

Pandemic Erased Progress in Lowering Heart Disease Death Rate



Before 2020, the heart disease death rate had been declining steadily for nearly a decade. The decrease was recognised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of the ten greatest public health achievements of the last century. However, the death rate has increased significantly during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the latest research, this increase represents nearly five years of lost progress and around ten years of lost progress among Black and younger adults.

The findings were presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions in Chicago.

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020. The disease resulted in stay-at-home orders with limited access to healthcare. The pandemic put many people at higher risk for new or worsening cardiovascular disease and delays in detecting and treating heart disease.

The researchers used the CDC's Wide-Ranging ONLine Data for Epidemiologic Research and analysed aggregated death certificate data from 2010 to 2020. Their analysis shows that in the U.S., the heart disease death rate fell by 9.8% from 2010 to 2019 but then increased by 4.1% in 2020, returning to levels in 2015.

The increase in death rate was more significant among younger adults. From 2010 to 2019, the death rate fell by 5.5% for adults 35 to 54. But it jumped to nearly 12% in 2020, erasing prior progress. Among adults between 55 to 74 years, the death rate fell by 2.3% between 2010 and 2019 but increased by 7.8% in 2020.

Black adults also experienced about ten years of lost progress. In the decade leading up to 2019, the heart disease death rate in the decade leading up to 2019 showed a decline in the heart disease death rate of 10.4% among Black adults. But this increased by 11.2% in 2020, returning to the 2010 rate.

There may have been other contributing factors to this increase. These include decreases in physical activity and increases in smoking and alcohol use.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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