

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Cook Islands

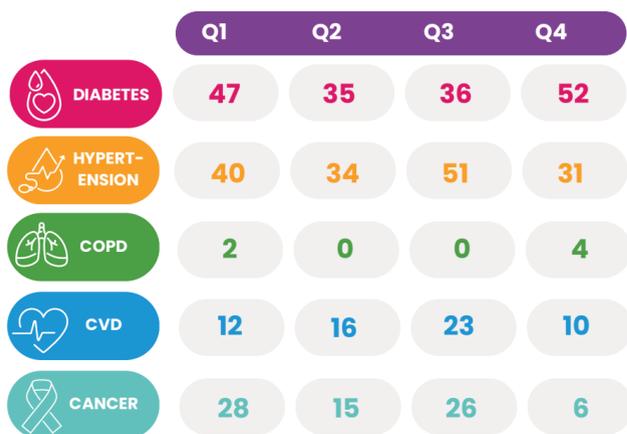
NCD QUARTER 4 REPORT

October - December 2025

Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health Cook Islands (TMO), as it redirects its effort to address NCDs, provides report on the current NCD situation in the Cook Islands. This update will cover the following NCDs: Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) (including heart diseases, stroke, and myocardial infarction), hypertension, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases (COPD, asthma, bronchiectasis, chronic bronchitis and emphysema).

Note: A **patient** refers to an individual who receives an initial diagnosis at the point of consultation. A **case** represents each distinct NCD diagnosed in a patient, as individuals may have multiple NCDs.

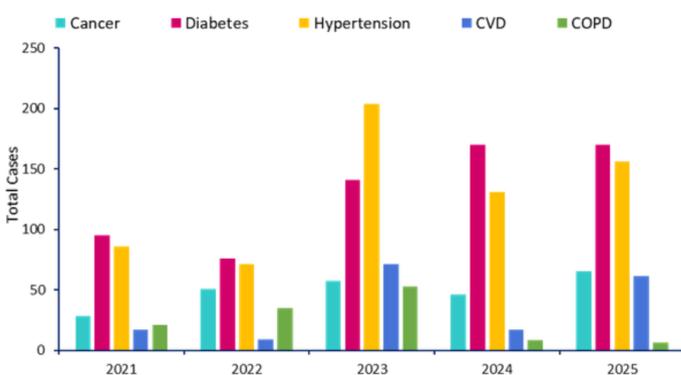
TOTAL NEW NCD CASES 2025 (N=468)



Source: TMO NCD Register

In 2025, diabetes was the most diagnosed NCD with 170 cases, followed by hypertension (156), cancer (75) and CVD (61). Q3 (Jul-Sep) recorded the highest quarterly cases at 136, with an average of 117 NCD cases per quarter.

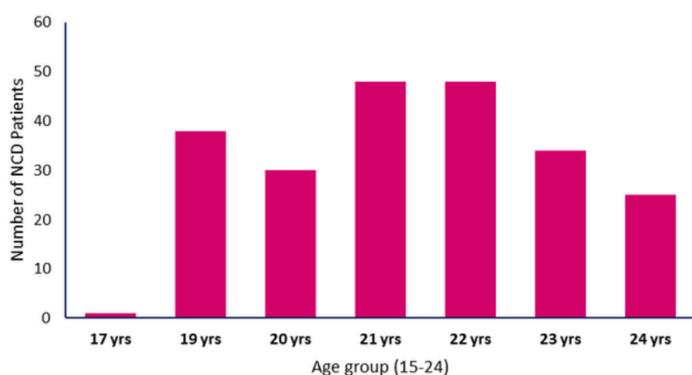
ANNUAL SUMMARY OF NCD CASES



Source: TMO NCD Register

Over the past five years (2021-2025), NCD cases in the Cook Islands showed a gradual upward trend, though 2025 saw a slight decline, representing a brief pause in that trajectory. Throughout this period, hypertension and diabetes remained the most prevalent NCDs in the Cook Islands.

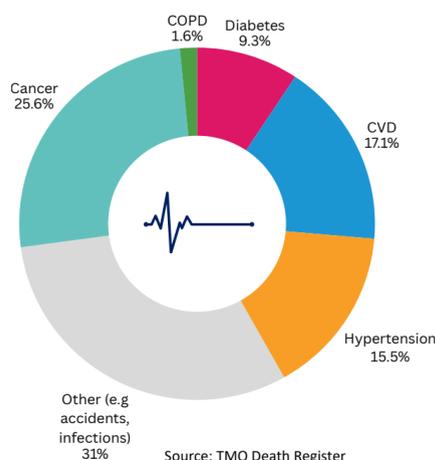
Distribution of NCD Patients Among Youth Aged 15-24



NCD patient numbers increase from the late teenage years, peaking at ages 21-22, before declining toward age 24. This indicates a higher NCD burden in early adulthood within the 15-24 age group, suggesting the need for earlier prevention and intervention efforts.

TOTAL UNDERLYING DEATHS FOR 2025 (N=130)

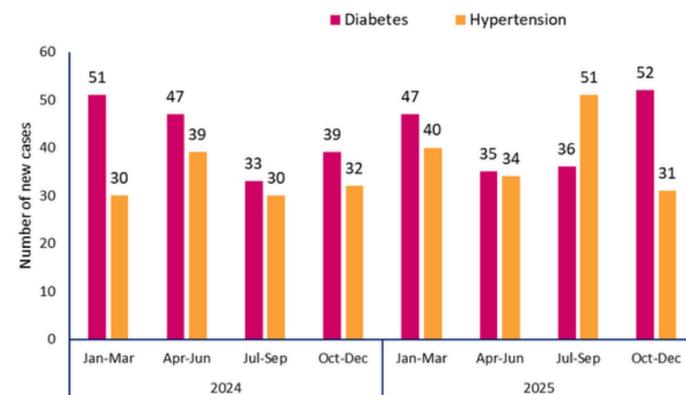
Note: The figures below do not represent the primary cause of death but rather chronic underlying NCDs that the patient had, which may have contributed to the primary cause of death.



Source: TMO Death Register

The pie chart (n=130) shows that Other conditions (31%) and Cancer (25.6%) together account for over half of all underlying cause of death, highlighting their significant contribution to the overall burden. In contrast, diabetes, although high in cases, represents less than 10%, and COPD is minimal at just 1.6%, indicating a much smaller share compared to the leading categories of mortality.

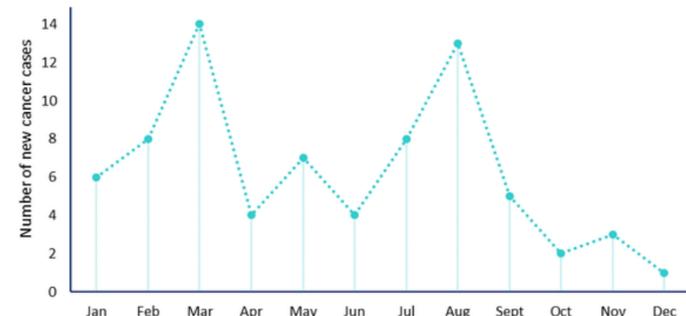
Hypertension and Diabetes 2024 & 2025



Source: TMO NCD Register

Diabetes cases remained consistently high across all quarters in 2024 and 2025, peaking at 52 cases in Oct-Dec 2025. Hypertension fluctuated more, with a notable spike in Jul-Sep 2025 (51 cases), briefly surpassing diabetes.

Cancer Cases 2025



Source: TMO Cancer Register

In 2025, a total of 75 cancer cases were diagnosed. The highest number of cases occurred in March, with 14 cases, while December recorded the lowest number, with just one case.

Skin cancer had the highest number of cases, representing 27% (20), followed by breast cancer at 23% (17) and cancers associated with the female genitourinary system 11% (8).

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH NCDs AS OF DEC 2025

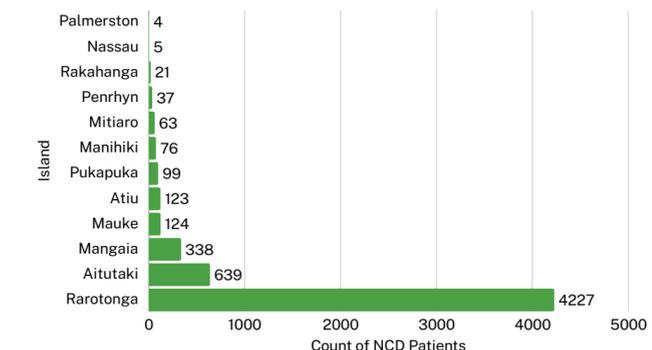
5,756

Representing 51% of the total 15yrs and above Cook Islands population. (Oct-Dec 2024: 5,663)

NCD PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS AS OF DEC 2025

NCD by Island

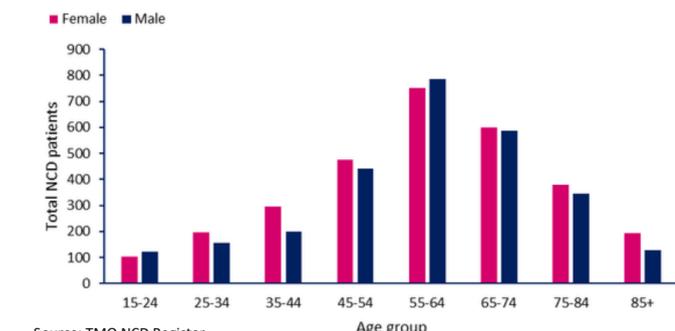
Note: Patient's island is determined by their address registered on TMOs patient information systems (Medtech Evolution)



Source: TMO NCD Register

Rarotonga accounts for the vast majority of NCD patients with 4,227 cases, more than six times that of the next highest island, Aitutaki (639), largely reflective of its significantly larger population size compared to the outer islands.

NCD by Sex and Age



Source: TMO NCD Register

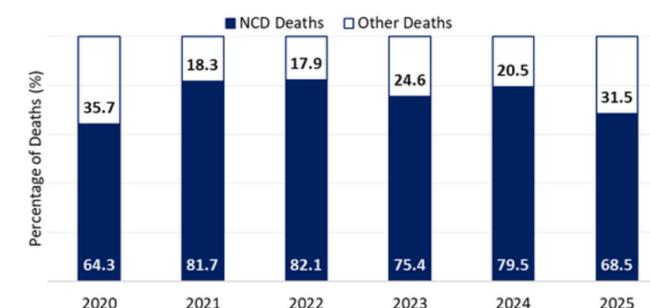
The graph highlights a higher concentration of cases among patients aged 55-74. Females account for the majority across most age groups (approximately 52% overall) with the exception of the 15-24 and 55-64 age groups, where males recorded higher counts.

NCD Deaths by Sex 2025



Males had a higher likelihood of dying from NCDs than females, with rates of 57% and 43%, respectively, based on the total recorded deaths.

Proportion of NCD Deaths to Total Deaths 2020-2025



NCD deaths consistently account for the majority of total deaths across all years, remaining above two-thirds annually. The proportion increased from 64.3% in 2020 to a peak of 81.7% in 2022, followed by some fluctuation but remaining high at 68.5% in 2025.

Average Age of NCD Death: 70 Years

Note: Based on data from January to December 2025



Regular Health Check-ups



Reduce/Quit Alcohol Consumption



Reduce/Quit Smoking/Vaping



Make Healthier Choices



Take NCD Medications Regularly



Stay Physically Active



Reduce Salt & Sugar Intake



Attend NCD Appointments

Note: The provided numbers are provisional and subject to change in future reports. The data range for this report is limited to ages 15 years old and above only. Visitors, non-residents, expatriates and deceased have been excluded from this report. This report covers descriptive information only. To fully understand the reason behind the pattern/trend an analytic study needs to be conducted.