

Tuesday, 28 April 2020

## 1.8 million Australians aged 70+ have a ‘comorbidity’ condition that puts them at higher risk from COVID-19

**New research shows more than 1.8 million Australians aged 70+ (65% of this age group) have a pre-existing condition that puts them at higher risk of dying if they were to contract the COVID-19 coronavirus. Such conditions are known as a comorbidity.**

Roy Morgan analysed the prevalence of the top ten comorbidities identified by authorities including the [Australian Government](#) and the [New York Department of Health](#). (New York is currently the global location hardest hit by the pandemic; more than 300,000 residents of New York State have been infected by COVID-19 and more than 27,000 have died during the pandemic.)

### High blood pressure, cancer and diabetes are the leading comorbidities for older Australians

Almost 1 million Australians aged 70+ (35% of this age group) suffer from high blood pressure (hypertension), representing a third of people in this age group. This is clearly the most common comorbid condition suffered by older Australians.

Around a quarter of Australians aged 70+ (710,000) have some form of cancer, making it the second most common comorbidity for older Australians.

Other common comorbid conditions for older Australians include Diabetes (435,000 – 15%), High cholesterol/Cholesterol problems (363,000 – 13%) and an Irregular heartbeat (121,000 – 11%).

These findings are drawn from the latest Roy Morgan health and wellbeing data conducted in the 12 months to March 2020.

### Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan, says Australia has responded well to the COVID-19 coronavirus, however, many Australians remain at an increased risk:

*“Special analysis of Roy Morgan’s health and wellbeing data shows over 1.8 million Australians aged 70+ (65%) are at increased risk of death should they contract the COVID-19 coronavirus, illustrating just why it was so important Australia took extensive measures to flatten the curve.*

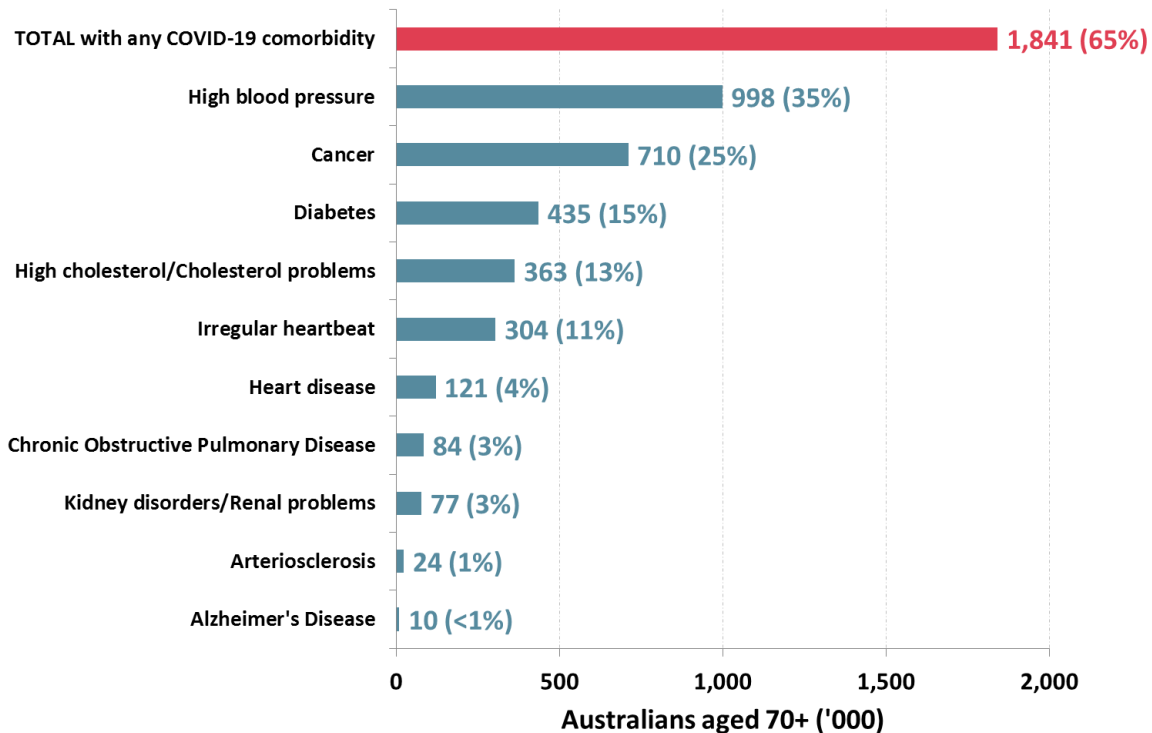
*“Extensive tracking of those who have succumbed to the virus in New York State – where over 300,000 have contracted COVID-19 and over 20,000 have died during the pandemic – shows several underlying health conditions significantly increase one’s risk of dying from COVID-19.*

*“The leading comorbidities for COVID-19 prevalent in older Australians are high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, cholesterol problems and an irregular heartbeat. The fact nearly two-thirds of all Australians aged 70+ suffer from one of the top ten conditions shows how dangerous an uncontrolled outbreak of COVID-19 could be.*

*“So far just over 80 Australians have died with a COVID-19 infection during March and April. Of those to have died, over 80% have been aged at least 70 years of age or older. Although Australia has done well to reduce the spread of infection in recent weeks, it appears the ‘new normal’ will require social distancing measures and a ban on large gatherings for some time to prevent a renewed outbreak of the disease that could put at risk the lives of millions of the more vulnerable Australians at risk.”*

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## Prevalence of leading COVID-19 coronavirus comorbidities among Australians aged 70+



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), April 2019 – March 2020, n=3,840. **Base:** Australians aged 70+. There are 2.8 million Australians aged 70+.

**Note:** Analysis by other age groups is available on request by contacting Julian McCrann – [Julian.McCrann@roymorgan.com](mailto:Julian.McCrann@roymorgan.com).

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan's health and illnesses data, please contact:**

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### Related research findings

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Compiled with data from Roy Morgan's Single Source survey (the largest of its kind in the world, with 50,000 respondents p.a), these ready-made profiles provide a broad understanding of the target

### Top 10 comorbidities identified by the New York Department of Health

1. Hypertension/High blood pressure
2. Diabetes
3. High cholesterol/Cholesterol problems
4. Coronary artery disease/Arteriosclerosis
5. Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease
6. Atrial fibrillation/Irregular heartbeat
7. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
8. Renal disease/Kidney disorders/Renal problems
9. Cancer
10. Congestive heart failure/Heart disease

**For more information see here:** <https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Fatalities?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no>

**About Roy Morgan**

Roy Morgan is Australia’s largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years’ experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

**Margin of Error**

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

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