



# Physician's Lexicon

## An Epidemic of Words

**THE GREEK ROOT, DEMOS, (MEANING A DISTRICT** or territory but when incorporated into English words meaning 'of the people'), has given rise to a number of current terms including democracy, endemic, epidemic, pandemic, epidemiology, demography, demagogue and even the formal names, Democritus and Damocles.

Endemic defines those disorders (tacitly communicable) prevailing within the people but typically diseases of low intensity; epidemic, literally upon the people, refers to diseases generally of high affliction rates; and pandemic, disorders of global distribution, (ie, involving all of the people).

The secular, popular form of ancient Greek writing is often referred to as the demotic script as distinguished from the pictorial script used for royal and religious messages, a script called hieratic.

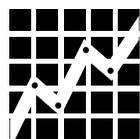
The English language is rich with words, beginning with *demo-* which are etymologically unrelated to those terms originally stemming from the Greek, *demos*. Demolish, for example, is derived from the Latin, *moliri*, meaning to construct or gather, and the Latin prefix, *de-*, meaning down or away from. The English word, demonstrate, is from the Latin, *demonstrare*, meaning to point out or display and also from the Latin prefix, *de-* (see above.) And, of course, there are a cluster of English words also employing the Latin prefix, *de-*; words such as demoralize, dementia, demeanor and demobilize.

The word, demon, is from the Latin, *daemon*, which in turn is derived from a Greek word originally defining someone who distributes something tangible (ultimately, portioning out men's destinies)

and thus becomes the name for a remorseless god. The word, pandemonium, meaning a chaotic, tumultuous state, descends from the same Greek root. John Milton (1608 – 1684), the English poet, invented the word to provide a title to the capitol of Hell.

And of course there is the word, demoiselle, from contemporary French, meaning a young maiden but ultimately from the Latin, *domina*, meaning mistress or lady of the household; and earlier from the Latin, *domus*, meaning household (as in words such as domicile, major domo, dome and even Don.).

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## VITAL STATISTICS

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### Rhode Island Monthly Vital Statistics Report Provisional Occurrence Data from the Division of Vital Records

Underlying Cause of Death	Reporting Period			
	September 2010	12 Months Ending with September 2010		
	Number (a)	Number (a)	Rates (b)	YPLL (c)
Diseases of the Heart	171	2,245	213.2	3,059.0
Malignant Neoplasms	175	2,282	216.7	6,311.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	45	472	44.8	617.5
Injuries (Accidents/Suicide/Homicide)	50	615	58.4	10,154.5
COPD	37	488	46.3	547.5

Vital Events	Reporting Period		
	March 2011	12 Months Ending with March 2011	
	Number	Number	Rates
Live Births	975	11,754	11.2*
Deaths	932	10,006	9.5*
Infant Deaths	(9)	(67)	5.7#
Neonatal Deaths	(8)	(66)	5.6#
Marriages	245	6,074	5.8*
Divorces	351	3,277	3.1*
Induced Terminations	330	4,145	352.6#
Spontaneous Fetal Deaths	51	665	56.6#
Under 20 weeks gestation	(42)	(593)	59.3#
20+ weeks gestation	(9)	(70)	6.0#

(a) Cause of death statistics were derived from the underlying cause of death reported by physicians on death certificates.

(b) Rates per 100,000 estimated population of 1,053,209. (www.census.gov)

(c) Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL).

*Note: Totals represent vital events that occurred in Rhode Island for the reporting periods listed above. Monthly provisional totals should be analyzed with caution because the numbers may be small and subject to seasonal variation.*

\* Rates per 1,000 estimated population

# Rates per 1,000 live births