

Pregnancy-related deaths rose in 2020

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Pregnancy-associated deaths increased in the United States in 2020, according to a research letter published online Feb. 1 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Claire E. Margerison, Ph.D., from Michigan State University in East Lansing, and colleagues examined changes in pregnancy-associated mortality from drugs, homicide, suicide, and other causes from 2018 through 2020. The analysis included data from U.S. death certificate records of female U.S. resident decedents (aged 15 to 44 years) from April 1 through Dec. 31 of each year.

The researchers identified 4,528 pregnancy-associated deaths. Compared with 2019, the overall pregnancy-associated death ratio from April to December 2020 was 66.9 deaths per 100,000 [live births](#), an increase of 35.0 percent. This increase was also substantially larger than increases seen from 2018 to 2019. From 2019 to 2020, deaths increased from drugs (55.3 percent), homicides (41.2 percent), and obstetric and other causes, which were primarily motor vehicle crashes (28.4 and 56.7 percent, respectively). Pregnancy-associated suicides declined from 2019 to 2020.

"Our study findings suggest that there is a need for [prevention](#) and intervention efforts, including harm reduction strategies, tailored to pregnant and [postpartum women](#), particularly during times of population stress and decreased utilization of preventive care, such as a pandemic," the authors write.

More information: Claire E. Margerison et al, Changes in Pregnancy-Associated Deaths in the US During the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.54287](#)

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