

### **Appendix 3: National Death Index description [posted as supplied by author]**

The National Death Index (NDI) is a resource developed by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to aid epidemiologists and other health and medical investigators with their mortality ascertainment activities.<sup>1</sup> It is a central computerized index of death record information on file in the state vital statistics offices. It contains a standard set of identifying information (e.g., first and last name, middle initial, father's surname, social security number, month, day, and year of birth, race, sex, marital status, state of residence, and state of birth) on each death to be used in searches of the file to identify and locate death records in the state offices. It assists investigators in determining whether persons in their studies have died and, if so, provides the names of the states in which those deaths occurred, the dates of death, and the corresponding death certificate numbers.

The NDI is considered the most complete resource for mortality tracing and has long been used in health research<sup>2-3</sup>. The NDI information demonstrated high sensitivity (87-98%) and is currently the only source at the national level with a cause-of-death field, making it useful for research purposes.<sup>3</sup>

#### References

1. National Death Index. (Accessed 04/22/2015, at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ndi.htm>)
2. Use of the National Death Index in Health Research. (Accessed 04/22/2015, at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ndi/ndi\\_bibliography\\_health\\_research.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ndi/ndi_bibliography_health_research.pdf))
3. Cowper DC, Kubal JD, Maynard C, Hynes DM. A primer and comparative review of major US mortality databases. *Ann Epidemiol* 2002;12:462-8.