must have been particularly high. Even in 1921 the Canadian infant mortality rate was 102.1 per 1,000 live births. With increasing urbanization and improved sanitation and medical services, the crude death rate dropped by 50% from 22 to 11 between 1851 and 1930. It continued to decline to a low of 7.3 in 1970 and 1971, rising slightly to 7.4 in 1973 and 1974.

Table 4.32 shows the trends in crude death rates since 1951 in the provinces and territories. The low rate shown for Newfoundland is mainly due to the high proportion of young people, and the relatively high rates for Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia to the high proportion of elderly people there.

Table 4.33 shows the numbers of deaths in urban centres of 50,000 population and over in 1974, and the average deaths a year for the periods 1961-65 and 1966-70.

Age and sex distribution of deaths. Since 1921 the mortality trend at all ages has been downward. However, the principal factor in lowering the general death rate has been the reduction in the mortality of infants and children. Between 1951 and 1974, death rates for infants and for children under five years of age dropped by about 60% (Table 4.39). Rates for the five-to-14 group also declined steeply. However, rates for boys and young men from 15 to 24 were actually higher than in 1951. Death rates for males over 25 were appreciably lower in 1974 than in 1951, except for men of 65-74 years, for whom there was little change. Rates for females of all ages declined substantially between 1951 and 1974.

As shown in Table 4.40 males under 40 accounted for 18.1% of all male deaths in 1961 but for only 13.6% in 1971; in 1961, 16.4% of all female deaths were of persons under 40, but only 10.7% in 1971.

Sharp reductions in male infant and child mortality, and substantial declines in the female rates for all younger age groups, have tended to raise the average age at death. Over 1961-71 the average for males rose 3.6 years from 59.7 to 63.3, while that for females advanced 5.1 years, from 63.1 to 68.2. The male median age at death rose only slightly, from 67.9 to 68.5, but the gain for females was 2.5 years, from 72.2 to 74.7. Thus half the females who died in 1971 were more than 74.7 years old.

Causes of death. Table 4.41 presents details of the 1974 Canadian deaths and death rates based on 50 causes as given in the International Abbreviated List (International Classification of Diseases, 8th Revision). Of the 166,794 deaths in 1974, 82,141 or over 49% were due to cardiovascular diseases, i.e. to ailments of the heart and circulatory system. Cancer accounted for 33,751, or 20.2%, accidents for 12,945 or 7.8%, and respiratory ailments for 10,911 or 6.5%. Combined, these four causes were responsible for 139,748 deaths, or 83.8% of the total.

The proportion of older people in the population has been rising in recent years. Consequently, cancer and cardiovascular diseases account for a larger proportion of all deaths than formerly. On the other hand, deaths of infants, children and young adults from such diseases as pneumonia and tuberculosis have sharply declined.

Table 4.42 shows that the leading causes of infant mortality are radically different from the main causes of death at later periods. Accidents are the primary cause of death for males between one and 44 years of age. The majority of deaths among older males are due either to cardiovascular diseases or to cancer.

Accidents are also the primary cause of mortality among girls, with cancer being the leading cause of death of young and middle-aged women. Cardiovascular diseases and cancer are the leading causes of death for elderly women.

Infant mortality 4.7.2

Table 4.43 shows that mortality rates for both male and female infants (under one year of age) have been reduced by more than 60% since 1951. For example, if the 1951 death rate had remained unchanged until 1974, there would have been