



Physician's Lexicon

The Straight and Narrow Words of Medicine

THE GREEK WORD, ORTHOS, CONVEYS THE sense of straightness, directness, correctness or something free of structural or moral deviousness. And as a prefix, *ortho-*, it has adorned countless words in both the general and medical vocabularies.

The word orthodox, descends from the Greek noun, *doxa*, meaning an opinion and the verb, *dokein*, meaning to think; in combination, then, orthodox means having the correct opinion via the original Greek and later the ecclesiastical Latin, *orthodoxus*.

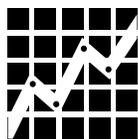
Other words employing the *ortho-* prefix, in general usage, include orthography (the art of spelling words in accordance with accepted usage); orthotropic (plants that grow vertically); orthoptera (insects with vertically oriented wings such as locusts); orthogonal (in architecture, any structure that is vertically oriented); and orthoscopy (normal vision.)

Amongst the many medical terms that include the *ortho-* prefix:

- Orthopedics: A medical term original meaning the medical science of achieving straight or undeformed children by surgical or manipulative interventions (from *pais*, Greek, meaning child.)
- Orthodontia: The dental specialty concerned with malocclusions and other structural deformities of teeth, particularly in childhood.
- Orthognathic: An adjective defining facial contour without visible jaw abnormalities. From the Greek, *gnathos*, meaning jaw.
- Orthokinetics: A branch of physiotherapy which attempts to modify skeletal muscle activity around joints affected by deformative arthritis.
- Orthodromic: An adjective describing the proper direction of axonal nerve impulses.

- Orthophrasia: A quaint 19th Century medical term describing those who think directly or correctly. Compare with schizophrenia, literally a divided mind; phrenology, an obsolete belief in the specific anatomic location of various mental faculties; and phrenetic, sometimes spelled frenetic, meaning excessively manic. The same Greek root, *phren*, has also described the diaphragm, its nerve supply (phrenic nerve) and its diseases such as phrenitis.
- Orthothanasia: The disputed and contentious, and perhaps illusive, art of dying gracefully and naturally.
- And finally, orthobiosis, that wonderfully Victorian noun, from the Greek, *bios*, meaning life, defining the art of living correctly both in mind and body.

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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			
	December 2011	12 Months Ending with December 2011		
	Number (a)	Number (a)	Rates (b)	YPLL (c)
Diseases of the Heart	198	2,446	232.2	3,862.0
Malignant Neoplasms	178	2,199	208.8	5,482.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	40	424	40.3	565.0
Injuries (Accidents/Suicide/Homicide)	59	702	66.7	9,452.5
COPD	65	536	50.9	525.0

Vital Events	Reporting Period		
	June 2012	12 Months Ending with June 2012	
	Number	Number	Rates
Live Births	1,018	11,853	11.3*
Deaths	760	9,511	9.0*
Infant Deaths	(9)	(79)	6.7#
Neonatal Deaths	(8)	(60)	5.1#
Marriages	857	6,451	6.1*
Divorces	251	3,296	3.1*
Induced Terminations	282	3,876	327.0#
Spontaneous Fetal Deaths	18	590	49.8#
Under 20 weeks gestation	(11)	(486)	51.1#
20+ weeks gestation	(7)	(104)	8.8#

(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 1,052,567. (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