

Why the US pandemic death rate might be 50 percent more than what is being reported

[E]xperts know that the official [COVID-19] death tally is going to be an undercount by some extent. Some people who die might never have been tested for the disease, for example, and if people die at home without receiving medical care, they might not make it into the confirmed data.

To address that, researchers often look to what are called excess deaths — the number of deaths overall during a particular period of time compared to how many people die during the stretch in a normal year.

Now, in the most [updated count to date](#), researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that nearly 300,000 more people in the United States died from late January to early October this year compared the average number of people who died in recent years. Just two-thirds of those deaths were counted as Covid-19 fatalities, highlighting how the official U.S. death count — now standing at about 220,000 — is not fully inclusive.

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Deaths among white people in 2020 were just 11.9% higher than average years, a much lower increase than deaths among Latinx people (53.6% higher than average), Asian people (36.6% higher), Black people (32.9% higher), and American Indians and Alaska Natives (28.9% higher). “These disproportionate increases among certain racial and ethnic groups are consistent with noted disparities in Covid-19 mortality,” the researchers wrote.

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