

Glossary:Competing cause of death

Statistics Explained

The term **competing cause of death** can be used in different ways:

- as two or more causally unrelated, etiologically specific diseases listed in part I of the [death certificate](#) ; this may be a source of error on the medical part of the death certificate;
- referring to the fact that if a person is cured (and will not die) from one disease, (s)he is eligible to attract another fatal disease; it is possible, by using multi-decrement (or cause-elimination) life tables, to investigate the impact on [life expectancy](#) if deaths from a particular cause were to be eliminated from a population; life expectancy is not automatically improved, however, by simply releasing a population from the burden of a particular cause of death; should a cause be removed, other causes will then 'compete' for the 'space' it leaves; the effect of 'competing causes' can be assessed through competing risk analysis.

Related concepts

- [Antecedent cause](#)
- [Avoidable cause of death](#)
- [Cause of death](#)
- [Contributory cause of death](#)
- [External cause of death](#)

Statistical data

- [Causes of death statistics](#)