

U.S. life expectancy dropped 1.5 years in 2020



The CDC has said the US life expectancy dropped by 1.5 years overall amid the coronavirus pandemic [File: Rick Bowmer/AP Photo]

Washington, July 21 (RHC)-- Overall life expectancy in the United States fell by a year and a half in 2020, the largest one-year decline since World War II, health officials have said – but the decrease for Black Americans and Hispanic Americans was even worse, at three years.

Life expectancy is an estimate of the average number of years a baby born in a given year might expect to live. For decades, US life expectancy was on the upswing. But that trend stalled in 2015, for several

years, before hitting 78 years, 10 months in 2019.

Last year, life expectancy dropped to about 77 years and four months, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. The drop is mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which health officials said is responsible for close to 74 percent of the overall life expectancy decline.

More than 3.3 million Americans died last year, far more than any other year in US history, with COVID-19 accounting for about 11 percent of those deaths. Meanwhile, Black life expectancy has not seen as large of a one-year decline since the Great Depression in the mid-1930s.

While health officials have only tracked Hispanic life expectancy for the past 15 years, the 2020 decline was the largest recorded one-year drop.

COVID-19 was not the only killer to play a role in the drop. Drug overdoses pushed life expectancy down, particularly for whites, while rising homicides were a small but significant reason for the decline for Black Americans, said Elizabeth Arias, the report's lead author.

Other problems affected Black and Hispanic people, including lack of access to quality healthcare, more crowded living conditions and a greater share of the population in lower-paying jobs that required them to keep working when the pandemic was at its worst, experts said.

Life expectancy is an important statistical snapshot of a country's health that can be influenced both by sustained trends such as obesity as well as more temporary threats like pandemics or war that might not endanger those newborns in their lifetimes.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/264583-us-life-expectancy-dropped-15-years-in-2020>



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