

Report: US death rate declined in 2022, COVID deaths fell by almost half

May 4 2023, by Ernie Mundell



Preliminary mortality data for 2022 finds America making its way back

from the devastation of the pandemic, with a significant 5.3% decline in deaths compared to 2021. The data was published in the May 5 issue of the CDC journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Although COVID-19 remained the fourth leading cause of death in the United States last year, the number of fatalities linked to the disease fell by almost half—from 462,193 deaths in 2021 to 244,986 deaths in 2022.

COVID was responsible for about 5.7% of American deaths in 2022, down from 12% a year earlier. Among COVID-19 fatalities, men continued to be at higher risk of dying than women.

The new figures, compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are called "provisional" because the numbers aren't yet final. They're based on data from the National Vital Statistics System.

"In 2022, approximately 3,273,705 deaths occurred in the United States," said researchers led by CDC health scientist Farida Ahmad. "The estimated 2022 age-adjusted death rate decreased by 5.3%, from 879.7 per 100,000 persons in 2021 to 832.8."

The top three causes of [death](#) for 2022 were [heart disease](#) (almost 700,000 deaths), cancer (about 608,000) and unintentional injuries (about 218,000), the CDC team said.

Heart disease deaths have been on the rise since 2020, Ahmad's team noted, while cancer deaths also charted a rise during 2021 and 2022, after years of decline.

In terms of which segments of the U.S. population faced the highest odds of dying in 2022, the report found that Black and American Indian/Alaskan Natives were at greatest risk.

The CDC team believes the new data "can guide [public health policies](#) and interventions aimed at reducing [mortality](#) directly or indirectly associated with the COVID-19 pandemic."

More information: Find out more about COVID-19 at the [U.S. National Institutes of Health](#).

Farida B. Ahmad et al, Provisional Mortality Data—United States, 2022, *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (2023). [DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7218a3](#)

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