

NCD Quarter 1 Report

Non-Communicable Diseases January – March 2026

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).

Total number of people diagnosed with NCDs as of March 2026

5,815

Representing almost half (prevalence: 51.6%) of the total 15yrs and above Cook Islands population. (Dec 2025: 5,756)

Q1 NEW NCD CASES

91 avg. 30 cases/month

SEX DISTRIBUTION

52%|48% female | male

AVERAGE AGE OF NCD

59 yrs Based on total number of NCD patients

AVERAGE NCD AGE AT DEATH

76 yrs Q1 2026 data only

PREMATURE NCD DEATHS

30% 30-69yrs for Q1 2026 only

New NCD Cases

Across all recorded NCD conditions, hypertension accounted for the largest share of new diagnoses, while COPD remained the least prevalent. The Jan-Mar 2026 quarter showed hypertension at its highest point, suggesting continued growth in hypertensive disease burden within the Cook Islands population.

Hypertension cases trended **upward** over the observed period, peaking at **53 cases** in Jan-Mar 2026 - the highest across all five quarters.

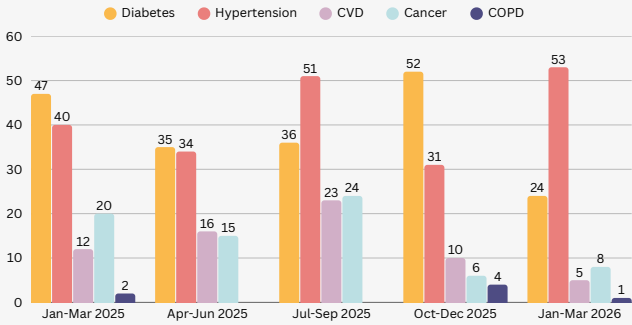
Diabetes cases remained relatively stable across all five quarters, peaking at **52 cases** in Oct-Dec 2025 before a slight decline to **24** in Jan-Mar 2026.

CVD incidence rose from 12 (Jan-Mar 2025) to a peak of 23 (Jul-Sep 2025), then declined steadily to **5 by Jan-Mar 2026**. Overall, CVD cases dropped sharply in the most recent quarter.

COPD remained the **least prevalent NCD** recording a brief rise to 4 cases in Oct-Dec 2025 before dropping to **1 in Jan-Mar 2026**.

Incidence of NCDs

Quarterly Comparison of NCD Incidence (Jan 2025-Mar 2026)



Source: TMO NCD Register
Incidence Rate: 49 cases per 1,000 population (from Jan 2025-Mar 2026)

Diabetes & Hypertension

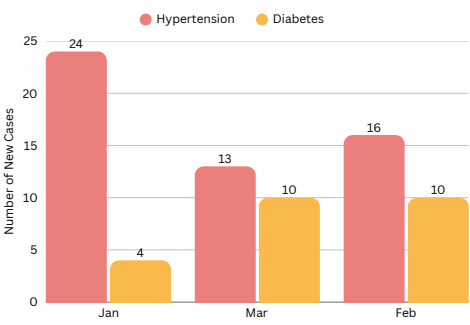
In Jan-Mar 2026, hypertension consistently outpaced diabetes in new case counts, with the sharpest disparity recorded in January - 24 versus 4 cases respectively.

January recorded the highest **hypertension** monthly count at **24 cases**, followed by a decline to 13 in March and a slight recovery to 16 in February.

Diabetes cases were low in January at **4**, rising to a consistent 10 cases in both March and February.

Incidence of Hypertension & Diabetes Cases

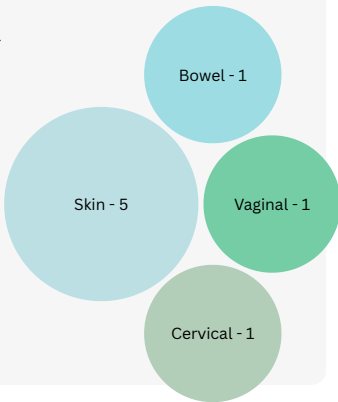
New Hypertension & Diabetes Cases by Month, Jan-Mar 2026



Source: TMO NCD Register

Cancer

In Jan-Mar 2026, a total of 8 new cancer cases were recorded, with Skin cancer being the most prevalent (3 cases), followed by Vaginal, Cervical, and Bowel cancer at 1 case each. Females accounted for 38% of cases (3) and males 62% (5), with an average age of diagnosis of 72 years.



Underlying NCD Deaths

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.

From Jan-Mar 2026, 34 deaths were recorded, with NCDs accounting for 20 deaths (59%). Of these, 30% (6 deaths) were premature. Males accounted for 12 NCD deaths and females for 8. "Other" conditions were the leading cause category (14), followed by Cancer (8), CVD (7), Hypertension (3), and Diabetes (2).

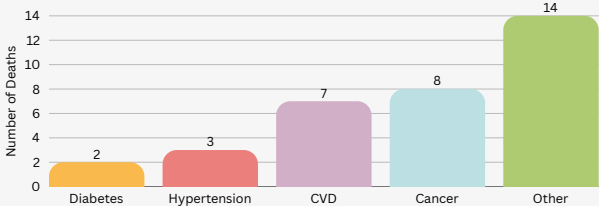
PREMATURE NCD DEATHS

30%

30-69yrs

Underlying Cause of Death (n=34)

Number of Deaths with Underlying NCDs Jan - Mar 2026



Source: TMO Death Register

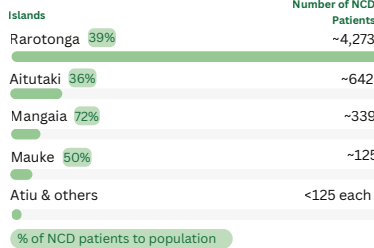
Note: Other includes deaths attributed to motor vehicle accidents, natural causes, and drowning.

NCD Prevalence as of March 2026

NCD Patients by Island



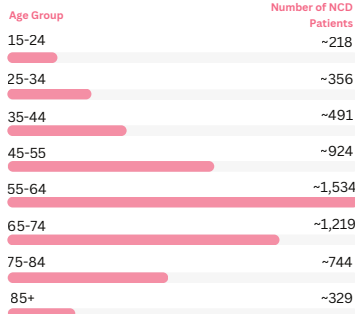
Rarotonga has the highest number of NCD patients (4,273), reflecting its larger population. Among the Pa Enua, Aitutaki (642) and Mangaia (339) have the most cases.



NCD Patients by Age Group



The burden peaks among those aged 55-64 (1,534 patients), rising steadily from age 15 and declining in older age groups.



NCD Patients by Sex



52%

3,028 female patients

48%

2,787 male patients

Females account for a slightly higher proportion at 52% (3,028) compared to males at 48% (2,787).



Regular Health Check-ups



Make Healthier Choices



Stay Physically Active



Reduce/Quit Smoking/Vaping



Reduce Salt and Sugar intake



Reduce/Quit Alcohol Consumption



Take NCD Medications Regularly



Attend NCD Appointments