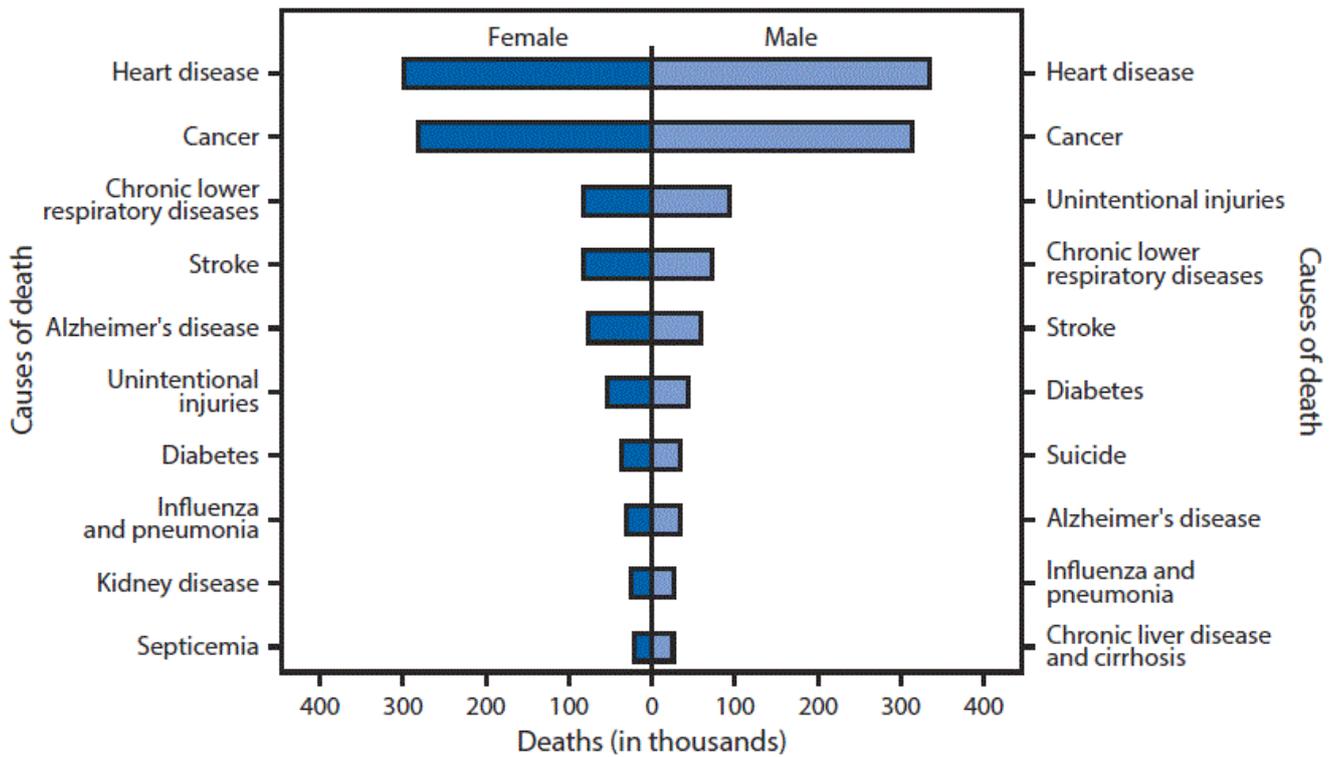


Credit: Shutterstock [1]

Watching an autopsy has a way of changing one's view on death. Every single one of us – rich, poor, white, black, male, female, religious, atheist – will one day be on a cold metallic cart with a tag on our toe. And the medical examiner will open us up, poke around, extract and weigh a few organs, then ship your lifeless corpse on to the funeral home.

So, the question isn't *if* we are going to die, but *when* and *how*. Science has little to say about the former, but it has collected quite a bit of data on the latter. That's what makes the CDC's weekly report on the dead and dying so morbidly fascinating.

This week, the CDC listed the top 10 causes of death for Americans based on sex. The top 10 causes of death are not the same for men and women. (See chart.)



[2]

In both men and women, heart disease and cancer are #1 and #2, respectively. But everything changes after that.

Unintentional injuries are the #3 leading cause of death among men, but it is #6 for women. This is probably due to the fact that men are much more prone to saying things like, "Hold my beer, and watch this." Also, men tend to work in more dangerous professions where being killed on the job is a possibility.

Notably, two of the top 10 causes of death in men are not in the top 10 for women: Suicide and chronic liver disease. Men are [three to four times more likely](#) [3] to commit suicide than women. Likewise, men are more likely to suffer from alcoholism, which can lead to liver disease.

For women, on the other hand, kidney disease and septicemia (blood infection) are in the top 10 causes of death. This perhaps indicates, because women aren't as likely to die from poor lifestyle choices, that they die from more "natural" causes.

**Source** [2]: "QuickStats: Number of Deaths from 10 Leading Causes, by Sex — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2015." MMWR 66(15): 413. Published: 21-Apr-2017. DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm6615a8.

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**Links**

[1] <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/covered-dead-body-person-morgue-tag-570406489>

[2] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6615a8.htm>

[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db241.htm>