

South Africa - Mortality and Causes of Death 1997-2020

Statistics South Africa, Department of Home Affairs

Report generated on: May 18, 2025

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Identification

SURVEY ID NUMBER

zaf-statssa-mcd-1997-2020-v1

TITLE

Mortality and Causes of Death 1997-2020

ABBREVIATION OR ACRONYM

MCD 1997-2020

COUNTRY

Name	Country code
South Africa	zaf

STUDY TYPE

Socio-Economic/Monitoring Survey

ABSTRACT

This cumulative dataset contains statistics on mortality and causes of death in South Africa covering the period 1997-2020. The mortality and causes of death dataset is part of a regular series published by Stats SA, based on data collected through the civil registration system. This dataset is the most recent cumulative round in the series which began with the separately available dataset Recorded Deaths 1996.

The main objective of this dataset is to outline emerging trends and differentials in mortality by selected socio-demographic and geographic characteristics for deaths that occurred in the registered year and over time. Reliable mortality statistics, are the cornerstone of national health information systems, and are necessary for population health assessment, health policy and service planning; and programme evaluation. They are essential for studying the occurrence and distribution of health-related events, their determinants and management of related health problems. These data are particularly critical for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 which share the same goal for a high standard of living and quality of life, sound health and well-being for all and at all ages. Mortality statistics are also required for assessing the impact of non-communicable diseases (NCD's), emerging infectious diseases, injuries and natural disasters.

KIND OF DATA

Administrative records

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Individuals

Version

VERSION DESCRIPTION

v1: Edited, anonymised dataset for public distribution

VERSION DATE

2025

VERSION NOTES

Version 1 of the dataset was downloaded from Statistics South Africa's website on 13 May 2025.

Scope

NOTES

This dataset contains statistics on mortality and causes of death that occurred in South Africa over the period 1997-2020 and were registered by the Department of Home Affairs. Other socio-demographic and geographic characteristics of the deceased include age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and place of birth and death.

Coverage

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The survey has national coverage.

GEOGRAPHIC UNIT

The lowest level of geographic aggregation covered by the data is province.

UNIVERSE

This dataset is based on information on mortality and causes of death from the South African civil registration system. It covers all death notification forms from the Department of Home Affairs for deaths that occurred in 1997-2020, that reached Stats SA during the 2021/2022 processing phase.

Producers and sponsors

PRIMARY INVESTIGATORS

Name	Affiliation
Statistics South Africa	Government of South Africa
Department of Home Affairs	Government of South Africa

Data Collection

DATES OF DATA COLLECTION

Start	End
1997	2020

DATA COLLECTION MODE

Other

DATA COLLECTION NOTES

The registration of deaths is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1992 (Act No. 51 of 1992 as amended), and is administered by the Department of Home Affairs. After a death is registered, the Department of Home Affairs issues a death certificate and, where applicable, updates the population register. The forms are then collected by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) for processing.

Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRES

The registration of deaths is captured using two instruments: form BI-1663 and form DHA-1663 (Notification/Register of death/stillbirth).

Data Appraisal

DATA APPRAISAL

This cumulative dataset is part of a regular series published by Stats SA and includes all previous rounds in the series (excluding Recorded Deaths 1996). Stats SA only includes one variable to classify the occupation group of the deceased (OccupationGrp) in the current round (1997-2020). Prior to 2016, Stats SA included both occupation group (OccupationGrp) and industry classification (Industry) in all previous rounds. Therefore, DataFirst has made the 1997-2015 cumulative round available as a separately downloadable dataset which includes both occupation group and industry classification of the deceased spanning the years 1997-2015.

Access policy

ACCESS CONDITIONS

Public access data for use under a Creative Commons CC-BY (Attribution-only) License

CITATION REQUIREMENTS

Statistics South Africa. Mortality and Causes of Death 1997-2020 [dataset]. Version 1. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa [producer], 2025. Cape Town: DataFirst [distributor], 2025. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25828/kz4c-9748>

ACCESS AUTHORITY

Name	Affiliation	Email	URL
DataFirst	University of Cape Town	support@data1st.org	Link

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Public Access

Metadata production

DDI DOCUMENT ID

ddi-zaf-datafirst-mcd-2011-v2

PRODUCERS

Name	Affiliation	Role
DataFirst	University of Cape Town	Metadata Producer

DATE OF METADATA PRODUCTION

2025-05-15

DDI DOCUMENT VERSION

Version 1

Data Description

Data file	Cases	Variables
mcd-1997-2020-causes-v1	1000	14
mcd-1997-2020-dates-v1	1000	11
mcd-1997-2020-deceased-v1	1000	20

Data file: mcd-1997-2020-causes-v1

Cases: 1000

Variables: 14

Variables

ID	Name	Label	Question
V239	SerialNo	Serial number	
V240	CauseA	Immediate cause of death	
V241	InjuryA	Injury codes for the immediate cause of death	
V242	CauseB	Second condition leading to death	
V243	InjuryB	Injury codes for the second condition leading to death	
V244	CauseC	Third condition leading to death	
V245	InjuryC	Injury codes for the third condition leading to death	
V246	CauseD	Fourth condition leading to death	
V247	InjuryD	Injury codes for fourth condition leading to death	
V248	OtherCause	Other conditions leading to death	
V249	OtherInjury	Injury codes for other conditions leading to death	
V250	Part2Cause	Cause provided on part 2 of the death notification form	
V251	Part2Injury	Injury codes for cause on part 2	
V252	UnderlyingCause	Underlying cause of death	

Total: 14

Data file: mcd-1997-2020-dates-v1

Cases: 1000

Variables: 11

Variables

ID	Name	Label	Question
V253	SerialNo	SerialNo	
V254	DeathYear	DeathYear	
V255	DeathMonth	DeathMonth	
V256	DeathDay	DeathDay	
V257	BirthYear	BirthYear	
V258	BirthMonth	BirthMonth	
V259	BirthDay	BirthDay	
V260	RegistrationYear	RegistrationYear	
V261	RegistrationMonth	RegistrationMonth	
V262	RegistrationDay	RegistrationDay	
V263	ProcessingYear	ProcessingYear	

Total: 11

Data file: mcd-1997-2020-deceased-v1

Cases: 1000

Variables: 20

Variables

ID	Name	Label	Question
V264	SerialNo	Serial number	
V265	DeathType	Death type (Individual death/Stillbirth)	
V266	AgeYear	Age in completed years	
V267	Sex	Sex of deceased	
V268	MStatus	Marital status of deceased	
V269	Relationship	Relationship of informant to deceased	
V270	EduCode	Education of deceased	
V271	OccupationGrp	Groups of occupation of deceased	
V272	Industry	Type of business / industry where the deceased was working	
V273	Smoker	Smoking status of deceased	
V274	Pregnancy	Pregnancy status of deceased	
V275	PopGroup	Population group	
V276	Citizenship	Citizenship of deceased	
V277	BirthProvince	Province of birth of the deceased	
V278	DeathProvince	Province of death occurrence	
V279	ResProvince	Province of usual residence of the deceased	
V280	Ascertainment	Ascertainment of the cause of death	
V281	DeathInst	Place of death	
V282	NaturalUnnatural	Natural/non-natural underlying causes of death	
V283	BirthWeight	Birth weight in grams	

Total: 20