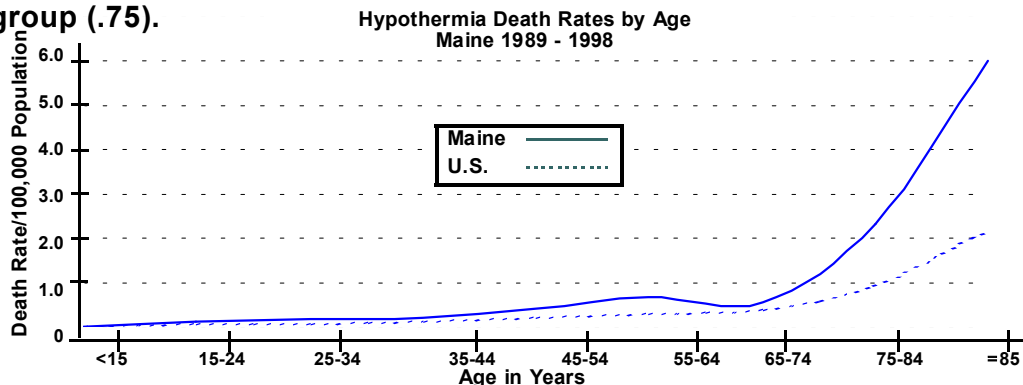


# HYPOTHERMIA-RELATED DEATHS

Maine Residents: 1989 – 1998

- ➔ Hypothermia is the lowering of core body temperature to 95 degrees Fahrenheit or less. Most hypothermia-related deaths occur during the winter in states like Maine that have moderate to severe cold temperatures. Risk factors for hypothermia include being male, being 65 years old or older, and being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.<sup>1</sup>
- ➔ In Maine, an average of 5 hypothermia-related deaths occurred each year from 1989 – 1998 (a total of 52 deaths). For that period, the death rate in Maine due to hypothermia, .3 deaths/100,000 population, was significantly higher than the U.S. rate - .1 death/100,000.
- ➔ Maine's death rate was also significantly higher than 2 other New England states, Connecticut and Massachusetts, but comparable to New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island.
- ➔ Similar to what was observed nationally, males accounted for approximately two thirds of all hypothermia deaths in Maine and experienced a death rate twice that of their female counterparts.
- ➔ Age 65 years old and older is a risk factor for hypothermia<sup>1</sup>. Residents in this age group accounted for more than half of all hypothermia deaths both nationally and in Maine. These older Maine residents also had the highest death rates due to this cause, 1.7 deaths/100,000, a death rate significantly higher than the rate for those younger than 65 (.21) and significantly higher than the national rate for the same age group (.75).



- ➔ Alcohol consumption or drug intoxication are also risk factors for hypothermia. These factors were involved in the deaths of approximately one third of the hypothermia deaths occurring in Maine in 1989 - 1998; however, two thirds of hypothermia deaths to residents younger than 65 years old involved drugs and alcohol.

*Notes:* Hypothermia-related deaths are deaths attributed to ICD-9 cause of death codes 901.0, 901.8, and 901.9. All rates are for underlying cause of death. Age specific rates cannot be age-adjusted. All other rates are age-adjusted to the US 1940 standard population; these are rates that have been standardized to eliminate differences due solely to variations in the age composition of the populations. All national data (national data are for whites only) were obtained from CDC Wonder. Unless noted, differences in rates are not statistically significant, i.e., they could be accounted for by chance alone.

<sup>1</sup> Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), December 20, 1996. A full citation is available upon request.

For further data on this topic, please contact:  
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