

Scottish Burden of Disease

Future prevalence and burden of ischaemic heart disease

A Management information release for Scotland

Publication date: 04 June 2024





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Contents

Context	4
Background	5
Data	6
Analyses	7
Main points	9
Results and commentary	10
Results	10
Summary	13
Limitations	14
Conclusion and next steps	14
Glossary	16
Contact	19
Further information	19
Rate this publication	19
Appendices	20
Appendix 1 – Background information	20
Appendix 2 – Publication metadata	21
Appendix 3 – Early access details	24
Pre-release access	24
Standard pre-release access:	24
Early access for management information	24
Early access for quality assurance	24
Appendix 4 – PHS and official statistics	25
About Public Health Scotland (PHS)	25
References	26

Context

Scotland is expected to see a rapidly ageing population, within the context of a slight overall decrease in population, over the next two decades.¹ Public Health Scotland's Scottish Burden of Disease (SBoD) study has recently been adapted to forecast how these demographic and population health trends are expected to combine, to anticipate the extent of future public health challenges. Initial work focused on the impact of the changing demographic situation only and found that, despite a projected 1.2% decrease in the Scottish population, the combined annual disease burden from all causes of disease and injury is forecast to increase 21% in the next 20 years.² Absolute increases in annual disease burdens are forecast to be largest for cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and neurological diseases – together accounting for approximately two-thirds of the total increase in forecasted disease burden.

These findings are set alongside the context of a projected reduction in working-age population over that same time period with an old-age dependency ratio projected to increase from 57% in 2022 to 64% in 2042.¹ These changes will have important implications for public health and the health and social care system. To address these challenges, alongside financial constraints and sustainability, decision makers need to consider both more effective approaches to prevention and different models of care. In doing so, alongside demographic change, consideration of epidemiological changes is needed as these have the potential to either ease or add to the pressure within an already stretched system.

Background

Disease prevalence is a measure of the overall occurrence of a disease at a point in time. It is a helpful as it outlines the scale of population-level health demands that are likely to arise from living with a disease. This in turn can inform discussions over how best to meet these health needs through health and social care service provision, and over how these needs could be reduced through public health interventions.

Disease prevalence is influenced by three epidemiological concepts:

- The rate of new cases (incidence)
- The rate of remission (cure)
- The survival rate of prevalent cases (death).

Ischaemic heart disease (IHD) is a long-term condition. Once an individual experiences acute coronary syndrome, or is diagnosed with heart disease, there is no treatment which can fully reverse the damage that has already occurred. The consequences from heart disease can vary from person to person and can include an increased risk of early death. Rapid treatment is important to aid recovery, as well as prevent additional damage. The prevalence of IHD is therefore influenced through two main pathways: the incidence of IHD, case-fatality and the survival rate of prevalent cases. If improvements in mortality are not met by equivalent improvements in disease prevention, the number of prevalent cases will grow.

In this report, we project the prevalence of IHD over the next two decades by incorporating information on historic trends of the prevalence of IHD, alongside projected changes in the Scottish population. The SBoD 2019 study found IHD was the leading cause of disease burden in Scotland, with an estimated 139,000 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). IHD exhibits sizeable absolute and relative inequalities, with 46% of DALYs estimated to be attributable to inequalities in multiple deprivation.³

Methodology

Data

Estimates of the number of people living with IHD in Scotland were calculated for each year from 2005 to 2019. Cases were identified data from the following Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) datasets: 01 Inpatient and Daycase dataset (SMR01); 04 Mental Health Inpatients dataset (SMR04); and Geriatric Long-Stay (SMR01E) dataset, using a standard lookback period of 20 years.⁴ SMR01/01E records allow the recording of up to six diagnosis codes. In records from 1997, ICD-10 coding was applied in Scotland, and prior to 1997 ICD-9 was applied.^{5,6} Cases were identified if an appropriate code was recorded in any of the six positions and the records linked with the National Records of Scotland (NRS) Vital Events (Deaths) Register using the Community Health Index Number.^{7,8}

When estimating the number of individuals suffering disability due to IHD, two separate pathways were considered: IHD and IHD with heart failure. These pathways were estimated and analysed separately and where records suggest an individual could be considered prevalent via both pathways, a hierarchical approach was used and the individual assigned to the pathway which generates the largest disability according to burden of disease methodology (i.e. IHD with heart failure).

Individuals that had a hospital diagnosis of IHD at any time point in the 20 years prior to the index year were considered to be prevalent for IHD if they were still alive at the end of the index year. Individuals that had hospital diagnoses of both IHD and HF at any time point in the 20 years prior to the index year were considered to be prevalent for IHD with heart failure. In addition, exclusion adjustments were made to account for the small proportion of prevalent individuals who we estimated would no longer be living in Scotland in the year of interest.

To refine our estimates of IHD prevalence, community prescribing data from the Prescribing Information System (PIS) was used.⁹ Individuals that were dispensed nitrate treatment as defined by prescription items under sub-section 2.6.1 of the

British National Formulary (BNF) during the index year were also considered cases for that year.

Prevalence estimates were calculated for years 2009 to 2019 as described above. Prior to 2009, recording of CHI on PIS was considered unreliable with an estimated 30 to 70% of dispensed items not including a valid CHI.¹⁰ Therefore it was not possible to use PIS data to supplement hospital data for years prior to 2009. Not supplementing hospital data with prescribing data would likely lead to an under-recording of cases, particularly those less severe prevalent cases. Pre-2009 estimates were therefore adjusted to reflect this potential under-recording of cases. Full coverage age-sex specific prevalence rates for 2009 were used to uplift estimated prevalence for 2005 to 2008 to account for the lack of prescribing data.

A full list of ICD codes used to define IHD can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Analyses

Future estimates of prevalence were projected using age-period-cohort (APC) regression models. APC models allow the independent effects of age, period and birth cohorts to be included in the model, as well as a linear trend. There are several advantages to this approach, the main one being that period and cohort effects serve as proxies for events such as risk factors, public health and medical interventions, which are often difficult to measure directly.

APC models - were fitted to sex-specific data and the best fitting model, based on goodness-of-fit criteria, were selected. In addition, where the linear period trend was included in the model, either the full trend (from 2005-2019) was used or the more recent trend only (from 2010-2019). The period trend was selected based on whether a significant change was estimated between the two time periods. Following selection of the best-fit model, these resulting age and sex specific prevalence estimates were combined with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2020-based interim national population projections, recommended for use by the NRS, to generate future estimates of prevalence.¹¹

For both male and female models, a full age-period-cohort model was identified as the best fitting model. In addition, the linear trend for the two most recent time periods (2010-2019) was applied. As it's unlikely current trends will continue at the same rate throughout the projection period, the linear trend parameter was cut by 0%, 25% and 50% in the first, second and third 5-year period, respectively, to decrease the effect of current trends.

As a comparator, future estimates of prevalence incorporating demographic changes only were calculated. Here, the sex-specific IHD prevalence for 2019 was calculated by five-year age group. These age and sex-specific estimates were then applied to population projections to generate future estimates. These estimates assumes that prevalence remains constant over the forecast period. That is, all future changes would be due to the changing demographics in Scotland ignoring the time trends identified in APC models. Estimates included in this report are those which include the impacts of projected demographic changes and historic epidemiological trends, unless stated.

Estimates of prevalence for IHD disease reported here may differ to other published estimates of prevalence in Scotland, as these estimated follow the disease models and definitions outlined by the SBoD study.

Main points

- The number of people with IHD in Scotland is estimated to decrease by 15% from 2019 to 2044, from 252,600 prevalent cases to 215,500. This equates to 37,100 fewer people living with IHD in 2044, compared to 2019..
- Absolute and relative changes differ between the age groups and sexes. The largest absolute change in prevalence is forecast to be in females aged 65 to 84 years. Despite an overall decrease in prevalence, the largest relative change is forecast to be in males aged 85 years and over where a 58% increase in prevalence is forecast.
- Due to projected decreases in the number of prevalent cases, unless offset by increases in disease severity, the non-fatal burden of IHD would decrease between 2019 and 2044.
- These projected decreases in prevalence and burden of IHD are not inevitable - we need to continue to invest in prevention at all levels. Effective prevention at all levels can both assure the projected decreases and possibly surpass them.

Results and commentary

Results

From 2005 to 2019, the number of people with a diagnosis of IHD decreased from 261,800 to 252,600; a decrease of 3.5% (Figure 1). Through incorporating the impact of projected population changes (age-effects) from 2019 onwards and assuming the underlying prevalence rate remains the same as it was in 2019, we estimate the number of people with IHD could rise from 252,600 to 348,100 from 2019 to 2044; an increase of 38% (Figure 1 and Table 1). Refining these estimates further by incorporating historical pre-pandemic age, period- and cohort-effects identified in underlying historic data, we estimate the number of people with IHD would decrease, from 252,600 in 2019 to 215,500 in 2044; a decrease of 15% (Figure 1 and table 1).

Figure 1: Trend in the number of people with ischaemic heart disease (2000 to 2019) with projections to 2044 (mean value per 5-year period)

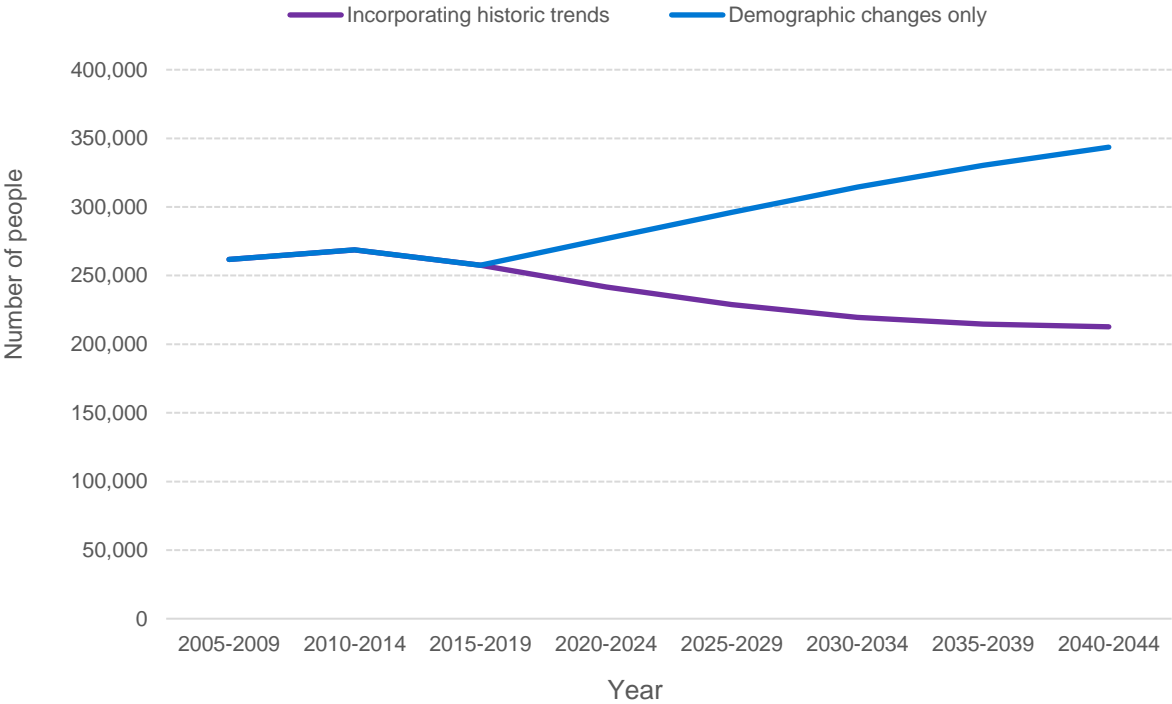


Table 1: Estimated number of people with ischaemic heart disease in Scotland using two different methods (selected years) with projections to 2044

Method	2019	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Change (n) (2019 to 2044)	Change (%) (2019 to 2044)
Demographic changes only	252,631	284,664	303,823	321,422	336,075	348,105	+95,474	+37.8%
Incorporating historic trends and demographic changes	252,631	248,645	235,057	224,420	218,030	215,451	-37,180	-14.7%

In the full model, incorporating historic trends and demographic changes, the largest relative and absolute decreases in prevalence are expected to be seen for females. For females, a 30% absolute decrease is projected, representing an absolute decrease of 28,140 prevalent cases (Table 2). For males, a smaller relative decrease of 6% is projected, representing an absolute decrease of 9,000 prevalent cases.

Table 2: Estimated number of people with ischaemic heart disease incorporating historic trends with projections to 2044, by sex (selected years)

Sex	2019	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Change (n) (2019 to 2044)	Change (%) (2019 to 2044)
Male	157,807	159,200	155,617	152,289	150,072	148,772	-9,035	-5.7%
Female	94,824	89,445	79,440	72,132	67,959	66,679	-28,145	-29.7%

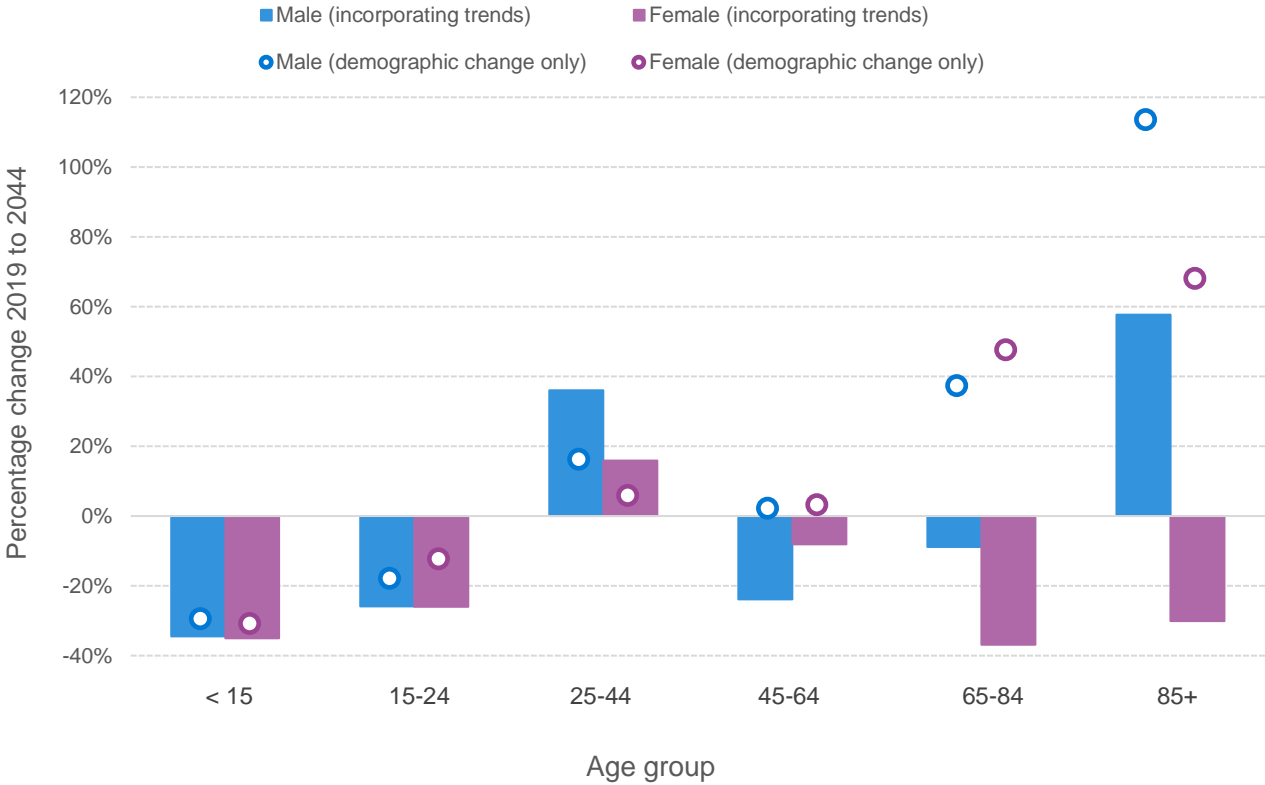
In addition to sex-specific differences, estimated future prevalence is noticeably

driven by age (Figure 2). Considering the full model, incorporating historic trends, prevalence is forecast to decrease in all age groups, with the exception of males and females aged 25 to 44 years and males aged over 85 years. The increases in males and females aged 25 to 44 years is forecast despite a small reduction expected in the working age population. This suggests the influence of underlying period and cohort effects in the historic data.

Despite an overall decrease in prevalence, the largest relative change is forecast to be in males aged 85 and over where a 58% increase in prevalence is forecast. The largest absolute change in prevalence is forecast to be in females aged 65 to 84 years, with a projected decrease of 21,000 prevalent cases from 2019 to 2044.

Projections resulting from the demographic change only model are in contrast for those aged 45 years and above (Figure 2). This is driven by the projected increases in population in the older age population.

Figure 2: Percentage change (2019-2044) in the estimated number of people with ischaemic heart disease by sex and age group



In burden of disease studies, prevalence is used to calculate the non-fatal burden

[years lived with disability (YLD)] of a condition, along with estimates of the severity and disability associated with the disease. Applying burden of disease methodology to the projected values of prevalence, we estimate that the non-fatal burden due to IHD is also projected to decrease. The YLD is projected to be 12,400 YLDs in 2044, down from 15,400 in 2019, representing an absolute decrease of 3,000 YLDs and a relative decrease of 19%. Considering male and female stratification, the forecasted decreases in YLD by sex follow the same patterns as seen in prevalence.

Overall burden (DALYs) is a composite measure incorporating both non-fatal and fatal burden. This projected decrease in non-fatal burden will not necessarily lead to a similar projected decrease in the overall burden, as the latter will also be influenced by projected changes in mortality and fatal burden for a disease. Further work by the SBoD team is focussed on future projections of mortality and fatal burden, in order to develop forecasts of the overall burden of IHD in Scotland.

Summary

Both the prevalence and non-fatal burden of IHD in Scotland are projected to decrease over the next 20 years for males and females.

Recent trends have illustrated that the incidence rate for IHD decreased by 18% from 2013/14 to 2022/23.¹² In this same period, the rate of mortality from IHD also decreased by 25%.¹² Therefore, prevalence estimates are being driven by the reducing incidence and the decrease in the mortality of IHD, which are reflected in our projections over the next two decades. However, these projected decreases are not inevitable. We need to continue to invest in prevention at all levels. Through effective primary prevention we can reduce the rate of new cases of IHD occurring and through deploying effective secondary and tertiary prevention strategies we can reduce the health-related quality of life impacts, for example those associated with heart failure, and risk of early death, in those already living with IHD or those at-risk of IHD.

Limitations

Projections, by definition, are unstable and become less robust the longer the forecast period. External events, changes to population projections and limitations in the original models can all impact the robustness of projections. For example, the use of pre-pandemic period time trends in IHD prevalence do not take into account any changes observed between 2020 and 2023.

In these projections, as well as technical uncertainties, there may also be uncertainties in the calculation of future burden. When estimating the future non-fatal burden of IHD using YLD, these projections assume the distribution across severity levels will remain constant over time. This may not be the case, particularly when decreased mortality rates may cause people to live longer and develop further complications of IHD (for example heart failure). Any changes to the distribution of prevalence across the severity levels throughout the projection period will affect YLD estimates.

Conclusion and next steps

The estimated decrease in the prevalence of IHD over the next two decades is not inevitable, nor is the projected magnitude of the change. Continued investment in prevention and tackling the underlying mechanisms which increase the risk of IHD could further reduce the number of new cases of IHD. Ensuring timely, and accessible, services are available for those who suffer acute events, and from the ongoing impacts of living with the consequences of IHD, will also play its part in ensuring that people live longer lives in better health.

The SBoD team are doing further work on the future projections of mortality and fatal burden, in order to develop forecasts of the overall burden of IHD. They are also working to build upon these projections to explore how forecasts may be influenced by various scenarios. Examples include changes to the prevalence of underlying risk factors for IHD and the introduction of any novel treatments or public health interventions. In addition, the SBoD team are working with the Whole Systems Modelling team at PHS to determine how these various projections and scenarios are

likely to impact service provision in the health and social care systems over the next 20 years.

Glossary

Burden of disease (and injury)

The quantified impact of a disease or injury on a population using the disability-adjusted life years (DALY) measure.

DALY (disability-adjusted life year)

A standardised metric that can be used to quantify the health loss due to dying prematurely or to living with the health consequences of diseases, injuries or risk factors. DALYs are a summary metric of population health. DALYs are an absolute measure of health loss; they count how many years of healthy life are lost due to death and non-fatal illness or impairment. They reflect the number of individuals who are ill or die in each age-sex group and location.

Disability

In burden of disease studies, this is synonymous for “loss of health”, or any, short or long term, departure from full health.

Disability weight

Numerical representations of the severity of health loss associated with a health state. Disability weights are numbers between 0 and 1 that are multiplied by the time spent living with a health loss to determine the years lived with disability associated with the cause of that loss. In the GBD, disability weights are derived from a worldwide, cross-cultural study to compare the relative severity of health problem.

Early death

The burden from dying prematurely. Often used synonymously with **years of life lost**.

Fatal burden

The burden from dying prematurely as measured by years of life lost. Often used synonymously with **years of life lost**.

Health loss

The total burden from early death and ill-health. Often used synonymously with **disability adjusted life year (DALY)**

Health states

The consequences of diseases and injuries or their risk factors. Health state refers to an individual's levels of functioning within a set of health domains such as mobility, cognition, pain, emotional functioning, self-care, etc. Health states do not refer to general well-being (which is a broader construct) or to aspects of participating in society, although they clearly affect these other aspects of life and may be affected by them

Ill-health

Often used synonymously with **years lived with disability**.

Life expectancy

The average number of years of life expected to be lived by individuals who survive to a specific age.

Non-fatal burden

The burden from living with ill-health as measured by years lived with disability. Often used synonymously with **years lived with disability**.

Sequelae

Consequences of diseases and injuries for which epidemiological estimates and YLD calculations are made. It encompasses not only the traditional clinical meaning, but also a broader categorization of health outcomes such as severity levels for a particular disease, injury or impairment.

Severity distribution

Severity distributions are a means of summarising the range of health loss suffered to disease which enables estimates of disease occurrence to be paired with disability weights to estimate Years Lost to Disability in burden of disease studies.

YLD (Years of Life lived with a Disability)

In burden of disease studies this is also referred to as 'ill-health'. YLDs are computed as the prevalence of different disease-sequelae and injury-sequelae multiplied by the disability weight for that sequela. Disability weights are selected on the basis of surveys of the general population about the loss of health associated with the health state related to a disease sequela.

YLL (Years of Life Lost due to premature mortality)

YLLs are computed by multiplying the number of deaths at each age x by a standard life expectancy at age x . In SBoD we use an aspirational world life expectancy table developed for the Global Burden of Disease study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Background information

Table A1: ICD-10 codes

IC10 code	Description
I20-	Angina pectoris
I21-	Acute myocardial infarction
I22-	Subsequent myocardial infarction
I23-	Certain current complications following acute myocardial infarction
I24-	Other acute ischaemic heart diseases
I25-	Chronic ischaemic heart disease

Table A2: ICD-9 codes

IC10 code	Description
410	Acute myocardial infarction
411	Other acute and subacute forms of ischemic heart disease
412	Old myocardial infarction
413	Angina pectoris
414	Other forms of chronic ischemic heart disease
428	Heart failure

Appendix 2 – Publication metadata

Publication title

Scottish Burden of Disease: Future prevalence and burden of ischaemic heart disease

Description

Release of Scottish Burden of disease prevalence estimates for ischaemic heart disease for 2020-2044.

Theme

Population health and forecasts

Topic

Burden of disease

Format

PDF

Data source(s)

Please see methodology section for full data sources and time periods.

Date that data are acquired

Please see methodology section for full data sources and time periods.

Release date

04/06/2024

Frequency

Ad hoc

Timeframe of data and timeliness

The basis for the publication is SMR data from 2005 to 2019 and PIS 2009 to 2019.

Continuity of data

Please see methodology section for information on continuity of data and coding.

Revisions statement

Revisions relevant to this publication

Concepts and definitions

Please see [Glossary](#)

Relevance and key uses of the statistics

Population health surveillance; service planning and sustainability; quality improvement and assurance.

Accuracy

The report contains projections of the prevalence of disease in Scotland to 2044. Projections and forecasts, by definition, are unstable and become less robust the longer the forecast period. Please see [Limitations](#) section for full details.

Completeness

Please see methodology section for information on completeness of data.

Comparability

The prevalence described in this report is estimated following the disease models and definitions outlined by the SBoD study and therefore may not be directly comparable to other estimates of prevalence.

Accessibility

It is the policy of Public Health Scotland to make its websites and products accessible according to published guidelines. More information on accessibility can be found on the [PHS website](#).

Coherence and clarity

Measures to enhance coherence and clarity within this report include: explanatory chart/table notes, minimal use of abbreviations/abbreviations explained in the text, comprehensive notes on background and methodology.

Value type and unit of measurement

Figures are shown as absolute number, percentages and relative change. Units of measurement are disability-adjusted life years (DALYs); years lived with disability (YLDs) and years of life lost (YLL) and prevalence of disease. Please see [Glossary](#) for further details.

Disclosure

The PHS protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed

Official statistics accreditation

Management information

UK Statistics Authority assessment

Not put forward for assessment

Last published

First publication

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To be confirmed.

Date of first publication

Not applicable

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Date form completed

21 May 2024

Appendix 3 – Early access details

Pre-release access

Under terms of the 'Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008', PHS is obliged to publish information on those receiving pre-release access ('pre-release access' refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum pre-release access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard pre-release access.

Standard pre-release access:

Scottish Government Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

NHS board chief executives

NHS board communication leads

Early access for management information

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to 'management information', i.e. as part of the delivery of health and care:

Early access for quality assurance

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to help quality assure the publication:

Appendix 4 – PHS and official statistics

About Public Health Scotland (PHS)

PHS is a knowledge-based and intelligence driven organisation with a critical reliance on data and information to enable it to be an independent voice for the public's health, leading collaboratively and effectively across the Scottish public health system, accountable at local and national levels, and providing leadership and focus for achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes for the population. Our statistics comply with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) in terms of trustworthiness, high quality and public value. This also means that we keep data secure at all stages, through collection, processing, analysis and output production, and adhere to the Office for National Statistics '[Five Safes](#)' of data privacy.

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