

08.15.2014 | METHODS

# How do mortality rates in the U.S. compare to other countries?

Mortality data were obtained from the health status file in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Health Statistics database. OECD data were accessed on July 24 & 25, 2014. Additional data were obtained from the World Health Organization Mortality database on July 14, 2014.

Comparable countries for comparison were identified based on economic similarity because national health spending strongly correlates with GDP. Comparable countries met the following criteria:

- Above median total GDP among all OECD countries
- Above median GDP per capita among all OECD countries for at least 1 of the past 10 years

The comparable country averages were calculated using the simple (unweighted) average of comparable OECD countries (not including the U.S.), for which data are available.

For all slides displaying OECD data from 1980 through 2010:

- There is a break in series data in 1987 and 1997 for Sweden; in 1995 for Switzerland; in 1996 for Netherlands; in 1998 for Australia, Belgium, and Germany; in 1999 for United States; in 2000 for Canada and France; and in 2011 in the United Kingdom
- All breaks in series coincide with changes in ICD coding

For the slide displaying amenable mortality using WHO data from 1981 through 2006:

- Causes of death amenable to health care are based on data available on the WHO website for the list of indicators used in the article by Ellen Nolte and C. Martin McKee, "Measuring the health of Nations: Updating an Earlier Analysis," *Health Affairs* 27, no. 1(2008): 58-71.
- Age standardization is based on WHO methodology and is not the same method used by Nolte and McKee.