

Mortality and morbidity patterns in Albania in the past decade

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According to the most recent estimates performed by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, in Albania, in 2016, the expected life expectancy in males was 71.1 years, whereas in females it was 77.3 years (1). On the other hand, the observed values were 74.7 years and 80.7 years, respectively (1).

As for the child mortality, in 2016, the expected under-5 mortality and infant mortality in Albania were 14.9 and 12.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively (1). The respective observed values for the same year were 13.7 and 11.4 deaths per 1,000 live births (1).

Overall, in Albania, ischemic heart disease was the major cause of mortality in 2016, followed by cerebrovascular disease and lung cancer (1). As a matter of fact, compared to 2005, there was evidence of an increase in the mortality rate attributable to the ischemic heart disease (19% increase), cerebrovascular disease (9.5% increase) and lung cancer (18.8% increase) (1). Furthermore, in 2016, compared to 2005, there was evidence of an increase of 21% of other cardiovascular diseases, and 10.9% increase of the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (1).

On the other hand, in 2016, compared to 2005, there was evidence of a decrease of 22.1% in the mortality rate attributable to the lower respiratory

infections (1).

Regarding the premature mortality, in the past decade, there has been a considerable increase (48.7%) in the mortality rate due to Alzheimer disease in Albania, followed by lung cancer (11.1%) and ischemic heart disease (6.2%). Conversely, the premature mortality due to the lower respiratory infections and neonatal causes has decreased substantially (46% and 39.9%, respectively) from 2005 to 2016 (1).

As for the disability, in Albania, the burden of cerebrovascular disease has increased by 40.8% from 2005 to 2016, whereas the burden of iron-deficiency anemia has decreased by 30.6% (1).

In 2016, the top ten risk factors contributing to the overall burden of disease (death and disability combined) in Albania included high blood pressure, dietary risks, tobacco smoking, high body mass index, high total cholesterol level, alcohol and drug use, air pollution, high fasting plasma glucose, occupational risks, and malnutrition (1).

Regarding the first two decades of transition, the overall burden of non-communicable diseases in Albania had increased by 34% from 1990 to 2010 (18,19). In men, the Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 were about 17,498 in 1990 compared with 23,448 in 2010 (2,3). In both sexes,

the overall proportion of non-communicable diseases to the total burden of disease had increased from 59% in 1990 to 79% in 2010 (2,3). The rate of increase was similar in both sexes, according to the official data both from the Albanian institutions and the international estimates (2,3).

It is interesting to compare the mortality and

morbidity trends during the past decade in Albania as it provides useful clues for health professionals, and especially for policymakers and decision-makers who are involved particularly in the fight against non-communicable diseases, which keep rising in Albania, similar to the situation observed in most of the countries of the European Region (4).

Conflicts of interest: None declared.

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