

HIV DROPS TO FIFTH

Stats: TB leading cause of death in SA

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PRETORIA: Tuberculosis is the leading cause of death in South Africa, according to 2014 statistics.

During that year, there were 453 360 deaths registered at the Department of Home Affairs compared to 458 000 in 2013. At least 8.4 percent of these were a result of TB.

Diabetes, which was the fifth top killer in 2013, moved up to third position last year, Statistician General Pali Lehohla said, releasing the report yesterday.

He was speaking at the seventh African Population Conference hosted by the Department of Social Development in partnership with the Union for African Population Studies. During the year in review, cerebrovascular diseases were the second most life-threatening illnesses in the country.

Influenza and pneumonia stood at number four, down from the second position during the previous year.

Interestingly, HIV, which was the third leading killer in 2013 in South Africa, dropped to fifth position.

Lehohla, in an interview with the Cape Times's sister newspaper the Pretoria News, said South African men were dying early and very fast compared to their female counterparts.

In terms of the report, death affected mostly the youth in the country between 2002 and 2008, but there had been a general shift in the age pattern. The timely deaths of men could be attributed to non-natural causes such as violence related to stabbing and gun fighting, he said.

The 2014 statistics revealed that men were expected to live up to the age of 60, while life expectancy among women was 66.

The Statistician General said at the height of the HIV/Aids epidemic, more women died of multiple death causes related to the virus than men. "We are seeing the normalisation of death with more males who are dying than females. Previously at the height of the epidemic, we saw the cause of death related to HIV affecting mostly women."

Lehohla said post 2007 and 2009, deaths started to decline in South Africa, having peaked at 614 000 at that time.

Men were dying early and very fast compared to their female counterparts

Asked why men died early and fast, Lehohla said: "There was a paper recently that showed in part that more males died as a result of a whole range of things like violent incidents."

Generally, more than half of South Africans were at risk of dying from non-communicable diseases like stroke and diabetes.

Lehohla said TB and stroke were new diseases largely affecting females, but that deaths as a result of TB had decreased annually in recent years. He said it was impossible to compare whether the population in South Africa was dying faster than other populations in Africa because there were only a few countries on the continent that collected such data.

Dr Ester Muia, president of the UN Population Fund, presented a dim picture of youth aged 15 to 19, who bunked school because they believed they didn't need education to make it in life. In this regard, the 2011 statistics showed there were 939 152 young people between 15 and 19 who didn't want to go to school.

Zu Neu-Projekt
Brooklyn Chest Hospital
für TB-Kranke Kinder