New study shows dramatic differences between average age of death in Ohio counties

December 3 2020

A new study by the Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Public Health showed that there are dramatic differences between average age of death within Ohio counties.

The analysis looked at all Ohio fatalities starting Jan. 1, 2010 until Dec. 31, 2019 to determine how long Ohioans live by region, county and census tract.

In Cuyahoga County, the average age of death varied by 37 years, with large discrepancies in census tracts adjacent to each other; the difference is 40 years in Hamilton County. Large disparities are not just found in urban counties, but also in rural counties such as Coshocton County, with an eight-year difference between adjacent census tracts.

"These data demonstrate that life expectancy can vary widely even within counties and between neighborhoods," said Rick Hodges, director of the Alliance and an Ohio University executive-in-residence. "Having information like this available can help policymakers as they make decisions about what resources are needed in their communities."

Regionally, Ohioans living in Northern Appalachia lived the longest (74.39), followed by residents from suburban communities (74.23), rural areas (74.23), and residents of metropolitan areas (72.80). The lowest average age of death was found in the Southern Appalachian region

(71.68).

The study's other key findings include:

- The average age of death for all Ohioans over the 10-year period was 73.23 years.
- The average age of death for the state peaked in 2012 at 73.54 and hit a decade low in 2017 with 72.63.
- There was almost a seven-year (6.79) difference between counties with the highest and lowest average ages of death.
- Among Ohio counties, Auglaize (76.98), Geauga (76.94) and Putnam (76.88) had the highest average age of death; meanwhile, Vinton (70.19), Franklin (70.33) and Pike (70.44) had the lowest average age of death for the 10-year period.

"A person's quality of health should not depend on geographic location, particularly within municipalities, but this study shows that geographic location is indeed a factor," College of Health Sciences and Professions Dean Dr. Randy Leite said. "It's important to study these results and, along with other work the Alliance has completed, to ensure that problems in areas with lowered life expectancy and other issues are addressed."

The Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health is a collaborative effort of Ohio University and more than 30 partner organizations and works to solve some of Ohio's most complex and pressing health problems.

"Past reports have shown that societal factors, such as suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, and more contribute to a disparity in health outcomes among Ohioans," said Orman Hall, an executive in residence for Ohio University's College of Health Sciences and Professions. "Each study sheds new light on exactly how those factors contribute and how they

can be addressed."

More information: The report is available online:
www.ohiopopulationhealthalliance.com/resources

Provided by Ohio University