

# Pulmonary hypertension deaths have increased over past decade, according to CDC report

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Deaths from pulmonary hypertension have increased over the past decade, according to a study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In the study, published online in *CHEST*, researchers analyzed death rates from the National Vital Statistics System and data from the National Hospital Discharge Survey between 2001 and 2010 to analyze trends in hospitalizations and death rates related to pulmonary hypertension.

Pulmonary hypertension is characterized by increased blood pressure in the [pulmonary arteries](#), causing the right side of the heart to work harder. Common causes of pulmonary hypertension include [congestive heart failure](#), other heart diseases, birth defects of the heart, [chronic lung disease](#), [obstructive sleep apnea](#), and certain autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis. The risk of pulmonary hypertension increases in older patients.

"With expanding research into the diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary hypertension, it is important to provide updated statistics on this disease's impact on hospitalization and death rates," says Mary George, MD, researcher with the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, CDC and lead author. "Increases in hospitalizations may reflect both improved recognition of pulmonary hypertension as well as

an increase in treatment options."

Key findings from the study include:

- Death rates from the disease rose more significantly for women at 2.5 % per year compared with a 0.9% per year increase for men.
- Pulmonary hypertension death rates in those aged 85 and older increased more than 65% between 2001 and 2010.
- Approximately 4 in 10 deaths associated with pulmonary hypertension occur among patients under 75 years old.
- Hospitalization rates for women increased 52% while those of men increased 33% during the years studied. Women typically have a higher rate of connective tissue disease.
- Women accounted for 61% of all pulmonary hypertension hospitalizations in 2001-02 and 63% in 2009-2010.
- Congestive heart failure was the most commonly reported principal diagnosis at discharge, followed by other heart diseases (including pulmonary hypertension) and chronic and unspecified bronchitis.
- Over the past decade, [death rates](#) for black patients were approximately 40% higher than white patients.

"This study illustrates the importance of recognizing and diagnosing pulmonary hypertension so patients can receive proper treatment," says Richard S. Irwin, MD, Master FCCP, and editor in chief, *CHEST*. "It is essential information to aid clinicians in understanding the age, race, and gender differences in patients who are at risk for [pulmonary hypertension](#)."

The full study can be found in the online first section of [CHEST](#).

Provided by American College of Chest Physicians

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