

# Deaths from coronary heart disease

"People live with their own idiosyncrasies and die of their own illnesses."  
Vietnamese proverb

Civilization kills. Since 1990, more people have died from coronary heart disease than from any other cause. Unlike stroke, coronary heart disease is a comparative newcomer on the world stage. Variations in death rates are marked: they are lower in populations with short life expectancy.

Heart disease mortality rates are also affected by differences between countries in the major risk factors, especially blood pressure, blood cholesterol, smoking, physical activity and diet. While genetic factors play a part, 80% to 90% of people dying from coronary heart disease have one or more major risk factors that are influenced by lifestyle.

Death rates from coronary heart disease have decreased in North America and many western European countries. This decline has been due to improved prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, in particular reduced cigarette smoking among adults, and lower average levels of blood pressure and blood cholesterol. It is expected that 82% of the future increase in coronary heart disease mortality will occur in developing countries.

Of all coronary heart disease patients who die within 28 days after the onset of symptoms, about two-thirds die before reaching hospital. This highlights not only the need for early recognition of the warning signs of a heart attack, but also the need for prevention.

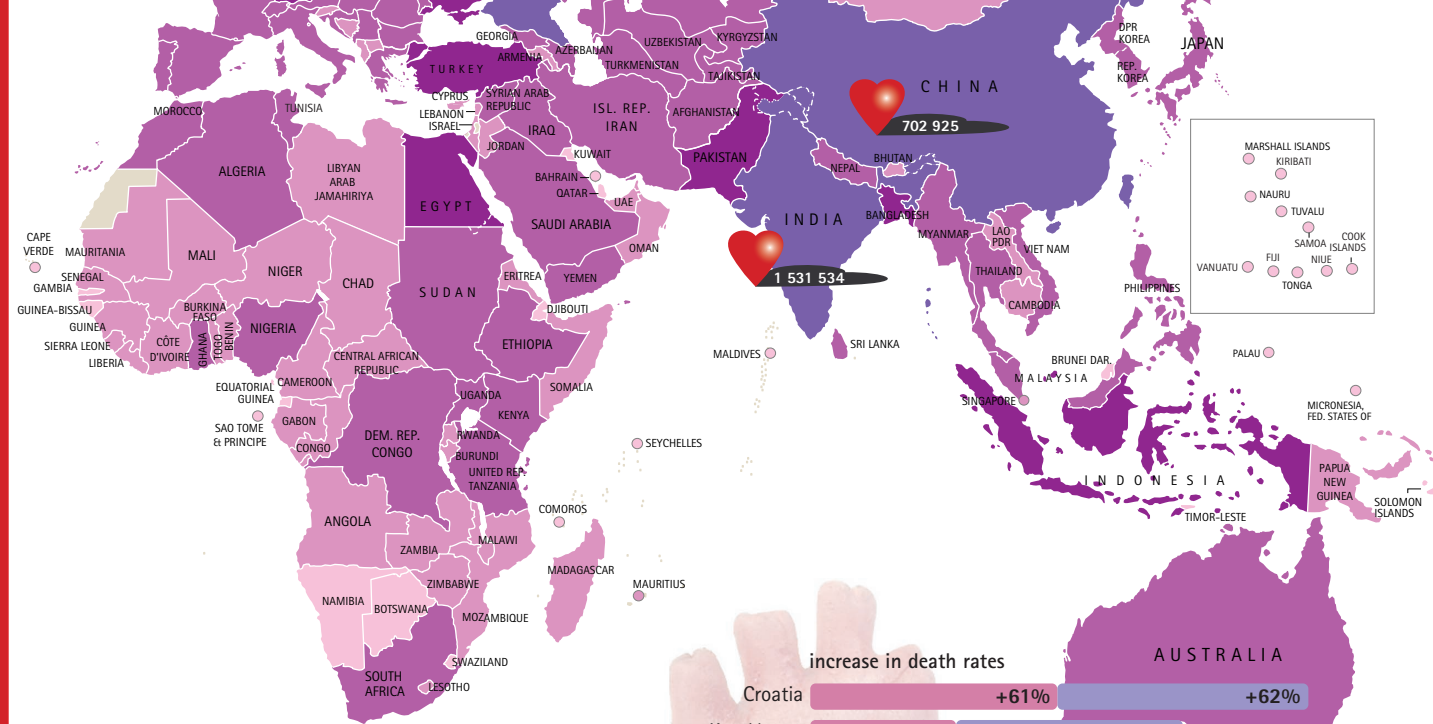
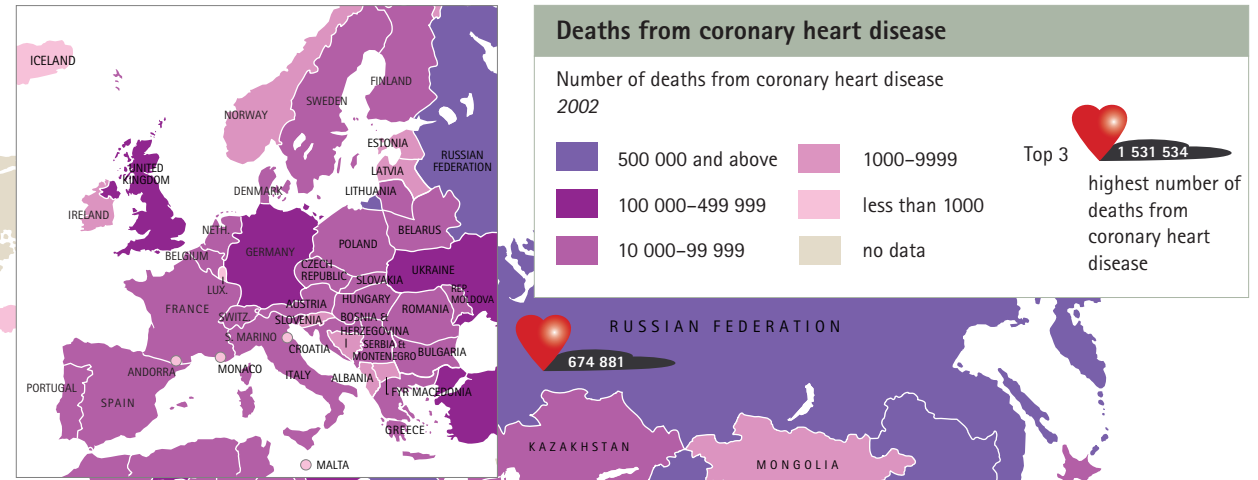
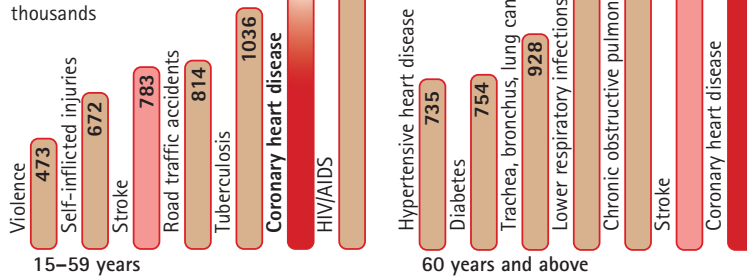


Despite improvements in survival rates, in the USA, 1 in 4 men and 1 in 3 women still die within a year of a recognized first heart attack.

Coronary heart disease is now the leading cause of death worldwide. It is on the rise and has become a true pandemic that respects no borders.

## Deaths from coronary heart disease compared with other causes

Number of deaths of people aged 15 to 59 years, and 60 years and over 2002  
thousands



3.8 million men and 3.4 million women worldwide die each year from coronary heart disease.