

Organ-specific Mortality (Global & India)

Globally, chronic noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) dominate mortality. WHO reports that in 2021 seven of the top ten causes of death were NCDs (chronic diseases) – accounting for **38% of all deaths** ¹. (By category, ~68% of the top-10 causes were NCDs, the rest infections/injuries.) The figure above (WHO data) illustrates this: most deaths arise from circulatory, respiratory, liver and kidney disorders rather than infections or trauma. In this context, heart, lung, liver and renal failures emerge as the leading organ-related killers worldwide.

- **Heart (cardiovascular):** Ischaemic heart disease (heart attacks) is the single largest killer globally, causing about **9.1 million deaths (~13% of all deaths)** ². When combined with stroke (~10% of deaths) and other circulatory disorders, cardiovascular causes dominate global mortality ². In India, cardiovascular diseases (including heart attacks and stroke) likewise lead: they account for about **28.9% of all deaths** ³, making heart failure the top organ-related cause domestically.
- **Lungs (respiratory):** Chronic respiratory diseases (COPD, asthma, etc.) cause roughly **5% of global deaths** ². In addition, *infectious* lung diseases (pneumonia and lower respiratory infections) kill another ~2.5 million people per year (~3.7% globally) ⁴, and lung cancer about **2.8% of deaths** ⁵. Altogether, lung-related diseases account for on the order of **10–15% of global deaths**. In India, respiratory diseases (chronic and infectious) account for about **7.3% of deaths** ⁶, reflecting the substantial burden of COPD and pneumonia in the population.
- **Liver (hepatic):** Liver disease (cirrhosis, hepatitis and liver cancers) causes roughly **2 million deaths per year globally** – about **4% of all deaths** ⁷. These deaths are largely due to cirrhosis (alcoholic or hepatitis-related) and liver cancer. India bears a disproportionately large share: one study notes India accounted for **18.3% of global liver-related deaths** in 2015 ⁸. (Risk factors in India include viral hepatitis, alcohol abuse and fatty liver disease.) Thus liver failure is a major mortality factor worldwide and in India.
- **Kidneys (renal):** Chronic kidney disease (CKD) and renal failure have surged as causes of death. Globally, “kidney diseases” rose from the 19th to the 9th leading cause of death between 2000 and 2021 ⁹. In India, CKD is also among the top causes: GBD 2015 ranked it 8th, and verbal-autopsy data showed renal failure deaths were **~2.9% of all deaths** in 2010–13 (up from ~1.9% in 2000) ¹⁰. Diabetes and hypertension are driving a rising toll from kidney failure.

India-specific Mortality (recent data)

Indian data show a broadly similar pattern, though with different proportions. Official reports (Sample Registration and WHO estimates) indicate:

- **Heart (cardiovascular):** Cardiovascular diseases (heart attacks and stroke) are the clear leaders in India – about **28.9% of Indian deaths** are due to circulatory causes ³.

- **Lungs (respiratory):** Respiratory diseases (COPD, pneumonia, tuberculosis, etc.) account for roughly **7.3%** of deaths ⁶ .
- **Liver (hepatic):** Digestive diseases (which include liver cirrhosis and other hepatic failures) cause about **5.0%** of deaths ¹¹ . (This reflects India's heavy burden of alcoholic and viral liver disease.)
- **Kidneys (renal):** Renal failure is an emerging cause in India. Estimates suggest CKD and kidney failure accounted for on the order of **3% of adult deaths** (age 15–69) by the early 2010s ¹⁰ . This share has been rising rapidly with the diabetes/hypertension epidemic.

Sources: Authoritative WHO and Government of India statistics were used. Global mortality data are from WHO Global Health Estimates (2021) and peer-reviewed summaries ¹ ⁹ ⁷ . India-specific figures come from the Registrar-General's causes-of-death data (2017–19) ³ and recent studies ¹⁰ ⁸ . (All percentages reflect the most recent 5–7 year estimates.)

¹ ² ⁴ ⁵ ⁹ The top 10 causes of death

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death>

³ ⁶ ¹¹ cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in

https://cbhidghs.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Final_Central%20Bureau%20of%20Health%20Intelligence%20July%202024.pdf

⁷ Global burden of liver disease: 2023 update - PubMed

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36990226/>

⁸ Epidemiology of Liver Diseases in India | Request PDF

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358206575_Epidemiology_of_Liver_Diseases_in_India

¹⁰ Uncovering the rising kidney failure deaths in India - The Lancet Global Health

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(16\)30299-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(16)30299-6/fulltext)