

1999 to 2023 saw increase in heat-related mortality rates

August 26 2024, by Elana Gotkine



Heat-related mortality rates increased from 1999 to 2023 in the United States, according to a research letter [published](#) online Aug. 26 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Jeffrey T. Howard, Ph.D., from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and colleagues examined trends in heat-related [mortality](#) rates in the U.S. population from 1999 to 2023. For each year, the age-adjusted mortality rates (AAMRs) per 100,000 person-years were extracted for [heat-related deaths](#).

The researchers found 21,518 deaths were recorded as heat-related underlying or contributing cause of death, with an AAMR of 0.26 per 100,000 person-years. From 1999 to 2023, there was an increase in the number of heat-related deaths from 1,069 to 2,325 (AAMRs, 0.38 to 0.62, respectively). The lowest number of heat-related deaths was 311 in 2004, and the highest was 2,325 in 2023. During the entire period, the AAMR increased by 3.6% per year.

Year-to-year variability was seen in the number of heat-related deaths and AAMR, with spikes in 2006 and 2011, and steady increases after 2016. A nonsignificant decrease of 1.4% per year was seen from 1999 to 2016, followed by a significant 16.8% increase per year from 2016 to 2023.

"Although a study using data through 2018 found a [downward trend](#) in heat-related mortality in the U.S., this study is the first to our knowledge to demonstrate a reversal of this trend from 2016 to 2023," the authors write.

More information: Howard, J. T. et al. Trends of Heat-Related Deaths in the US, 1999-2023, *JAMA* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2024.16386](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2024.16386)
jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2822854

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Citation: 1999 to 2023 saw increase in heat-related mortality rates (2024, August 26) retrieved 1

September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-mortality.html>

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