

Statistical Terms Defined

The following definitions are intended to support understanding of statistical terms used in population health status reports from Northern Health.

STATISTIC	DEFINITION
Rate	<p>A rate is the total number of events that occur in a population in a given time frame divided by the total population in that given time frame. Often these figures are very small and so are multiplied by 100,000 to make them more meaningful.</p> $= \frac{\text{number of lung cancer deaths among Northern Health residents in 2018}}{\text{number of Northern Health residents in 2018}} \times 100,000$
Age-standardized rate	<p>Age-standardization is a statistical technique that allows for comparison between two different populations. It removes the effects of differences in the age structure of populations and over time.</p>
Age-specific rate	<p>The total number of events that occur in a specified age group divided by the total population of that age group in a given time frame. Often these figures are very small and are therefore multiplied by a factor of 100,000 to make them more meaningful.</p> $= \frac{\text{number of lung cancer deaths among 70 to 74 year old Northern Health residents in 2002}}{\text{number of Northern Health residents aged 70 to 74 in 2002}} \times 100,000$
95% CI	<p>A 95% CI (confidence interval) is a range of values within which 19 times out of 20 the true estimate will lie. Confidence intervals provide an indication of the reliability of the estimate. These estimates come from samples of a population. In some cases reliable estimates can not be obtained and so data are suppressed.</p> <p><i>For example: The proportion of Northern Health residents who were daily smokers was 18% in 2014 (95%CI: 15 – 22).</i></p>
Mean	<p>The sum of a list of numbers, divided by the number of elements in the list. Mean is also known as Average.</p>
Median	<p>The middle value of a list. The smallest number such that at least half the numbers in the list are no greater than it. If the list has an odd number of entries, the median is the middle entry in the list after sorting the list into increasing order.</p>
Sample size	<p>The number of elements in a sample from a population.</p>