

## **-Fourth Type of Adjustment:**

### Population adjustments

Any data that are affected by population changes can be adjusted to give per-capita data. That is, consider the data per person (or per thousand people, or per million people) rather than the total. For example, if you are studying the number of hospital beds in a particular region over time, the results are much easier to interpret if you remove the effects of population changes by considering the number of beds per thousand people. Then you can see whether there have been real increases in the number of beds, or whether the increases are due entirely to population increases. It is possible for the total number of beds to increase, but the number of beds per thousand people to decrease. This occurs when the population is increasing faster than the number of hospital beds. For most data that are affected by population changes, it is best to use per-capita data rather than the totals.