

COVID was third leading cause of US deaths in 2020: data

31 March 2021



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COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in the United States in 2020, according to provisional data released on Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Heart disease was responsible for about 690,000 deaths, cancer for 598,000 deaths and COVID for 345,000 deaths, according to a new report.

These were followed by unintentional injury, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, Alzheimer disease, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia and kidney disease, trends in line with previous years.

COVID death rates were highest among adults aged 85 and over, Black people, Native Americans, and males.

"Sadly, based on the current state of the pandemic, these impacts have remained in 2021, where we continue to see that communities of color account for an outsize portion of these deaths," CDC director Rochelle Walensky said during a briefing.

"The data should serve again as a catalyst for

each of us continue to do our part to drive down cases and reduce the spread of COVID-19 and get people vaccinated as quickly as possible," she added.

Overall, 3,358,814 people died in 2020, excluding deaths of residents of US territories and foreign countries.

The age-adjusted death rate increased by 15.9 percent, from 715.2 to 828.7 deaths per 100,000.

Age-adjustment is a statistical method used to allow populations with different age structures to be compared.

COVID-19 was reported as the underlying cause of death or a contributing cause of death for 377,883 deaths—or 345,323 deaths where it was the underlying cause, which was 91 percent of cases.

COVID death rates were just 0.2 per 100,000 among children aged one to 14, but rose dramatically to 1,797.8 per 100,000 in people aged 85 and over.

The age-adjusted COVID death rate was 115 per 100,000 among men, and 72.5 per 100,000 among women.

Between races, the age-adjusted COVID death rate was lowest among Asian non-Hispanic people at 66.7 per 100,000, and highest among Hispanic people, at 164.3 per 100,000.

Among white people it was 72.5 per 100,000 and among Black people it was 151.1 per 100,000.

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