

Data shows that U.S. life expectancy dropped to 76.4 years in 2021

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From 2020 to 2021, life expectancy decreased by 0.6 years among U.S.

residents, reaching 76.4 years in 2021, according to a December data brief published by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics.

Jiaquan Xu, M.D., from the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland, and colleagues used data from the National Vital Statistics System to provide information on mortality patterns among U.S. residents for 2021 by variables including sex, age, race and Hispanic origin, and cause of death.

The researchers found that in 2021, [life expectancy](#) was 76.4 years, which represented a decrease of 0.6 years from 2020. From 2020 to 2021, there was a 5.3 percent increase in the age-adjusted death rate, from 835.4 to 879.7 deaths per 100,000 standard population. For each age group 1 year and over, age specific death rates increased from 2020 to 2021. Of the 10 leading causes of death, nine remained the same in 2021 as in 2020; the top three leading causes were still heart disease, cancer, and COVID-19. In 2021, the [infant mortality rate](#) was 543.6 infant deaths per 100,000 live births; the change from 2020 was not statistically significant.

"In 2021, a total of 3,464,231 resident deaths were registered in the United States—80,502 more deaths than in 2020," the authors write. "The number of deaths for which COVID-19 was the underlying cause of death increased 18.8 percent from 350,831 in 2020 to 416,893 in 2021."

More information: Jiaquan Xu et al, [Mortality in the United States, 2021 \(2022\)](#)

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