Abstract

Objective: To describe the mortality from external causes in Fortaleza (Brazil), including homicides, suicides, falls and traffic violence. Methods: A descriptive study about the mortality of residents in Fortaleza, in which 105,000 deaths occurring in the period of 1999 to 2007 were evaluated. The deaths were registered and available in the Mortality Information System (SIM) of the Municipal Health Secretariat (SMS). Death distribution by year of occurrence and gender were compared. To measure the population’s growth and the increase of deaths and of mortality rates in time we used linear regression. The correlations with coefficients of determination equal or above 70% (R² < 0.70) were considered significant. Results: It was found that, for the entire period, deaths from all external causes showed to be higher in men than in women, either in attacks or in traffic accidents or in cases of self-inflicted injuries. In the period, deaths from external causes presented a growth with level of significance above 70%, at a rate of 49.5 deaths per year, reaching 1.774 deaths in 2007 (R² = 0.74). Regarding the absolute numbers of deaths, growth occurred at the expense of increase of homicides and suicides in men (R² < 0.73) and not in women (R² < 0.56) and was not observed in mortality rates, indicating a correlation with population growth. Conclusion: By the study of trends in mortality rates, there are signs, albeit weak, of a trend to the reduction of deaths from external causes, which, probably, is reflecting the gains achieved by the efforts of resources mobilization and the organization of society against violence.

Keywords

Violence, mortality, external causes.