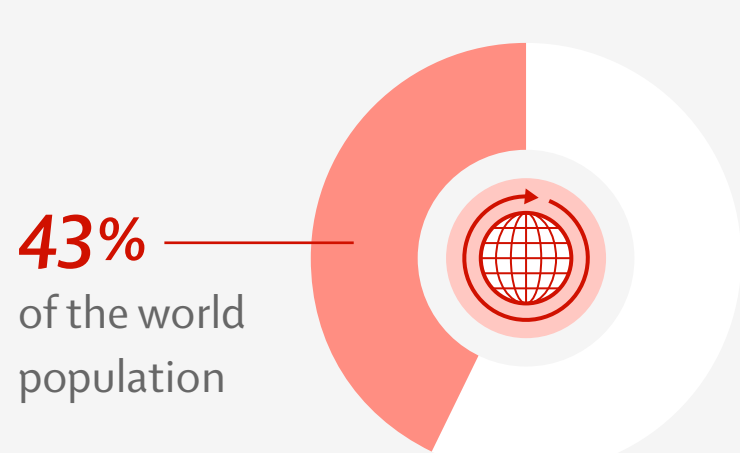


Global burden of conditions affecting the nervous system

Neurological conditions are the number-one leading cause of disease burden worldwide.

In 2021, around **3.40 billion individuals** had conditions affecting the nervous system, equivalent to...

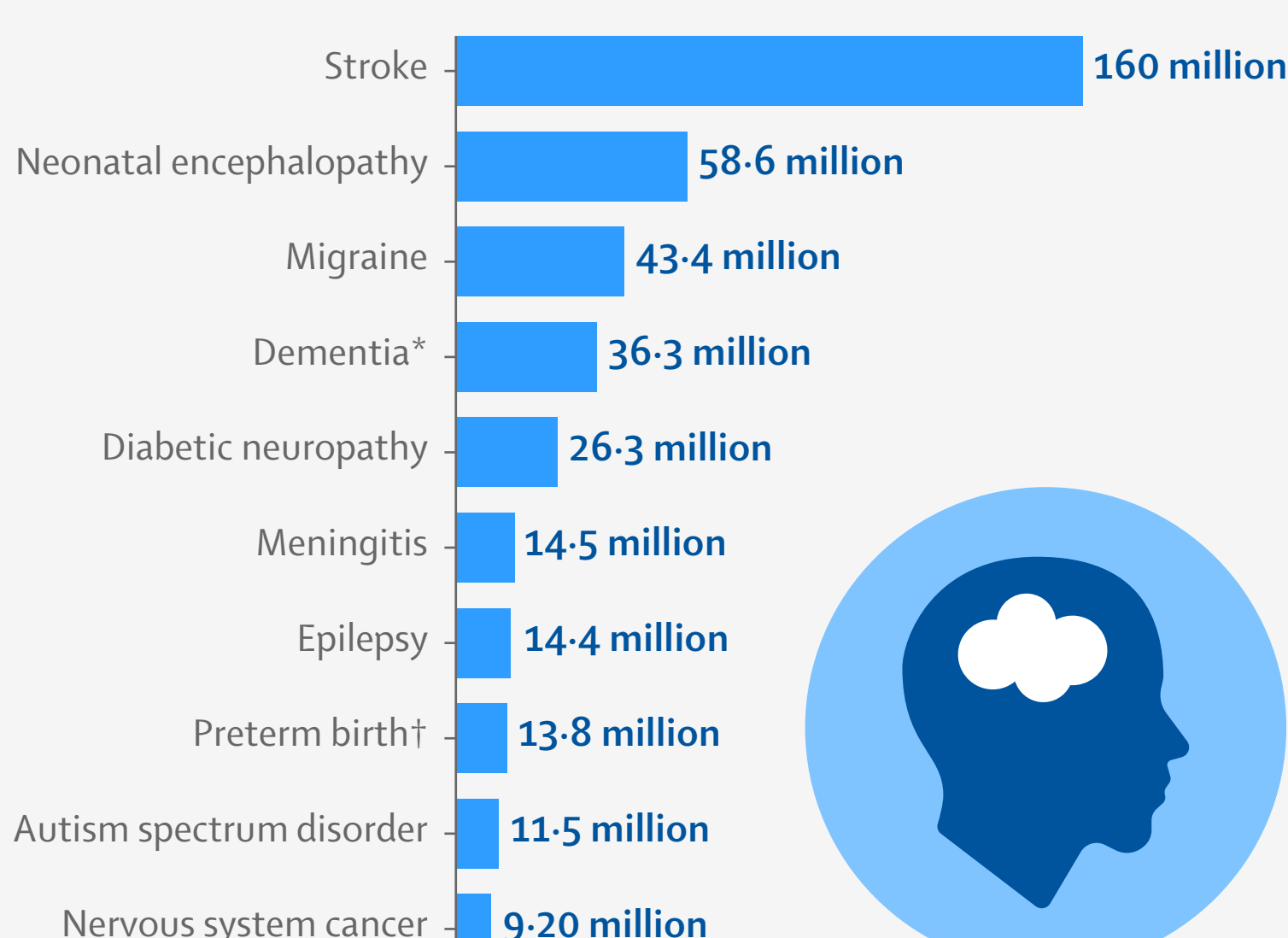


These conditions contributed to...



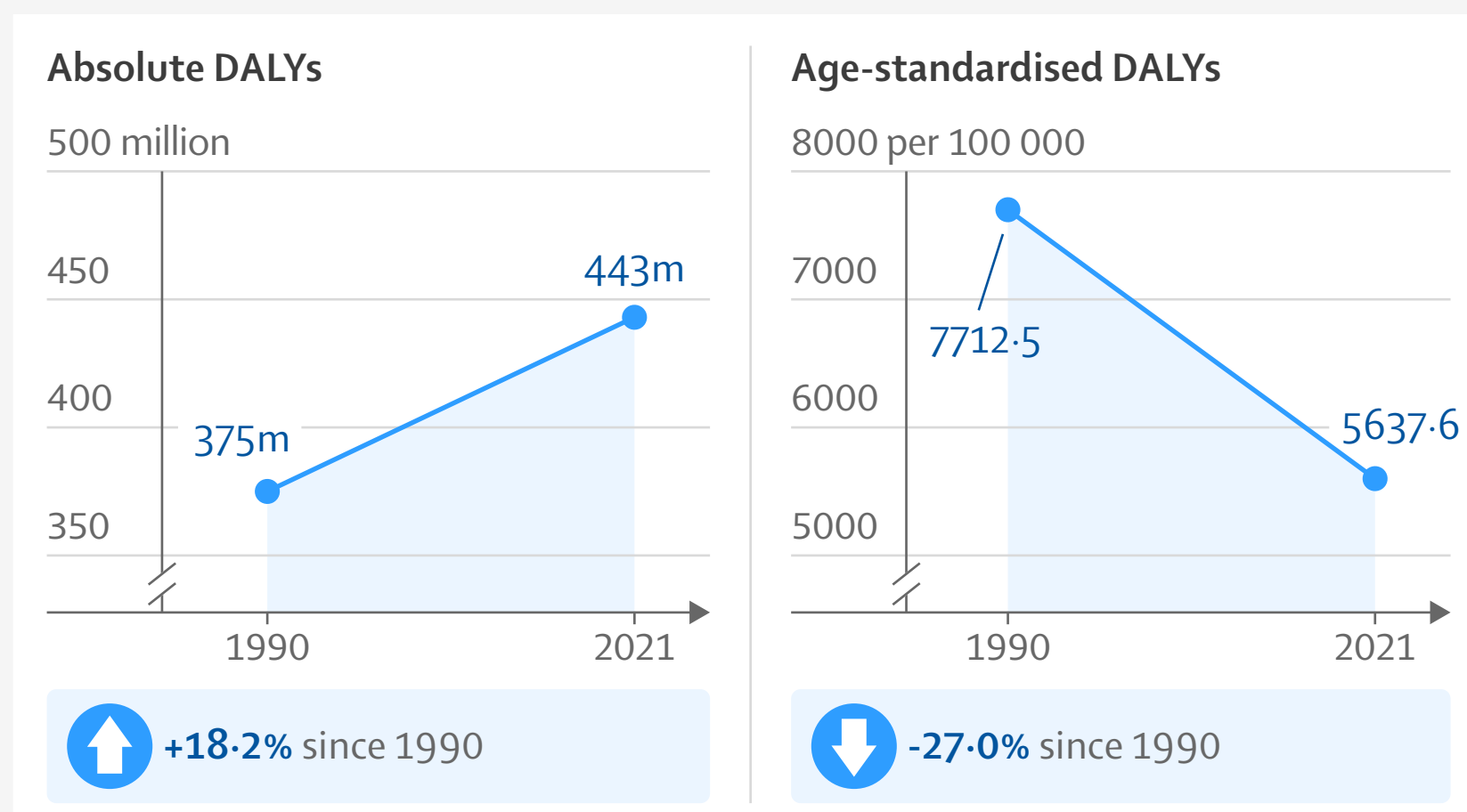
... making them the leading cause of disease burden worldwide.

The ten neurological conditions that accounted for the greatest DALYs in 2021 were...



*Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; † Neurological complications associated with preterm birth

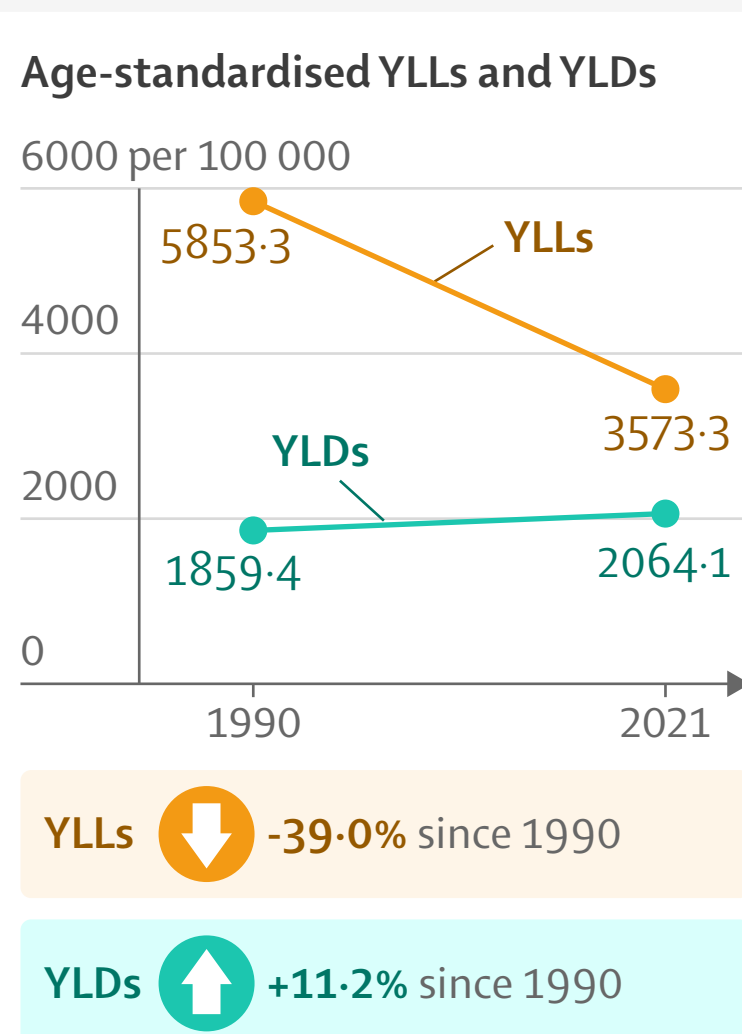
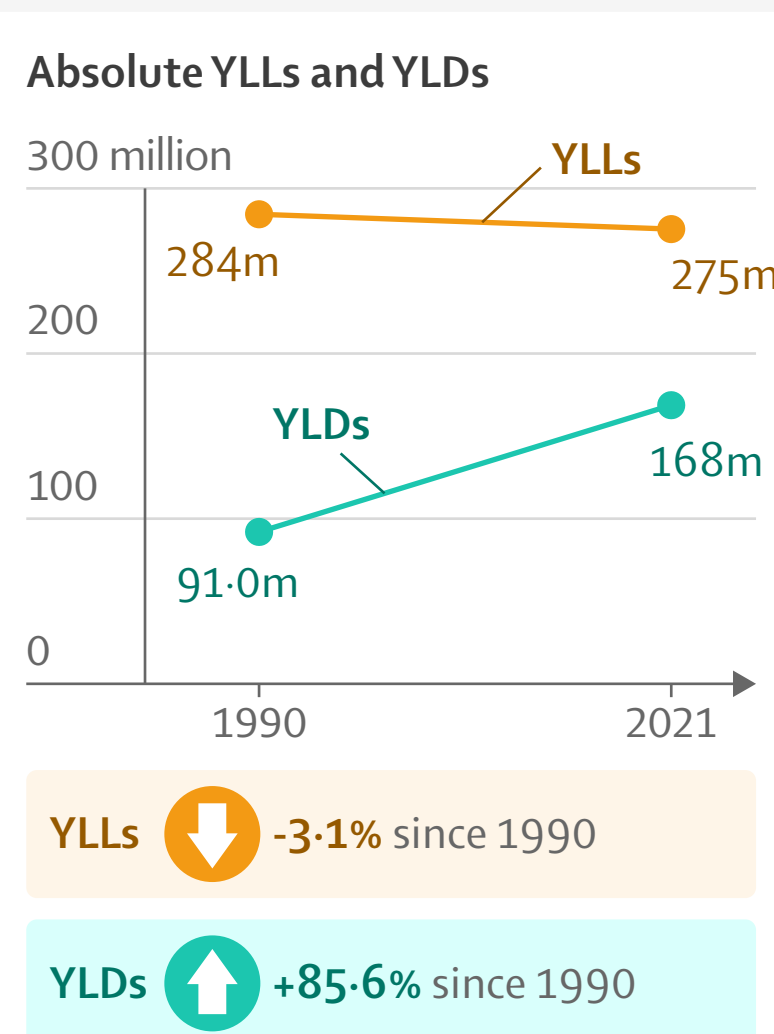
Since 1990, the absolute number of individuals living with, or dying from, neurological conditions has increased. At the same time, age-standardised DALY rates have dropped.



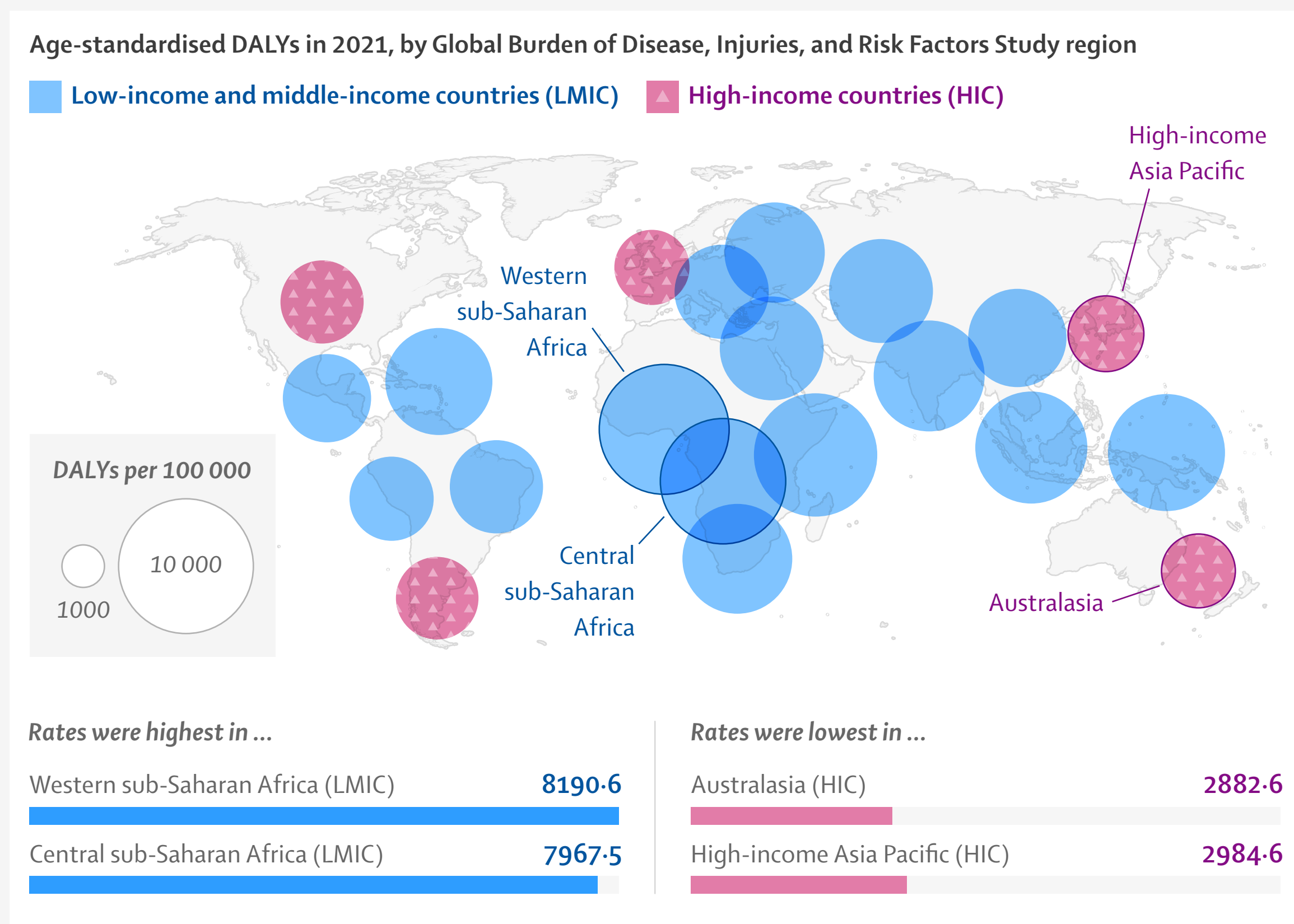
The rise in absolute DALYs has mainly been driven by ageing and growing populations and high prevalence of conditions such as dementia or stroke later in life.

The fall in age-standardised DALYs is largely a consequence of fewer people dying from neurological conditions, such as stroke.

Most neurological conditions have no cure. Although improvements in, and access to, treatments have led to the **number of attributable deaths (ie, YLLs) remaining almost constant** over the past three decades, despite global population growth, **the number of people living with such conditions (ie, YLDs) has risen sharply** as a consequence of increased life expectancy.

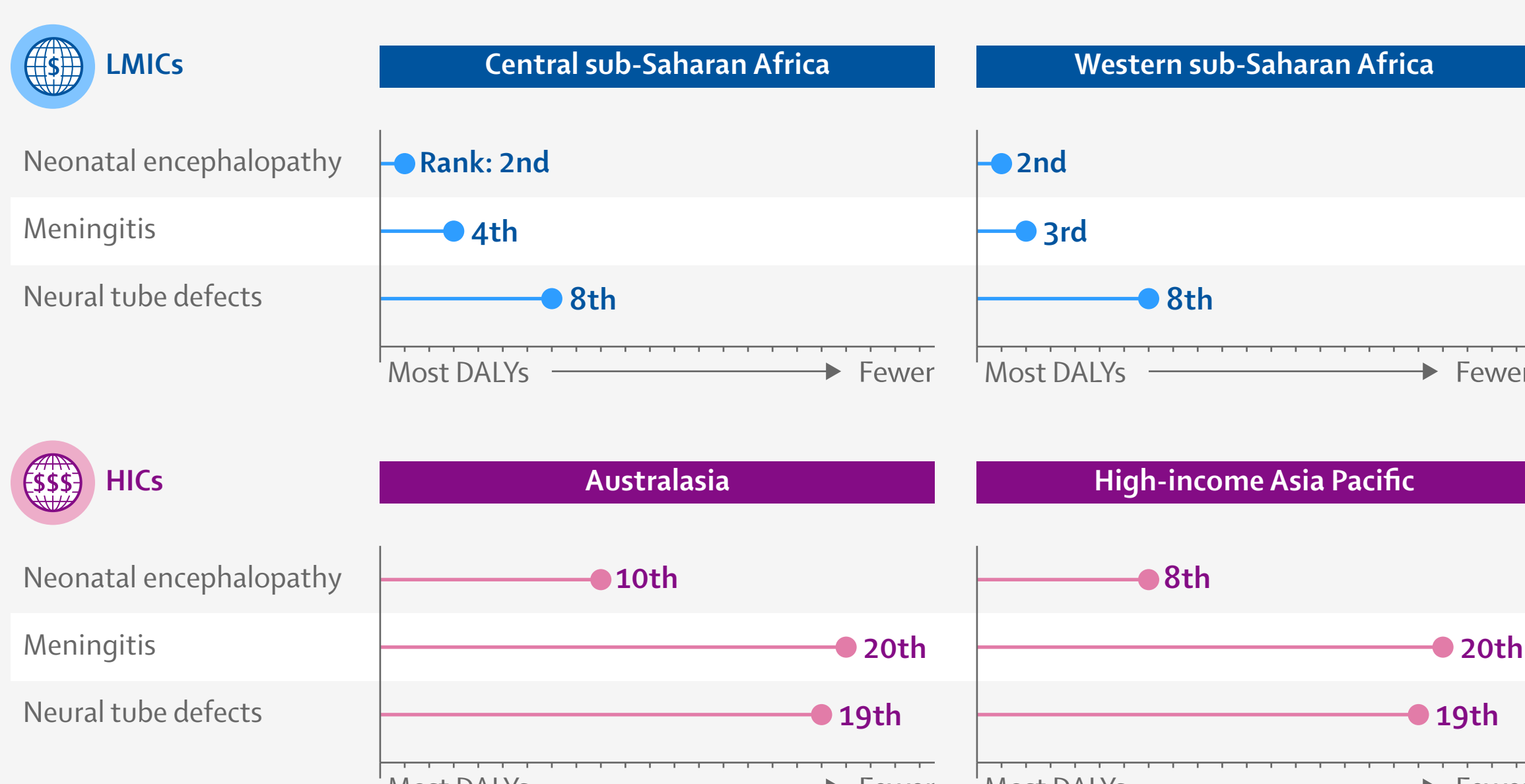


Neurological conditions disproportionately impact low-income and middle-income countries, where access to treatment and rehabilitation services remains limited:



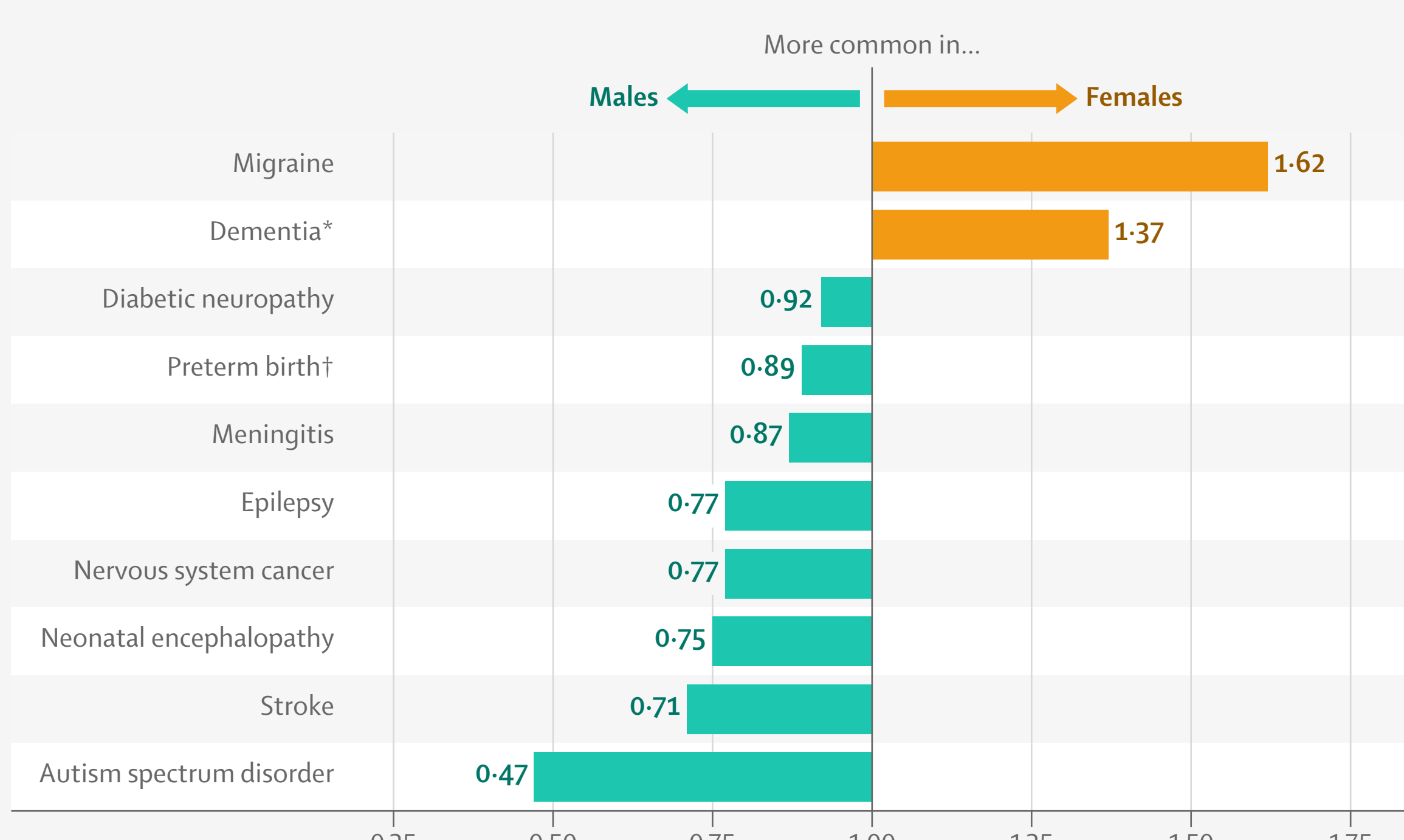
This difference is partly due to the higher prevalence of conditions affecting newborns and children under the age of 5 years, such as neonatal encephalopathy, meningitis, and neural tube defects—all three of which rank notably higher in LMICs than in HICs.

Ranking of age-standardised DALY rates in selected regions, by economic status



Generally, males are at a higher risk of neurological conditions than females. However, differences between conditions exist:

Female-to-male risk ratio of top-ten DALY conditions



*Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; † Neurological complications associated with preterm birth

Read the full *Lancet Neurology* study at [thelancet.com](https://www.thelancet.com)

GBD 2021 Nervous System Disorders Collaborators. Global, regional, and national burden of disorders affecting the nervous system, 1990-2021: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021. *Lancet Neurology* 2024; published online March 14. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422\(24\)00038-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422(24)00038-3).