

Covid cuts Italy life expectancy by almost one year

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Average life expectancy in Italy has been shortened by almost one year to 82.3 years because of the coronavirus pandemic, national statistics office Istat said on Wednesday.

Italy has been one of the countries worst hit by the pandemic, and the first in Europe. Earlier this week, it surpassed the milestone of more than 100,000 deaths.

Estimates for 2020 "suggest a sudden halt and a significant reversal of the trend of continuous improvement in life expectancy observed in recent years", Istat said.

Northern regions, which have been hit hardest by the virus, were the most affected by the reversal, with life expectancy in Lombardy falling from 83.7 years in 2019 to 81.2 years.

Before the pandemic took its toll, [life expectancy](#) across Italy had risen from 81.7 years in 2010 to 83.2 years in 2019, putting the country near the top of European Union tables.

The bloc's average stood at 81 years in 2018, according to Istat, the most recent EU-wide statistic.

In a wide-ranging report on 2020, Istat also highlighted the extent of Italy's [digital divide](#)—one of the challenges due to be addressed by a 200-billion-euro (\$238-billion) recovery plan funded by the EU.

One third of Italian households do not have a computer and an [internet connection](#), with nearly a quarter of the population never online in the last three months.

At the same time, "regular internet users" rose to nearly 70 percent, up from around 44 percent in 2010, and 30 percent of households had access to latest-generation broadband in 2019, up 6.1 percentage points from the previous year.

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