

Heart-diseases (all forms).—The number of deaths from the various diseases listed under this heading continues to increase, but the increase in the crude death-rate is considerably less than in recent years. Increase in the number of deaths and in the death-rate is to be expected with an ageing population.

Cancer.—Cancer stands second to diseases of the heart as a cause of death, and in 1939, 1,815 deaths were assigned to this cause, an increase of 28 over the previous year. The crude rate rose slightly, from 11.76 in 1938 to 11.79 in 1939. As shown in last annual report, the cancer death-rate, when adjusted to eliminate the effects of the changing age and sex constitution of the population, has shown no evidence of an increasing tendency for several years.

Tuberculosis (all Forms).

Year.	Number of Deaths from Tuberculosis.	Death-rate from Tuberculosis per 10,000 of Mean Population.	Year.	Number of Deaths from Tuberculosis.	Death-rate from Tuberculosis per 10,000 of Mean Population.
1934	621	4.21	1937.. ..	589	3.91
1935	576	3.89	1938.. ..	597	3.93
1936	680	4.56	1939.. ..	613	3.98

Of the 613 deaths from tuberculosis in 1939, 522 (3.39 per 10,000 of mean population) were assigned to tuberculosis of the respiratory system, and 91 (0.59 per 10,000) to other forms of the disease.

Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System.—After two years with a decreasing number of deaths and a declining death-rate the number of deaths in 1939 (522) showed an increase of 40 over those for 1938 (482) and the rate per 10,000 of mean population increased from 3.17 in 1938 to 3.39 in 1939. During the past eight years the latter rate has only once been exceeded, in 1936, when it was 3.62.

Of recent years the rate of decline has shown a tendency to decrease, and it is probable that if the position is to be maintained or improved a more intensive campaign against this disease will be necessary.

Tuberculosis other than that of the Respiratory System.—The 91 deaths last year so assigned were distributed as follows (the figures for 1938 being given in parentheses):

Tuberculosis of the meninges and central nervous system	34	(35)
Tuberculosis of intestines and peritoneum	12	(19)
Tuberculosis of vertebral column	7	(18)
Tuberculosis of bones and joints	2	(5)
Tuberculosis of lymphatic system	1	(3)
Tuberculosis of genito-urinary system	7	(11)
Tuberculosis of other organs	3	(3)
Disseminated tuberculosis	25	(21)
	91	(115)

The number of deaths (91) and the crude death-rate per 10,000 of mean population (0.59) are the lowest recorded in New Zealand. In 1924 the rate was 1.26 per 10,000 (the lowest recorded to that date) a figure more than double the rate experienced in 1939.

Of the various forms listed above, only in the case of disseminated tuberculosis was there an increase over the previous year in the number of deaths from 21 to 25. The average yearly number of deaths from this cause during the past ten years was 24.6.

INFANT MORTALITY.

Deaths of infants numbered 898, and the infant-mortality rate was 31.14 per 1,000 live births, compared with 35.63 in 1938.

Infant Mortality in New Zealand, 1932-39 (per 1,000 Live Births).

Year.	Under One Month.	One Month and under Twelve Months.	Total under Twelve Months.	Year.	Under One Month.	One Month and under Twelve Months.	Total under Twelve Months.
1932 ..	21.30	9.92	31.22	1936 ..	22.31	8.65	30.96
1933 ..	22.81	8.79	31.64	1937 ..	22.22	8.99	31.21
1934 ..	22.86	9.25	32.11	1938 ..	24.15	11.48	35.63
1935 ..	22.03	10.23	32.26	1939 ..	21.85	9.29	31.14