CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
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2005 Deaths to Baby Boomers Compared to their Parents' Generation at the same Age, 1985

The Baby Boom generation is generally considered to be those born between 1946 and 1964. In 2005, the latest year for which mortality data is available, this group ranged in age from 41 to 59. Since there is much interest in the aging of this generation and the impact this will have upon health care resources, it may be of some value to compare current trends in mortality of this generation to that of their parents' generation at the same age. Using age 20 as the age of the youngest parents, the comparison population used here is persons born between 1926 and 1944, who would have been age 41 to 59 in 1985. All statistics are based on Minnesota resident data.

Demographic Comparisons

Gender

Minnesota's Baby Boom generation is nearly double the size of their parents' generation with a population of approximately 1.4 million vs. 750,000. However, the gender distribution of the two populations is very similar both for population and for number of deaths. Males account for approximately half of the total population and close to two thirds of the deaths in both years. Crude death rates are lower for Baby Boomers overall as well as for each gender (Table 1).

Table 1: Minnesota Residents, Age 41 – 59 by Gender

	1985			2005		
	Population	# of Deaths	Death Rate	Population	# of Deaths	Death Rate
Male	374,243	2,113	564.6	703,367	2,807	399.1
Female	382,580	1,238	323.6	698,867	1,733	248.0
Total	756,823	3,351	442.8	1,402,234	4,540	323.8

Age Group

Population distribution by age is also remarkably similar for Baby Boomers in 2005 and their parents at the same ages in 1985. The 41-45 age group is about 30% and the 51-55 age group approximately 24% of the population for each. The 46-50 group, however, comprises slightly more and the 56-59 group slightly less of the population of Baby Boomers than of their parents (Table 2). The distribution of deaths by age group shows more variation. A significantly smaller percentage of the deaths occur to those aged 56-59 in 2005 than in 1985 while larger percentages of the deaths occur in each of the other age groups. Death rates are lower for all age groups in 2005 as compared to 1985 with the difference becoming more pronounced as age increases.

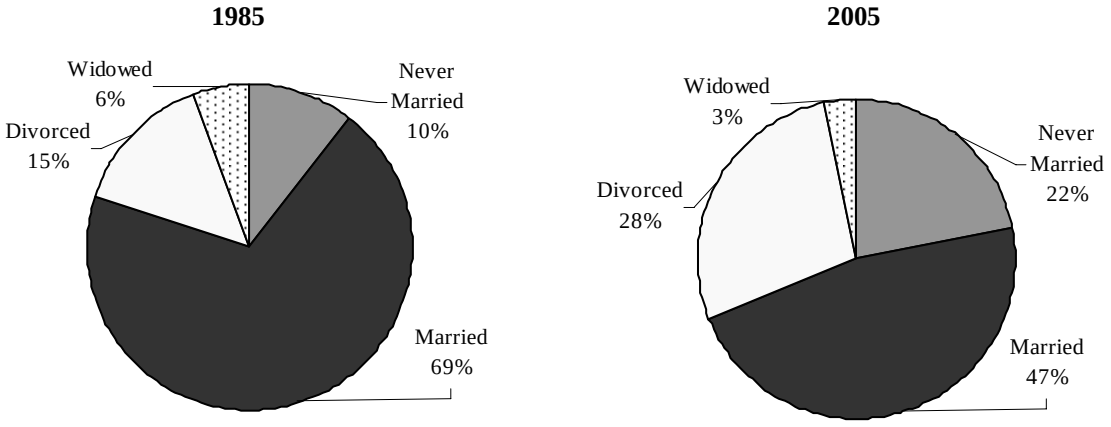
Table 2: Minnesota Residents, Age 41 - 59 by Age Group

	1985			2005		
Age Group	% of Population	% of Deaths	Death Rate Per 100,000	% of Population	% of Deaths	Death Rate Per 100,000
41-45	31.0	13.9	198.9	30.1	15.6	167.1
46-50	25.5	19.0	330.5	28.7	24.2	273.2
51-55	24.0	28.8	532.9	24.8	30.9	403.3
56-59	19.5	38.2	866.7	16.4	29.4	580.0

Marital Status of Decedent

Marital status of decedents looks quite different for Baby Boomers compared to their parents. Approximately 10% of decedents age 41-59 in 1985 had never been married, while nearly 22% of Baby Boomer decedents had never married. Many more Baby Boomer decedents were divorced; 27.9% as opposed to 14.5% of decedents in the previous generation (Figure 1).

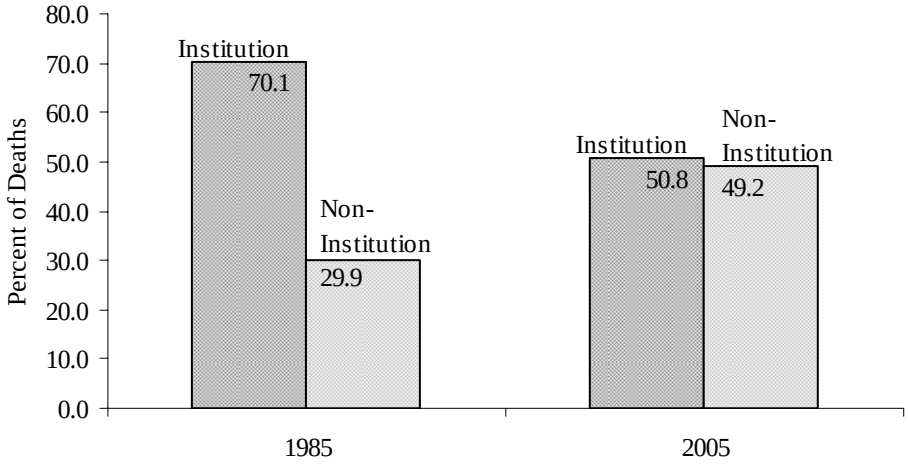
Figure 1: Marital Status of Decedents Age 41-59



Place of Death

The place where death occurs has changed considerably between 1985 and 2005 for this age group. For the earlier generation, 70.1% of deaths occurred in an institution such as a hospital or nursing home, while 29.9% occurred in non-institutional settings. In 2005, the percentages were nearly identical with 50.8% occurring in institutions and 49.2 in non-institutional locations (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Place of Death, Decedents Age 41-59



Cause of Death Comparisons

Gender

The same causes of death comprise the leading causes for persons age 41 – 59 in 1985 and in 2005, but the 'all causes' crude death rates are much lower for Baby Boomers than for their parents. Females, with the exception of cancer rates in 2005, have death rates that are lower than those for males in both 1985 and 2005 (Table 3). Most of this difference is driven by lower death rates for disease-related causes rather than for external causes of death.

Table 3: Death Rates by Gender, Leading Causes of Death

	Rate Per 100,000					
	Total		Male		Female	
	1985	2005	1985	2005	1985	2005
All Causes	442.8	323.8	564.6	399.1	323.6	248.0
Malignant Neoplasms (Cancer)	157.6	108.6	159.5	105.4	155.8	111.9
Heart Diseases	130.9	59.2	204.4	87.7	59.1	30.5
Unintentional Injuries	30.8	30.7	44.4	43.9	17.5	17.5
Motor Vehicle Accidents	12.4	12.9	16.0	18.1	12.4	12.9
Cerebrovascular Diseases/Stroke	16.8	10.8	17.9	12.4	15.7	9.3
Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	14.7	10.1	20.8	14.1	8.6	6.0
Intentional Self-Harm (Suicide)	14.4	15.4	23.8	24.7	5.2	6.0
Diabetes Mellitus	8.3	10.4	11.2	12.5	5.5	8.3

The largest differences in rates appear in heart disease deaths. Particularly striking is the difference in the death rate due to heart disease for males, a decrease of 57.1%. Females, too, in 2005 experienced a 48.4% lower heart disease death rate than did their mothers. Cancer death rates are also lower for both males and females, decreases of 33.9% and 28.2% respectively. Accidental death and suicide rates remained virtually unchanged for both genders, while rates of death due to cerebrovascular diseases and liver disease & cirrhosis are lower by 30 and 40 percent. The diabetes death rate, however, is higher for Baby Boomers of both genders.

Age Group

Overall, Baby Boomers have lower death rates than did their parents across all of the age groups. When looking at individual causes, however, there are some interesting differences as well as areas where Baby Boomers have higher death rates. Unintentional injury rates are moderately lower for all groups except for those aged 41-45 where the rate for Baby Boomers is 19.3% higher than the rate for their parents. Motor vehicle accident rates are higher for Baby Boomers in the youngest and oldest age groups, but lower for those in the middle. Rates for liver disease & cirrhosis are very similar for ages 50 and under, while Baby Boomers over age 50 have rates that are only about half that of their parents. Diabetes death rates for Baby Boomers are double that of their parents for those age 46-50 and 46% higher for age 56-59, while rates for those age 41-45 and 51-55 are the same or only slightly greater.

Table 4: Death Rates by Age Group, Leading Causes of Death

	Age 41-45		Age 46-50		Age 51-55		Age 56-59	
	1985	2005	1985	2005	1985	2005	1985	2005
All Causes	198.9	167.1	330.5	273.2	532.9	403.3	866.7	580.0
Malignant Neoplasms (Cancer)	60.5	39.8	115.0	74.1	188.1	149.6	330.4	233.7
Heart Diseases	48.1	23.9	94.8	53.0	163.8	72.2	269.5	115.3
Unintentional Injuries	26.4	31.5	35.2	31.6	33.1	31.1	29.1	27.4
Motor Vehicle Accidents	11.5	15.1	14.0	13.2	13.8	9.2	10.2	13.9
Cerebrovascular Diseases/Stroke	6.8	5.9	15.5	8.5	18.8	14.1	31.8	19.1
Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	7.2	6.2	9.3	10.9	23.2	12.4	23.0	12.2
Intentional Self-Harm (Suicide)	12.8	14.2	11.4	17.9	17.7	14.1	16.9	15.2
Diabetes Mellitus	4.3	4.3	3.1	6.5	10.5	10.9	19.0	27.8

Minnesota Vital Signs

Minnesota Center for Health Statistics
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Minnesota Department of Health

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