

Sweden sees deadliest November since Spanish flu

December 14 2020



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Sweden's statistics agency said Monday that the country suffered the highest number of deaths in November since the Spanish flu a century ago, as it battles a second coronavirus wave.

A total of 8,088 deaths were recorded in Sweden last month, corresponding to an excess mortality of 10 percent compared to the average between 2015 and 2019, according to Statistics Sweden.

"That's the highest number of deaths recorded during the month of November since 1918, which was the year the Spanish flu broke out," Tomas Johansson, a population statistician with the agency, said in a statement.

However, the number of dead in November 1918—16,600—was double last month's toll, and the country's population then was roughly half of what it is today.

The number of dead in November 2020 was also 77.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, lower than 79.2 in November 2010.

Sweden suffered a heavy death toll from the new coronavirus from March to June—more than 5,000 fatalities in a country of 10.3 million people.

But Sweden, which has famously elected to curb the disease with mostly non-coercive measures, saw a decrease in both cases and fatalities between July and mid-October, with around 400 COVID-19 deaths registered.

Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare, the number of people receiving [hospital care](#) on Monday reached 2,406, near the peak of 2,412 on April 20.

However, only 10.5 percent of patients treated were in [intensive care](#), compared to 22 percent in April.

On Friday, the Public Health Agency reported a total of 320,098

confirmed cases since the start of the pandemic and 7,514 associated deaths.

While Sweden did not impose a lockdown or close schools as the [second wave](#) took hold in October, the authorities began issuing stricter recommendations, which at first only targeted hard-hit regions but were applied nationwide as of Monday.

These include calls to avoid [public transport](#) and crowded stores, as well as limiting social interactions to single households or people in regular contact.

In November, the government also banned the sale of alcohol after 10 pm until February, and reduced the limit on people attending public events to eight from 50.

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