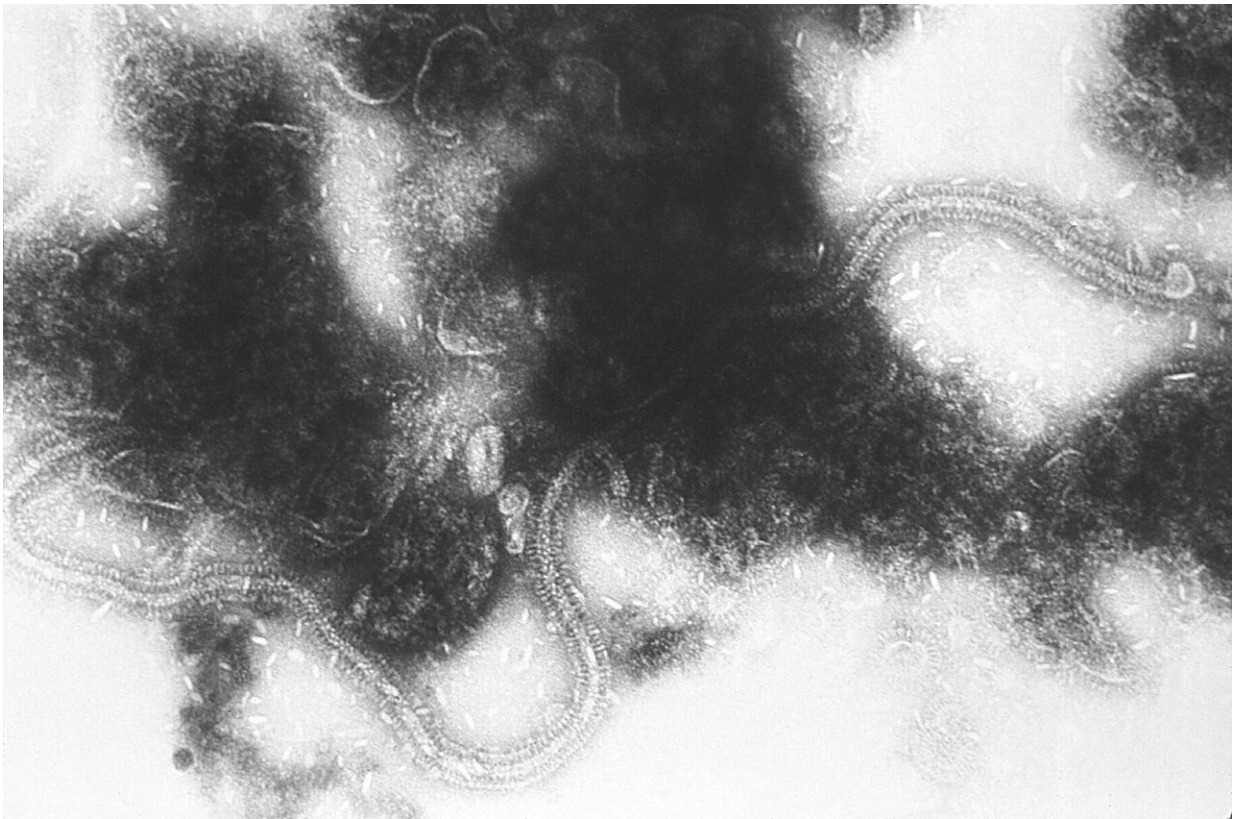


Infant deaths from RSV are much higher than previously known: study

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Transmission electron micrograph of RSV. Credit: CDC/ Dr. Erskine Palmer / Public Domain

A new study found that nearly one in ten of all deceased infants under 6 months old were infected with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Two-

thirds of infant fatalities from RSV occurred in the community and would have been excluded from mortality estimates based on hospital data.

RSV is a common virus that produces cold-like symptoms and is merely a nuisance for the vast majority of people who contract it. But for babies—especially [infants](#) in low- and middle-income countries who lack adequate access to medical care—the virus can be fatal.

Prior research has estimated that about 120,000 infants die from RSV each year, but this figure is based on modeling conducted in hospital-based settings and does not account for RSV deaths that occur in the community, which are not captured in hospital-based surveillance.

Now, a new study led by Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) researchers has found that the true burden of RSV [infant mortality](#) is substantially higher than what was previously believed.

Published in the journal *The Lancet Global Health*, the study used systematic surveillance to measure the presence of RSV among infants who died in [medical facilities](#) or in the community and found that the virus was present in 7 to 9 percent of infants under 6 months old and was primarily concentrated in infants under 3 months old.

Notably, two-thirds of these deaths occurred in the community—i.e., among infants who never received [medical care](#) in a hospital and were overlooked in previous facility-based surveillance.

"The concentration of deaths in young infants less than 3 months old(

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