

## The bases on which figures can be produced

A number of diseases, conditions or events which caused or contributed to the death can be specified on the [About the medical certificate of the cause of death](#) (PDF 27 Kb). As a result, figures for a particular cause of death can be produced on three bases:

- 'underlying cause' - cases where it was the disease or injury which initiated the chain of morbid events leading directly to death, or was the accident/act which produced the fatal injury;
- 'contributory factor' - cases where it was not the underlying cause of death, but it did contribute to the occurrence of the death - e.g. it did not cause the death, but may have hastened its occurrence;
- 'any mention' - i.e. whether it appeared to be the underlying cause of the death, or was just a factor which contributed to, or may have hastened, the occurrence of the death.

Figures are normally provided on the basis of the "underlying cause". Every death has just one "underlying cause" code, and so is counted only once in figures which are produced on the "underlying cause" basis.

A death may have several other causes coded as contributory factors, so could be counted several times in figures which are produced on the 'contributory factor' or 'any mention' bases. For that reason, figures are normally provided on the basis of the 'underlying cause'.