

## Young People Mortality - a gender insight

Vasco Prazeres <sup>1</sup> Ana Rita Laranjeira <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Directorate of Health, Lisbon, Portugal

In a strict biomedical perspective young people are healthy, when compared to other groups. However, it is widely known that the majority of health problems at this ages result from behavioural patterns that can not be isolated from cultural and social dynamics. The burden of violent deaths that characterise mortality statistics expresses the impact of lifestyle and behavioural risk factors in the health status, particularly in youth. Another aspect that cannot be disregarded concerns the fact that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the deaths that occurred during youth (10-24) were in men. In fact, it is not enough to verify dissimilarities between sexes in health statistics; besides the differences sustained for biological factors, others exist whose determinants rest on asymmetrical conduct patterns that are socially constructed. For that, a gender dynamic perspective has to be applied to the processes of developing health policies and global strategies to improve the health status of these age groups. This study is an overview of the youth mortality trends in Portugal (considering 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 years), characterizing each age group and sex in what pertains to natural and violent causes of death and, with more detail, the profile of the most frequent causes. In addition to this data analyses in the Portuguese context, the need for a comprehensive approach on gender symbolic system is stressed. The health and disease balance can only be accomplished with the development of health strategies more grounded in knowledge of the social dynamics in different environments and social groups.

Key words: Gender Mortality statistics Sex Young people