

Number of deaths fell 7% in the first quarter of 2003

In January, February and March 2003 there were 4,853 deaths, 53% of which were men and 47% women

In the first quarter of 2003, 4,853 people died in the A.C. of the Basque Country, 7% less than in the same period of the previous year, according to EUSTAT data. By provinces, 553 people died in Álava (-8.6%), 2,704 in Bizkaia (-6.1%) and 1,596 in Gipuzkoa (-7.9%).

Traditionally, the first quarter of the year is when the greatest number of deaths is registered, caused principally by the rise in respiratory system illnesses. This year, the increase in deaths caused by respiratory system illnesses with regard to the previous quarter was 30.8%. However, with regard to the same quarter of the previous year, the number of deaths due to this was notably lower, 22% less. Consequently, respiratory system illnesses now account for 11.4% of the total number of deaths, two points less than in the first quarter of 2002.

The main cause of death was circulatory system illness, resulting in 1,580 deaths (32.6%); following this, the second highest number of mortalities were those caused by tumours, responsible for 1,349 deaths (27.8%). Thirdly were respiratory system illnesses, which during these winter months led to 551 deaths.

The cause of death differed according to the sex of the deceased, since among men tumours were more common than circulatory system diseases, whereas among women the main cause was cardiovascular disease, followed by tumours. Respiratory system illness remained the third cause of death for both sexes, although its incidence was slighter than in the first quarter of 2002.

Among the deaths registered in the first quarter of 2003, 9 corresponded to children of less than a year old, 4 boys and 5 girls.

The natural population growth in the first quarter of 2003 was negative, with a loss in population of 337 people. In terms of provinces, the balance in Alava and Gipuzkoa was positive, with a population increase of 39 and 14 inhabitants, respectively. In Bizkaia, on the other hand, the number of deaths was superior to that of births (-390).

**Table 1: Deaths in the A.C. of Euskadi by sex, according to cause of death.
Quarterly comparison.**

	1st quarter 2003		Previous quarter (4th quarter 2002)		Same quarter of the previous year (1st quarter 2002)	
	N.	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
DEATHS	4.853		4.510		5.217	
Men	2.571	53,0	2.398	53,2	2.744	52,6
Women	2.282	47,0	2.112	46,8	2.473	47,4
CAUSE OF DEATH						
TOTAL	4.853		4.510		5.217	
Tumours	1.349	27,8	1.348	29,9	1.404	26,9
Circulatory system	1.580	32,6	1.420	31,5	1.564	30,0
Respiratory system	551	11,4	421	9,3	706	13,5
Digestive system	286	5,9	241	5,3	259	5,0
Accidents	164	3,4	161	3,6	148	2,8
Other diseases	923	19,0	919	20,4	1.136	21,8
MEN	2.571		2.398		2.744	
Tumours	875	34,0	839	35,0	909	33,1
Circulatory system	758	29,5	685	28,6	723	26,3
Respiratory system	301	11,7	256	10,7	383	14,0
Digestive system	161	6,3	127	5,3	154	5,6
Accidents	120	4,7	101	4,2	100	3,6
Other diseases	356	13,8	390	16,3	475	17,3
WOMEN	2.282		2.112		2.473	
Tumours	474	20,8	509	24,1	495	20,0
Circulatory system	822	36,0	735	34,8	841	34,0
Respiratory system	250	11,0	165	7,8	323	13,1
Digestive system	125	5,5	114	5,4	105	4,2
Accidents	44	1,9	60	2,8	48	1,9
Other diseases	567	24,8	529	25,0	661	26,7

Source: EUSTAT

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