

Non-Communicable Diseases in the Cook Islands

# NCD QUARTER 4 REPORT

October - December 2024

Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health, Cook Islands (TMO), as it redirects its efforts to address Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) would like to present and report on the NCD situation in the Cook Islands. The NCDs referred to in this update include: 1) cardiovascular diseases (CVD) (such as heart disease, stroke, and myocardial infarction), 2) hypertension, 3) diabetes, 4) cancer and 5) chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) (such as asthma, bronchiectasis, chronic bronchitis and emphysema).

Note: A **patient** refers to an individual who receives an initial diagnosis at the point of consultation. A **case** represents each distinct NCD diagnosed in a patient, as individuals may have multiple NCDs.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH NCDs AS OF 2024 **5,663**

Note: Reduction is due to removal of NCD patient deaths and overseas migration.

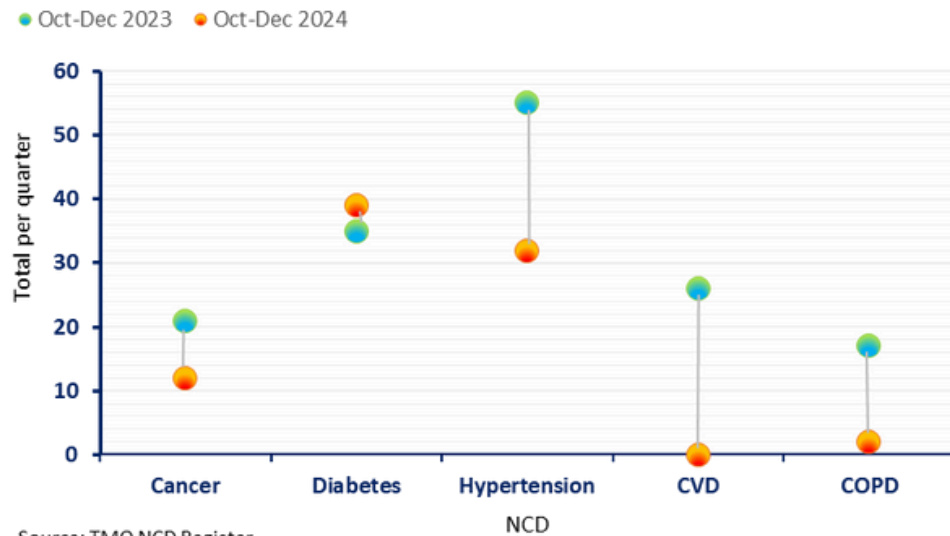
## TOTAL NEW NCD CASES 2024 (N=391)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
DIABETES	51	47	33	39
HYPERTENSION	30	39	30	32
COPD	2	0	4	2
CVD	16	1	0	0
CANCER	13	14	11	8

Source: TMO NCD Register

In 2024, diabetes was the most commonly diagnosed NCD, with a total of 170 cases. Hypertension ranked second, with 131 cases, while cancer was third, with 46 cases. As shown in the table above, the first quarter of the year (Jan-Mar) recorded the highest number of cases (112) compared to the other quarters.

## New NCD Cases Comparison Oct-Dec 2023 & 2024

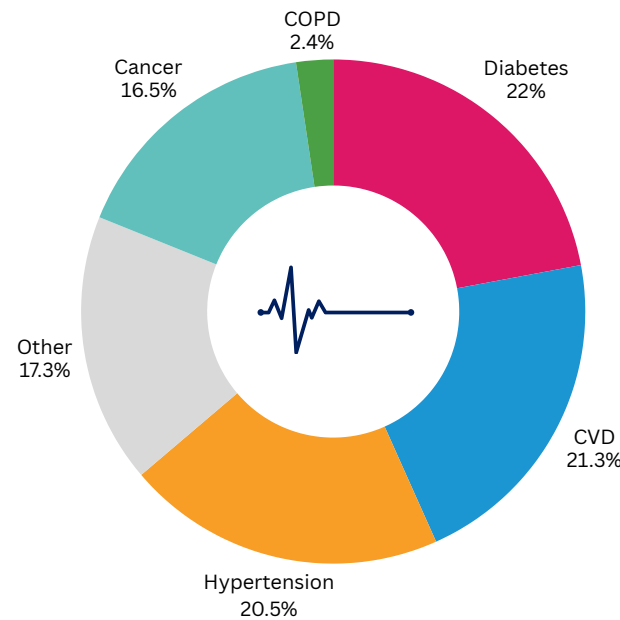


Source: TMO NCD Register

Comparing this quarters(Oct-Dec) between the two years, the data shows a higher incidence in 2023, except for diabetes, which is slightly higher this year.

## TOTAL UNDERLYING DEATHS FOR 2024 (N=127)

Note: The figures below do not represent the primary cause of death but rather chronic underlying NCDs that the patient had, which may have contributed to the primary cause of death.

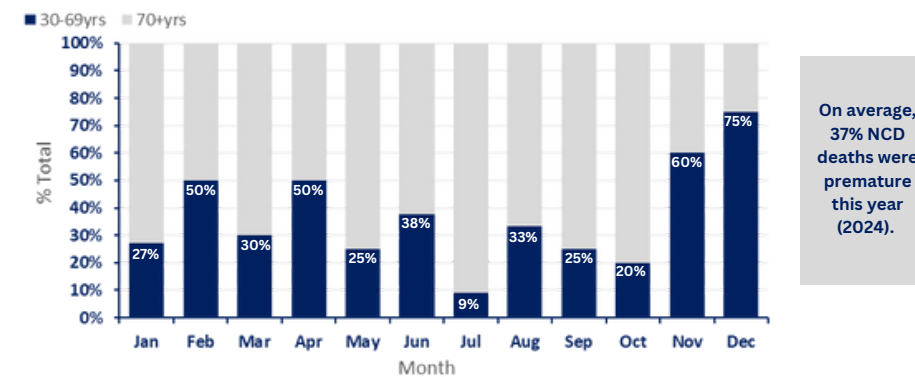


Source: TMO Death Register

Diabetes was the leading NCD underlying cause of death this year, with the highest percentage of 22%. "Other" causes of death comprised of only 17.3% of the total underlying cause. In contrast, NCDs made up a concerning 83%, highlighting their role as a silent killer among Cook Islanders.

Males had a higher likelihood of dying from NCDs than females, with rates of 51% and 49%, respectively, based on the total recorded deaths.

## Proportion of Premature NCD Deaths



Source: TMO Death Register

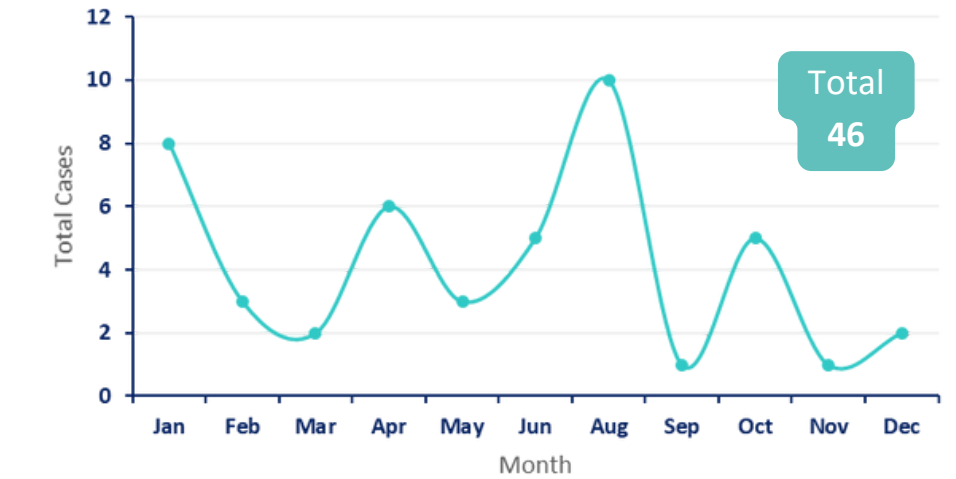
On average, 37% NCD deaths were premature this year (2024).

**Average Age of NCD Death: 72 Years**

Note: Based on data from January to December 2024

## CANCER DIAGNOSED CASES 2024 (N=46)

### New Cancer Cases 2024

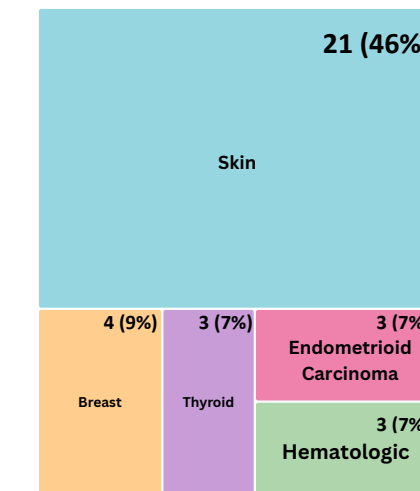


Source: TMO Cancer Register (CanReg5)

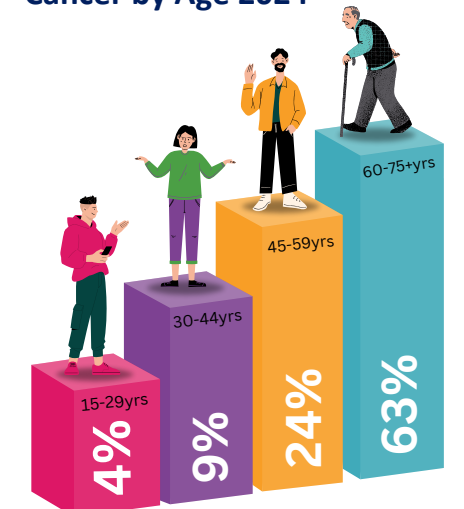
In 2024, a total of 46 cancer cases were diagnosed. The highest number of cases occurred in August, with 10 cases, while September and November each recorded the lowest number, with just one case.

Skin cancer had the highest number of cases, representing 46% (21), followed by breast cancer at 9% (4).

### Cancer by Type 2024



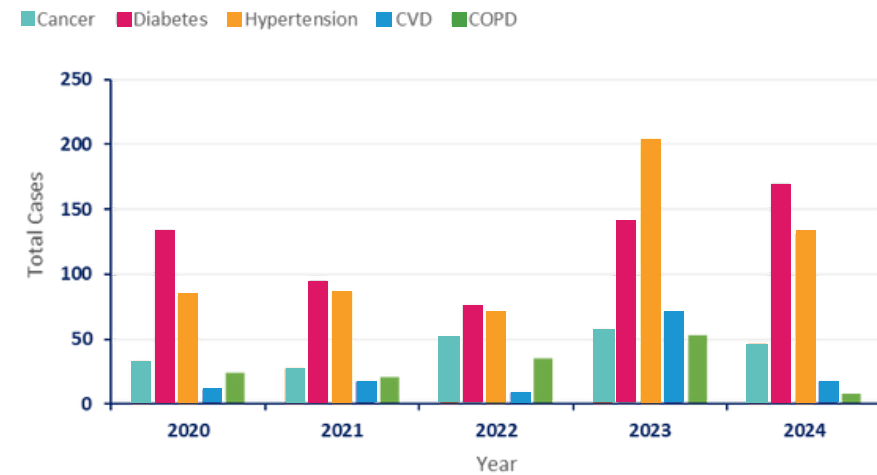
### Cancer by Age 2024



The 15-29 years age group had the lowest number of cases, with only 2 cases (4%). The 30-44 years age group recorded 4 cases (9%), while the 45-59 years age group had 11 cases (24%). The highest number of cases was found in the 60-75+ years age group, with 29 cases (63%). These figures indicate that cancer is more prevalent in older age groups, with a significant increase starting at age 45.

# INCIDENCE OF NCDs - ANNUAL SUMMARY

## Annual Comparison



Source: TMO NCD Register

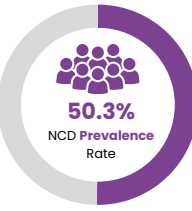
Since 2020, the number of NCDs has generally increased, with hypertension and diabetes becoming the most prevalent conditions among Cook Islanders. Further research is necessary to identify and confirm the factors contributing to this rise.

### Incidence Rate



For the year 2024, the incidence rate was **33 cases of NCDs per 1,000 population**; and a prevalence rate of about **50.3%**

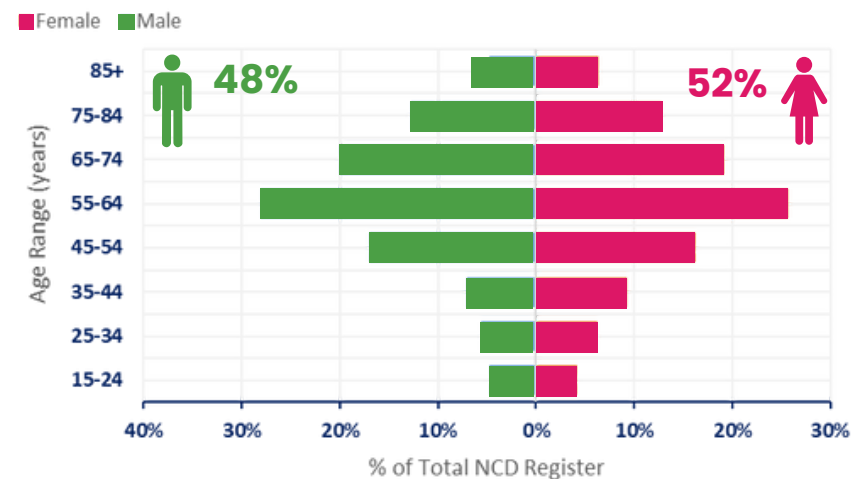
### Prevalence Rate



Note: **Incidence rate** is the number of new cases of a disease that occur in a given population during a defined period of time. **Prevalence rate** measures the frequency of all current cases of disease (new and existing) in a specified population.

# NCD PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

## Sex and Age Dissaggregation

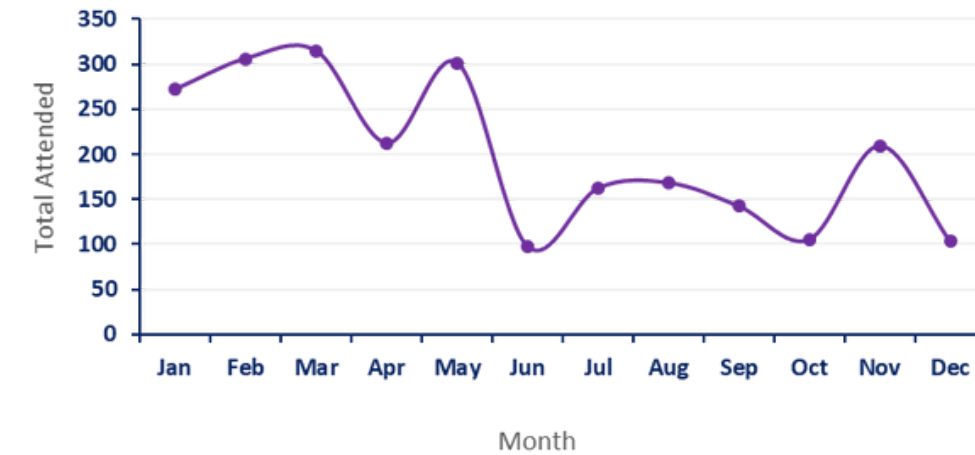


Source: TMO NCD Register

The data on NCDs by age reveals a higher concentration of patients starting from the 45-54 to 65-74 age groups. Overall, females have a higher percentage of NCD cases (52%, 00) compared to males (48%, 00).

# NCD CLINIC APPOINTMENTS ATTENDED

## NCD Clinic Appointments



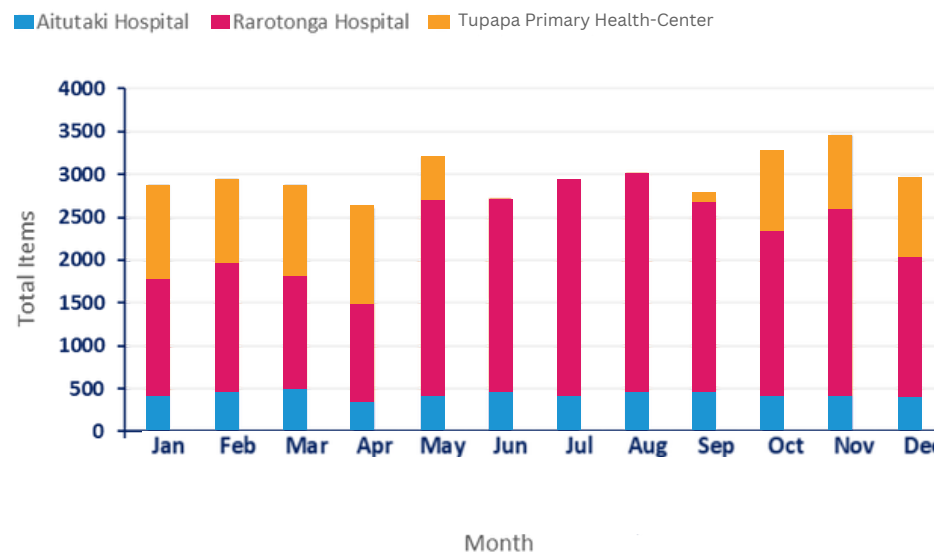
Source TMO Patient Appointment Book

The graph above illustrates the attendance trends of NCD patients at their scheduled appointments at the NCD clinic(s) in Rarotonga. Attendance was highest in the first quarter of 2024 but gradually declined in the following months (contributed by closure of Tupapa NCD clinic), with a slight increase in November. On average, around 200 patients attended their NCD appointments each month.

# NCD MEDICATIONS

Note: There are three main pharmacy distribution points of TMO, two being based in Rarotonga.

## Total NCD Prescriptions 2024

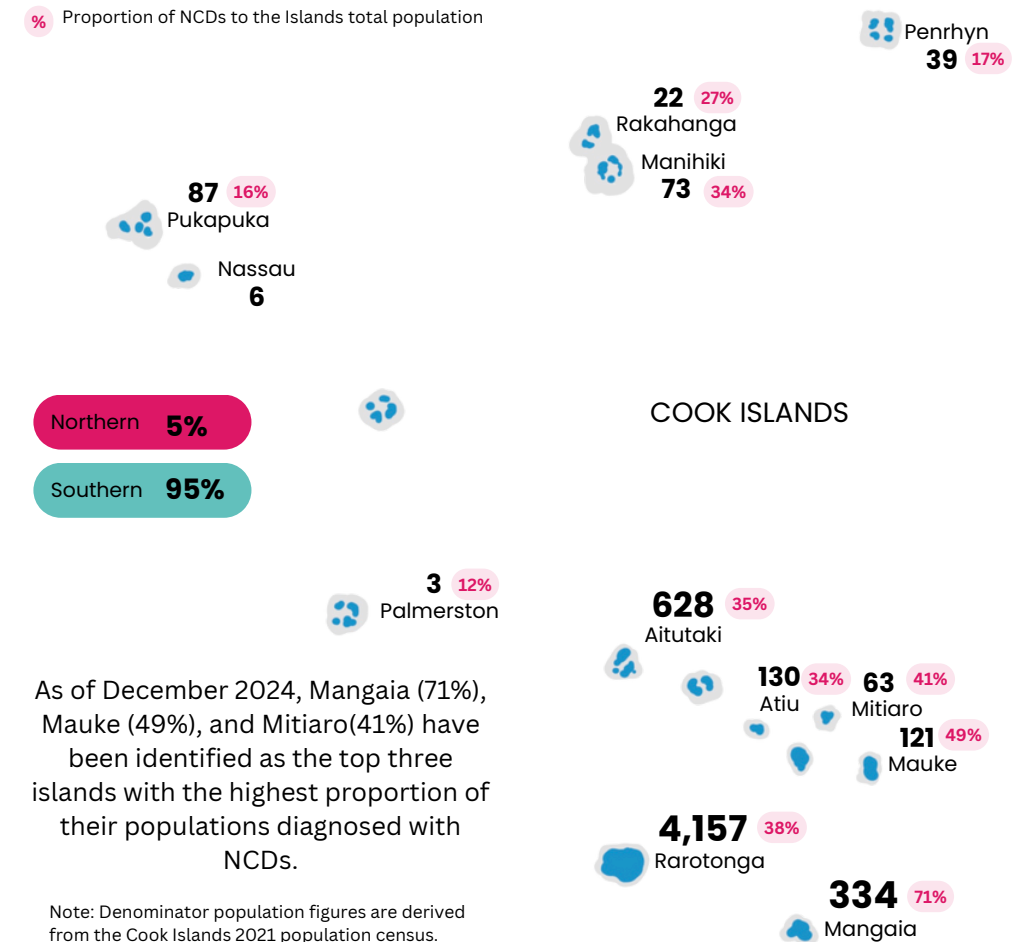


Source: TMO Pharmacy Inventory (Msupply)

Rarotonga Hospital dispensed the most NCD medications, with an average of 1,866 prescriptions per month, peaking at 2,578 in August. Aitutaki Hospital had a lower average of 432 prescriptions per month, with a peak of 490 in March. Tupapa Primary Health-center dispensing significantly dropped after May due to the closure, with an average of 924 prescriptions per month.

# NCD BY ISLAND AS OF DEC 2024

Note: Patient's island is determined by their address registered on TMOs patient information systems (Medtech Evolution)



As of December 2024, Mangaia (71%), Mauke (49%), and Mitiaro(41%) have been identified as the top three islands with the highest proportion of their populations diagnosed with NCDs.

Note: Denominator population figures are derived from the Cook Islands 2021 population census.

# EMPOWERING HEALTH: STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NCDs

- Regular Health Check-ups
- Reduce/Quit Alcohol Consumption
- Reduce/Quit Smoking/Vaping
- Reduce Salt & Sugar Intake
- Make Healthier Choices
- Take NCD Medications Regularly
- Stay Physically Active
- Attend NCD Appointments

Note: The provided numbers are provisional and subject to change in future reports. The data range for this report is limited to ages 15 years old and above only. Visitors, non-residents, expatriates and deceased have been excluded from this report