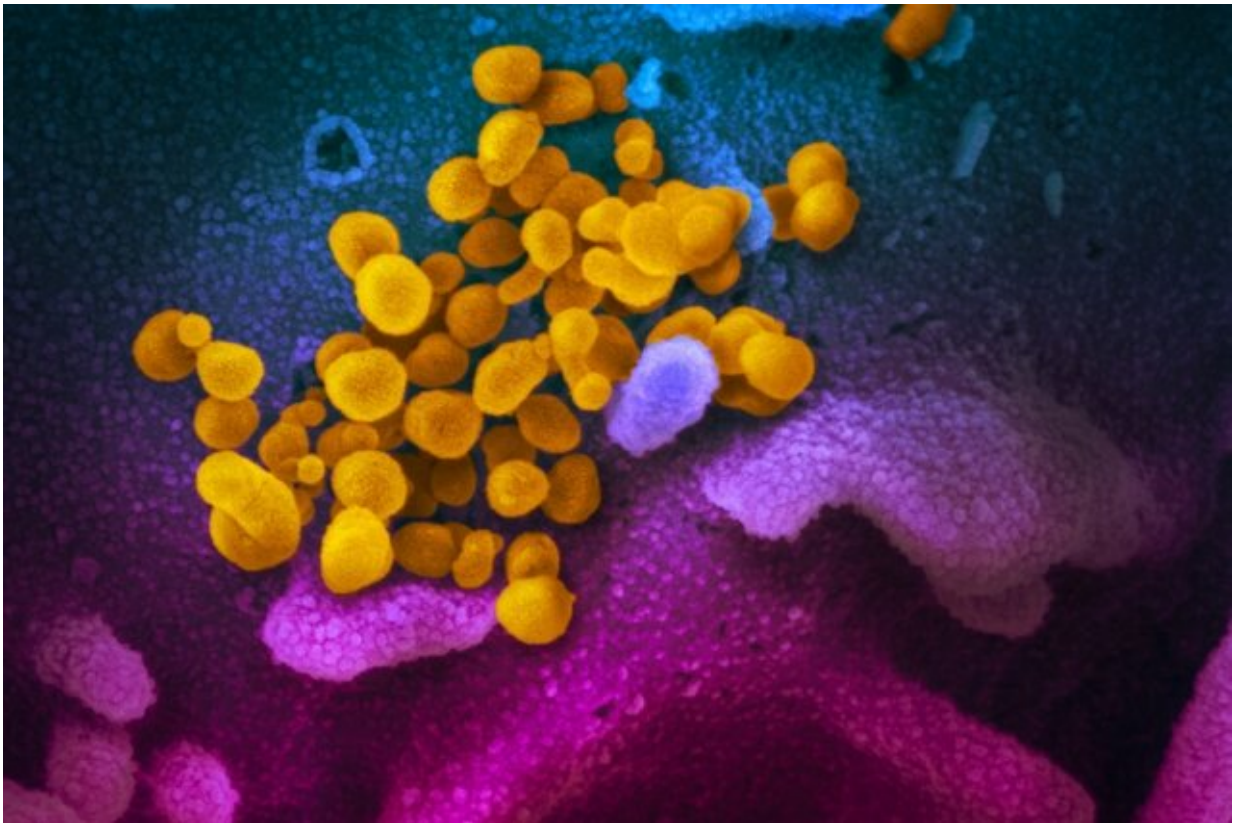


Over 20.5 million years of life may have been lost due to COVID-19

February 18 2021



This scanning electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 (yellow)—also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19—isolated from a patient, emerging from the surface of cells (blue/pink) cultured in the lab. Credit: NIAID-RML

Over 20.5 million years of life may have been lost due to COVID-19

globally, with an average of 16 years lost per death, according to a study published in *Scientific Reports*. Years of life lost (YLL)—the difference between an individual's age at death and their life expectancy—due to COVID-19 in heavily affected countries may be two to nine times higher than YLL due to average seasonal influenza.

Héctor Pifarré i Arolas, Mikko Mýrskylä and colleagues estimated YLL due to COVID-19 using data on over 1,279,866 deaths in 81 countries, as well as [life expectancy](#) data and projections for total deaths of COVID-19 by country.

The authors estimate that in total, 20,507,518 years of life may have been lost due to COVID-19 in the 81 countries included in this study—16 years per individual death. Of the total YLL, 44.9% seems to have occurred in individuals between 55 and 75 years of age, 30.2% in individuals younger than 55, and 25% in those older than 75. In countries for which death counts by gender were available, YLL was 44% higher in men than in women. Compared with other global common causes of [death](#), YLL associated with COVID-19 is two to nine times greater than YLL associated with seasonal flu, and between a quarter and a half as much as the YLL attributable to [heart conditions](#).

The authors caution that the results need to be understood in the context of an ongoing pandemic: they provide a snapshot of the possible impacts of COVID-19 on YLL as of 6 January, 2021. Estimates of YLL may be over- or under-estimates due to the difficulty of accurately recording COVID-19-related deaths.

More information: Years of life lost to COVID-19 in 81 countries, *Scientific Reports* (2021). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-021-83040-3](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-83040-3) , www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-83040-3

Provided by Scientific Reports

Citation: Over 20.5 million years of life may have been lost due to COVID-19 (2021, February 18) retrieved 28 March 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-million-years-life-lost-due.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.