

2023

COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S ANNUAL REPORT



TONI PRECKWINKLE
President, Cook County
Board of Commissioners

ZAHRA ALI
Chief Administrative Officer

PONNI ARUNKUMAR, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner

**COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE
ROBERT J. STEIN INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC MEDICINE**

2121 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-3705
Phone: (312) 666-0500

OFFICE HOURS:

The Medical Examiner's Office operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
The office is open to the public: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on official Cook County holidays.

IDENTIFICATION HOURS:

11:00 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.
12 p.m. to 4 p.m., weekends and official Cook County holidays.

<http://www.cookcountyil.gov/agency/medical-examiners-office>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Chief Medical Examiner	2
At A Glance	3-4
Mission, Vision and History of Medical Examiner's Office	5
Medical Examiner's Office Operations	6-9
Jurisdiction	
Departments	
Primary Medical Examiner Functions	
Other Services Provided	
Information for Families	
2023 Highlights	10-12
Collaborative Efforts	13-15
A Look Ahead	16
Charts & Graphs of 2023 Cook County Medical Examiner Office Data	17-57
General Statistics	18
Manner of Death	24
Opioid Deaths	47
Gun Homicide	52
Infant Death	54
Children Death	56
COVID-19	57
Appendix A	58
Acknowledgements	59
Cook County Board of Commissioners	60

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Honorable Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board of Commissioners and Residents of Cook County,

This annual report contains data detailing the breakdown of cases handled by the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO) for 2023 as well as information regarding the Office's role in death investigations, the indigent disposition program, organ and tissue donation and drug-related death statistics.

In 2023, the CCMEO experienced a 9% decrease in total number of opioid overdose deaths compared to 2022. Although the number of opioid overdose deaths has decreased, it has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Fentanyl contributed to approximately 90% of all opioid deaths. The Office also observed an 11% decrease in gun-related homicide deaths compared to 2022. Residents of traditionally under-resourced communities continue to be impacted at a higher rate.

The CCMEO maintains full accreditation with the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and conforms to International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17020 and 17025 requirements to attain the highest level of accreditation available to U.S. and international medicolegal death investigation offices.

The Office was awarded two National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards. The MEO was recognized for the implementation of its Family Services Program, which established a team of talented grief counselors to assist families by providing valuable information and community resources related to the death of a loved one. The program also provides on-site support services to MEO staff through one-on-one sessions, staff seminars and training and guidance for using employee assistance programs. The MEO was also recognized by NACo for the Cook County Jail Overdose Prevention Program, which developed strategies for the prevention of overdose deaths in the jail. A three-pronged effort incorporates screening measures, prevention of deaths and intoxication and re-evaluation if an overdose occurs. Particular focus was placed on synthetic cannabinoids.

The Office saw a tremendous number of cases in 2023 and our staff handled each one with dignity and respect. I am grateful to our staff for their tireless efforts and to President Preckwinkle for her leadership and guidance during a challenging year. It has been and continues to be an honor to serve the residents of Cook County.

Respectfully,

Poani Arunthanan, M.D.



COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES AT A GLANCE

Number of Deaths Investigated	16,392
Number of Cases by Manner of Death ¹	7,738
Accident	3,384
Homicide	850
Natural	2,776
Suicide	508
Undetermined	170
Homicides Autopsied	850
Suicides Autopsied	158
Non-Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths Certified	2,931
Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths Certified	453
Motor Vehicle Accidents Autopsied	79
Non-Motor Vehicle Accidents Autopsied	1,998
Drug-related Accident Deaths Certified	2,012
Drug-related Accident Deaths Autopsied	1,744
Naturals Autopsied	805
Undetermined Autopsied	148
Unidentified Autopsied	9
Opioid-Related	1,822
Gun-Related Homicides	739
Latino	137
NL White	25
NL Black	574
NL Other	3

¹ cases without a manner of death (n=50) like non-human bones are not listed

COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES AT A GLANCE

Infant Deaths Certified	75
Infant Deaths Autopsied	69
Scene Visits	1,371
Non-Medical Examiner Cases	8,654
Number of Deaths in Cook County ²	45,837
Number of Bodies Transported to the Office	6,335
Number of Bodies Transported by the Office	0
External Examinations	2,980
By Physician	2,325
By Investigator	655
Partial Autopsies	244
Complete Autopsies	3,806
Hospital Autopsies under ME Jurisdiction	0
Cases Where Toxicology Was Performed	4,355
Bodies Unidentified After Examination	17
Exhumations	0
Unclaimed Bodies	388
Average number of Bodies in Storage per day	207
Organ Donations	159
Tissue Donations	188
Cornea Donations	899
Microscopic Studies	728
Formal Neuropathology Studies	106
Formal Cardiac Pathology Studies	90

² Illinois Department of Public Health. Death Statistics. Retrieved from Vital Statistics: <https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/publications/idph/data-and-statistics/vital-statistics/death-statistics/deaths-by-county-2020-2022.pdf>

COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

MISSION

The mission of the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office is to ensure public health and safety by performing autopsies and postmortem examinations to determine cause and manner of death for individuals who die in Cook County.

VISION & COMMITMENT

It is the intent of the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office to maintain a regional forensic center of excellence for the practice and advancement of forensic science for the Midwest. Through the recruitment of high-quality staff, training of current staff and improvements to the existing facility, the Medical Examiner's Office is embracing President Preckwinkle's mission to serve as good stewards of public resources, placing a special emphasis on our core values – equity, engagement and excellence.

HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

As a result of a 1972 referendum, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office was established on December 6, 1976, and the Office of the Coroner was abolished.

A medical examiner differs from a coroner in that a medical examiner is an appointed official who is required to have pertinent qualifications, while a coroner is an elected official who is not required to have any qualifications.

In Cook County, the Medical Examiner must be a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Illinois and certified by the American Board of Pathology in anatomic and forensic pathology.

In Cook County, the President of the Board of Commissioners, with the advice and consent of the Board of Commissioners, appoints the Medical Examiner.

The Cook County office is the only Medical Examiner system in Illinois, with a jurisdiction of approximately 5.2 million people. The Medical Examiner's Office plays a vital role in the administration of justice and protection of public health.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE OPERATIONS

JURISDICTION

Under Illinois law and local ordinance, the Medical Examiner's Office is both required and empowered to determine the cause and manner of death. The Office investigates any human death that falls within any or all the following categories:

- Criminal violence
- Suicide
- Accident
- Suddenly when in apparent good condition
- Unattended by a practicing licensed physician
- Suspicious or unusual circumstances
- Unlawful fetal death as provided in Public Act 101-0013 of the 101st General Assembly of Illinois
- Poisoning or attributable to an adverse reaction to drugs and/or alcohol
- Disease constituting a threat to public health
- Injury or toxic agent resulting from employment
- During some medical diagnostic or therapeutic procedures
- In any prison or penal institution
- When involuntarily confined in jail, prison hospitals or other institutions or in police custody
- When any human body is to be cremated, dissected, or buried at sea
- When a dead body is brought into a new medico-legal jurisdiction without proper medical certification

DEPARTMENTS

The Medical Examiner's Office is organized into 8 divisions:

- Administration
- Forensic Technician
- Investigations
- Histology
- Medical Records
- Pathology
- Photography
- Radiology

PRIMARY MEDICAL EXAMINER FUNCTIONS

Death Investigations

The Investigations Division answers initial calls from mandated reporters concerning the death of an individual within the County. Investigators determine if the deceased falls within the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner's Office and performs scene investigations when warranted.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE OPERATIONS

Autopsies and Postmortem Examinations

Forensic pathologists perform complete autopsy examinations or external examinations as necessary to determine cause and manner of death. Forensic pathologists also provide expert testimony in criminal and civil matters at deposition or trial. Forensic pathologists meet with law enforcement, state's attorneys, public defenders and family as appropriate. Finally, forensic pathologists provide prompt notification to respective agencies, such as the Department of Health, of any death due to a reportable disease, unsafe consumer product and unsafe work environment.

Other Services Provided

Other services provided by the Medical Examiner's Office include:

- Providing Vital Statistics with cause and manner of death for inclusion on the death certificate
- Preparing or reviewing toxicology reports which list any foreign substance found in body
- Coordinating and obtaining consultations when appropriate
- Processing cremation permits for funeral directors
- Teaching medical students, pathology residents, law enforcement personnel and international observers
- Conducting award-winning research
- Providing statistics to third parties to optimize public health

Information for Families

In addition to its vital role in law enforcement and public health, one of the most important duties of the Medical Examiner's Office is to provide information to families who have lost a loved one – often suddenly and unexpectedly. Adding to the stress of coping with a sudden loss, this may be the first time families have dealt with the Medical Examiner's Office.

The Medical Examiner's Office works with families to assist them through the process. The Medical Examiner's Office investigators and clerical staff are there to help, and forensic pathologists can assist family members trying to understand how the death occurred. In some situations, the Medical Examiner will not be able to discuss details of the case until the autopsy report is issued.

Autopsies and External Examinations

An autopsy is a thorough examination of the body, inside and out, performed to document or rule out injuries and diseases. The autopsy procedure is performed by a medical doctor with special forensic training in recognizing the appearance of injuries and the effects of diseases. An autopsy may take several hours to perform and is often followed by laboratory tests, some of which can take months to complete. In cases where an autopsy may not be warranted, an examination of only the external surfaces of the body is performed.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE OPERATIONS

Requesting an Autopsy Report

Families may request copies of postmortem reports through the Medical Examiner's Online Portal or by contacting the Medical Records Department.

Information related to Pending Cases

After the medical examination is complete, it is sometimes necessary to perform further analysis, be it medical or investigative in nature, to determine the exact cause and manner of death. In this instance, a "pending" death certificate will be issued. Disposition of the deceased may take place with this pending death certificate. Once the forensic pathologist has determined the final cause of death, the Pathology Department will notify the families of the cause and manner of death. At this point, the funeral home can obtain certified copies of the final death certificate for the family through the Illinois Department of Vital Records.

Death Certificate

Families may obtain certified copies of death certificates by contacting the funeral home or the Cook County Clerk's Office. There are some suburbs which operate their own registrar. Families are advised to call the funeral home or the Medical Examiner's Office for the contact information of the registrar that handled a decedent's death certificate.

Recovering Property of Decedents

The Medical Examiner's Office inventories all personal belongings of the decedent upon arrival at the office. Property will be turned over to the funeral home retained by the legal next of kin. The Medical Examiner's Office may ask the requestor to provide a birth certificate, marriage license or other papers to prove the relationship to the deceased. Unclaimed property will be held by the Medical Examiner's Office for one year. After one year, the property is subject to sale by auction.

Virtual Cemetery

The final disposition sites of the indigents buried/cremated by the Medical Examiner's Office can now be found on the open data portal for Cook County Government.

In February 2014, the Medical Examiner's Office began using cremation as a dignified alternative to burial for indigent remains. Cremated remains are kept at the Medical Examiner's Office for one year and may be picked up by the family or willing persons who are authorized to do so.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE OPERATIONS

Unidentified Persons

The Medical Examiner's Office has a website to provide up-to-date descriptions of unidentified remains whose cases have been processed. Individuals may contact the Medical Examiners' Office Investigations Department regarding matching one of the unidentified bodies to the identity of a missing person.

Unclaimed Persons

If someone is a next of kin to an unclaimed person, they can contact our Indigent and Family Services Manager to claim that person. Unclaimed indigents will be cremated at the County's expense within 60 days of admission to the Medical Examiner's Office as dictated by the Cook County Medical Examiner's Ordinance.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The Office was awarded two National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards. The MEO was recognized for the implementation of its Family Services Program, which established a team of talented grief counselors to assist families by providing valuable information and community resources related to the death of a loved one. The program also provides on-site support services to MEO staff through one-on-one sessions, staff seminars and training, and guidance for using employee assistance programs. The MEO was also recognized by NACo for the Cook County Jail Overdose Prevention Program, which developed strategies for the prevention of overdose deaths in the jail. The office partnered with the Center for Forensic Science Research & Education (CFSRE) for testing an expanded panel of drugs, synthetic cannabinoids, and Novel Psychoactive Substances that routine toxicology labs are not able to test. If a death occurs in the jail and is a possible overdose, our office sends a blood sample to CFSRE and we receive results within 48 hours that are relayed to jail authorities. Public health agencies and the Drug Enforcement Administration are notified if novel drugs are detected.

THREE FELLOW GRADUATES

Fellows Bartlomiej Radzik, Megan Kinn and Michel Tawil started their one-year forensic pathology fellowships at the CCMEO on June 30, 2023. They have continued at the CCMEO as Assistant Medical Examiners. We congratulate them for their excellent work ethic and wish them well as they embark on their careers.



GRANTS

In 2023, the CCMEO received two federal grants. The first, the Medical Examiner Postmortem Toxicology Outsourcing Program Grant, was provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and administered through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), supplying \$178,734 to support toxicology case examinations. The second, the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) Grant, originated from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and was administered via the City of Chicago Department of Public Health, providing \$200,000 to enhance CCMEO's capacity for tracking and developing surveillance strategies for fatal opioid cases. Additionally, the CCMEO's Rapid DNA Analysis Program received over \$20,000 in funding through the end of 2023 from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant, awarded by the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS).

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

INDIGENT BURIAL: DIGNIFIED FINAL DISPOSITION

In 2014, the CCMEO transitioned from burying indigent decedents to utilizing cremation for dignified final disposition. In 2015, a full-time indigent coordinator was hired to manage the indigent disposition process. Since its inception, the indigent cremation program has cremated more than 4,500 indigent decedents and streamlined the process. The program is made possible through partnerships with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs, the Cook County Public Administrator, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department, the Cook County Funeral Director Association, the Archdiocese of Catholic Cemeteries, foreign consulates, faith organizations and support from the community.

In 2018, the CCMEO started a new process for burying unclaimed veterans by utilizing a County contract to enlist the services of local funeral homes who transport unclaimed veterans to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. This has led to the timely and respectful burial of indigent and unclaimed veterans. As the CCMEO looks forward, we will continue to cremate indigent decedents, strive to eliminate unnecessary wait in disposition and provide a dignified final disposition option for indigents.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

The following is a list of funeral homes, directors and other individuals who assisted the CCMEO in 2023:

Funeral Home	Director
BENJAMIN WINN FUNERAL SERVICE	PASTOR BEN WINN
BRUST FUNERAL HOME	SPENCER FOLEY
EMANUEL'S CHAPEL FUNERAL HOME	
EVANSTON FUNERAL & CREMATION	RONALD WEIS, TAMMY MAYER
GRACE AND MERCY FUNERAL SERVICES	MALISHA PORTER
HULTGREN FUNERAL HOME	TIM AND SUSAN HULTGREN
JOHNSON FUNERAL HOME	LINDA BROOKS
RIVER WOODS FUNERAL CHAPELS	STACEY VALLARTA
SOUREK LIVERY	TOM STECHMILLER
YGEE FUNERAL SERVICE	YVETTE GREEN
SAMBRANO FUNERAL SERVICE	LAURA SAMBRANO
WALLACE HARRISON FUNERAL SERVICE	NAKIA WALLACE, MARK HARRISON



COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL EDUCATION AGREEMENTS

The Medical Examiner's Office has agreements with several universities in which medical students and residents participate in one to two-month rotations to observe pathologists conducting examinations, including autopsies, to determine the cause and manner of death. The following are the institutions that participate in this program:

- Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
- Concordia University
- Des Moines University Osteopathic Medical Center
- Eastern Virginia Medical Center
- Loyola University Chicago Medical Center
- Malcolm X
- Marian University
- McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University
- Rosalind Franklin School of Medical Sciences
- Rush University Medical Center
- St. James School of Medicine
- State University of New York Upstate Medical University
- University of Chicago Medical Center
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Kentucky
- University of Wisconsin
- Worsham College of Mortuary Science

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

PATHOLOGIST ASSISTANT ROTATIONS

The Medical Examiner's Office has an agreement with Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science that facilitates pathologist assistant students to observe pathologists conducting examinations and autopsies.

GRIEF COUNSELING

The Medical Examiner's Office entered into an agreement in November 2013 with the University of Illinois Jane Addams School of Social Work that allows students to assist the families of patients by providing grief counseling.

MORTUARY SCIENCES

The Medical Examiner's Office has agreements with Malcolm X College and Worsham College of Mortuary Science that facilitate the donation of indigent bodies for use by mortuary students to further their study of mortuary science. These agreements are in accordance with the Illinois Cadaver Act and generate lab-use fees to the Medical Examiner's Office.

PUBLIC POLICY

The Medical Examiner's Office entered into an agreement with the University of Chicago-Harris School of Public Policy to support the Medical Examiner's Office in projects related to homicide and opioid death.

ILLINOIS VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM

The Medical Examiner's Office shares data with the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS). The IVDRS links data from various public health and criminal justice sources to present the fullest possible picture of the circumstances surrounding violent death in Illinois. IVDRS helps Illinois policymakers analyze violence-related deaths, identify risk factors and develop prevention efforts.

ORGAN/TISSUE DONATION

Gift of Hope

The Medical Examiner's Office has an agreement with Gift of Hope to donate organs and tissue upon consent of the next of kin. Gift of Hope will occasionally request to procure tissues postmortem at the Medical Examiner's Office. Each organ donor can save up to seven lives and each tissue donor can improve 50 lives.



COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

CONSULTATIONS

The Medical Examiner's Office requests radiology consultation from Forensic Radiology Group on complicated cases involving extensive radiology to determine cause and manner of death. The Office requests neuropathology and cardiac pathology consultation from Northwestern Hospital, anthropology consultation from anthropologists at Loyola University and University of Chicago and dental consultation from Dr. Howard Cooper.

FELLOWSHIP

The Medical Examiner's Office offers annually a one-year forensic pathology fellowship program for three graduates of an accredited residency program in general pathology. This program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

The selected fellows receive training in scene investigation, forensic toxicology, firearms, odontology, autopsy techniques, injury pattern recognition and anthropology. In addition to this training, the selected fellows each perform approximately 250 autopsies during the program.

TOURS

The Medical Examiner's Office limits the number of tours of the facility out of respect for the deceased and their families and to avoid any disruption to daily operations. Tours are provided to students in health-related fields, fire personnel, law enforcement personnel and trainees as well as government agencies involved in the medicolegal justice system. For more information, contact Mary Marik, Registered Health Information Administrator, at (312) 997-4430.

A LOOK AHEAD

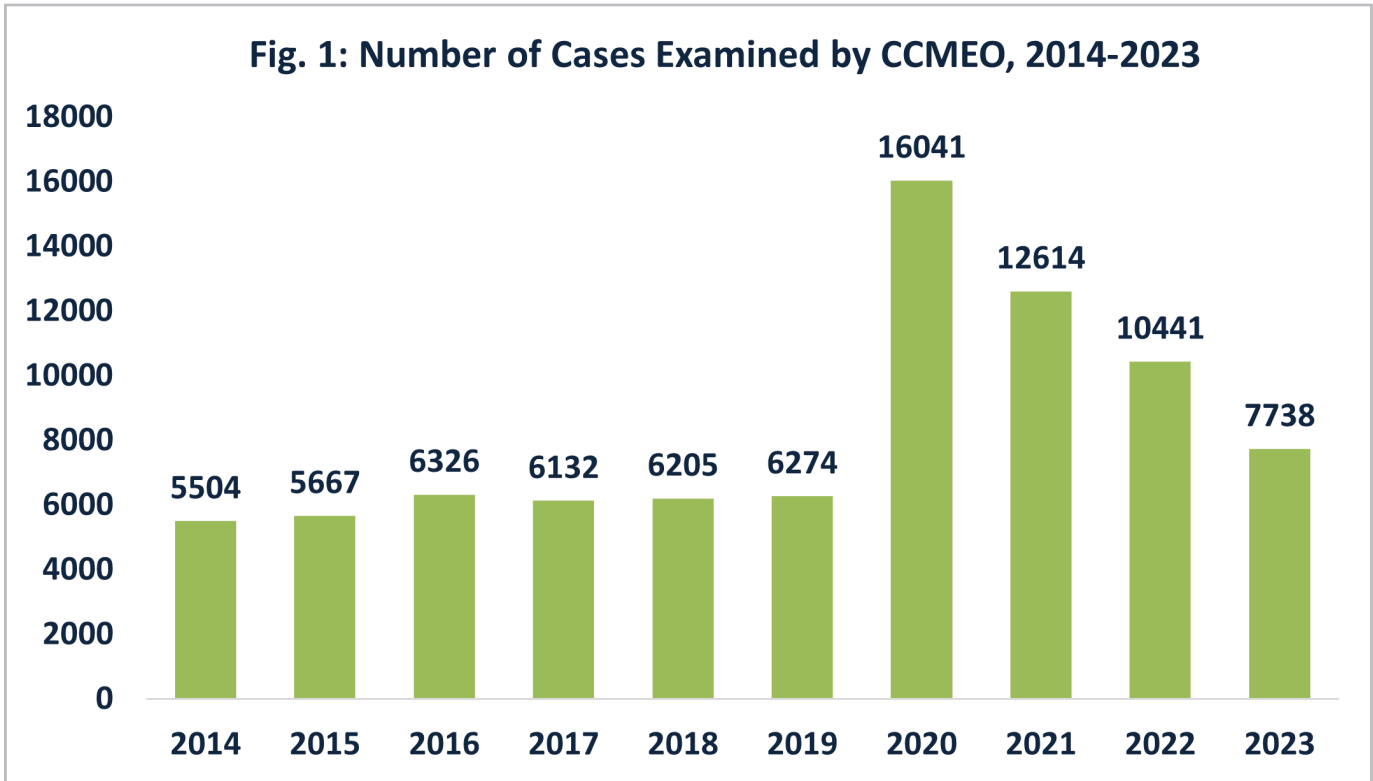
The Medical Examiner's Office has the following initiatives in 2024:

- Increase the number of assistant medical examiners to reduce the average caseload per pathologist.
- Capital improvements including the renovation of the forensic technician departments and intercom expansion throughout the building.
- Planning for a new state-of-the-art medical examiner's office facility.
- Continue to work with Gift of Hope to increase organ and tissue donation throughout Cook County.
- Maintain National Association of Medical Examiners accreditation and accreditation with the International Standards Organization.
- Continue work toward using the Rapid DNA instrument to its full potential. The use of this technology has aided in matching DNA collected from donors to missing persons. The use would reduce the number of unidentified decedents in the care of the office as well as bring closure to families of missing loved ones.

A network diagram background consisting of numerous light blue circles of varying sizes connected by thin, light blue lines, creating a complex web-like structure across the entire page.

**CHARTS AND GRAPHS
FOR 2023
COOK COUNTY
MEDICAL EXAMINER
OFFICE DATA**

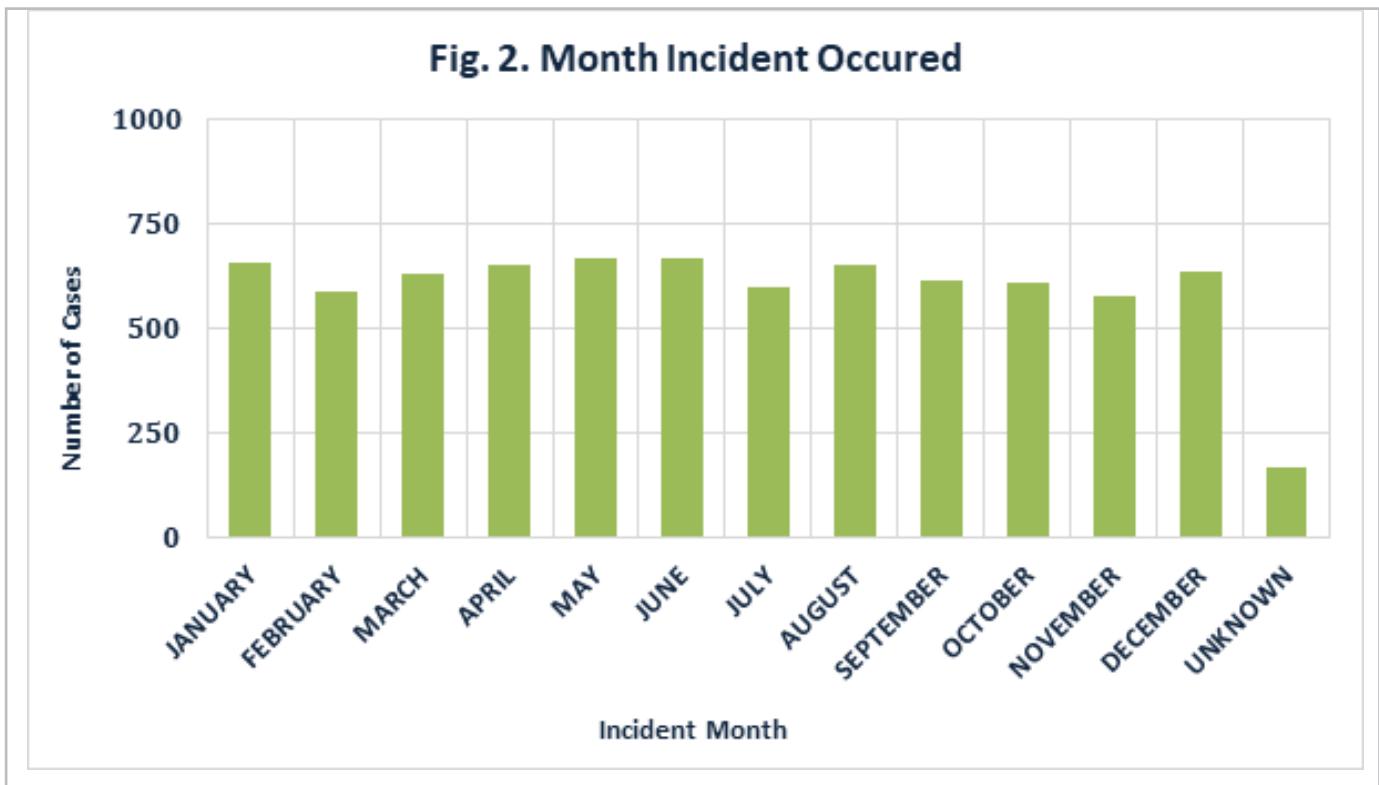
MEDICAL EXAMINER YEARLY CASE NUMBERS



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 1. MONTH WHEN INCIDENT OCCURRED

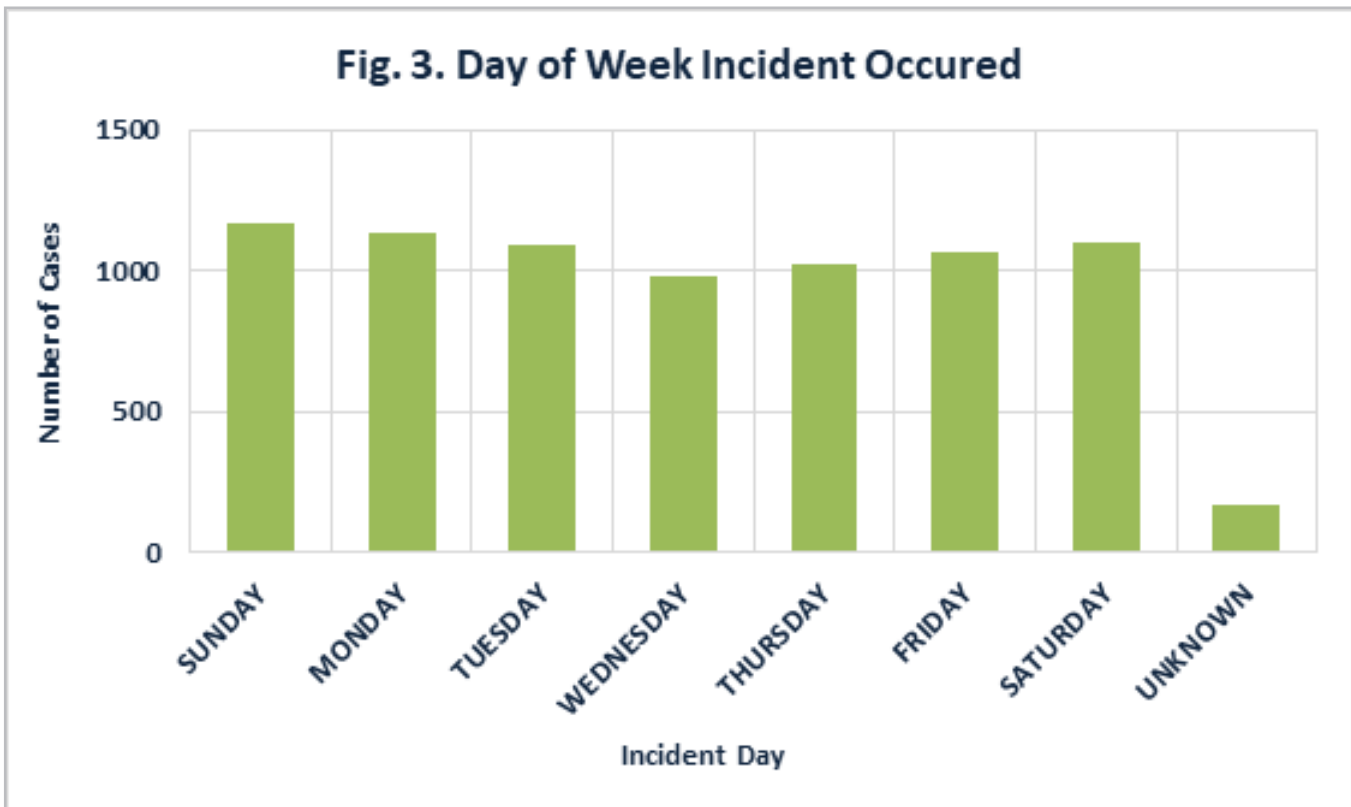
MONTH	NUMBER	PERCENT
January	655	8.46%
February	587	7.59%
March	630	8.14%
April	655	8.46%
May	671	8.67%
June	669	8.65%
July	602	7.78%
August	654	8.45%
September	617	7.97%
October	613	7.92%
November	581	7.51%
December	635	8.21%
Not Known	169	2.18%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 2. DAY OF THE WEEK WHEN INCIDENT OCCURED

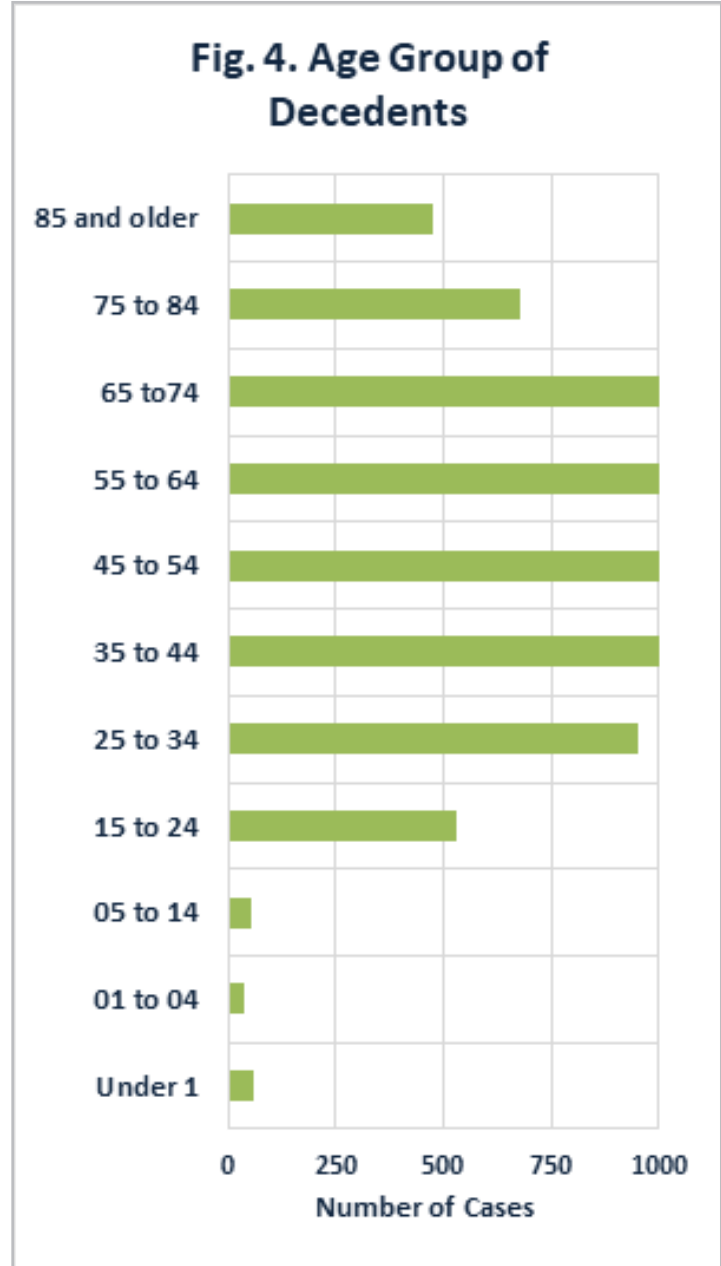
DAY	NUMBER	PERCENT
Sunday	1166	15.07%
Monday	1138	14.71%
Tuesday	1095	14.15%
Wednesday	982	12.69%
Thursday	1025	13.25%
Friday	1065	13.77%
Saturday	1098	14.19%
Not Known	169	2.17%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 3. AGE GROUPS of DECEDENTS

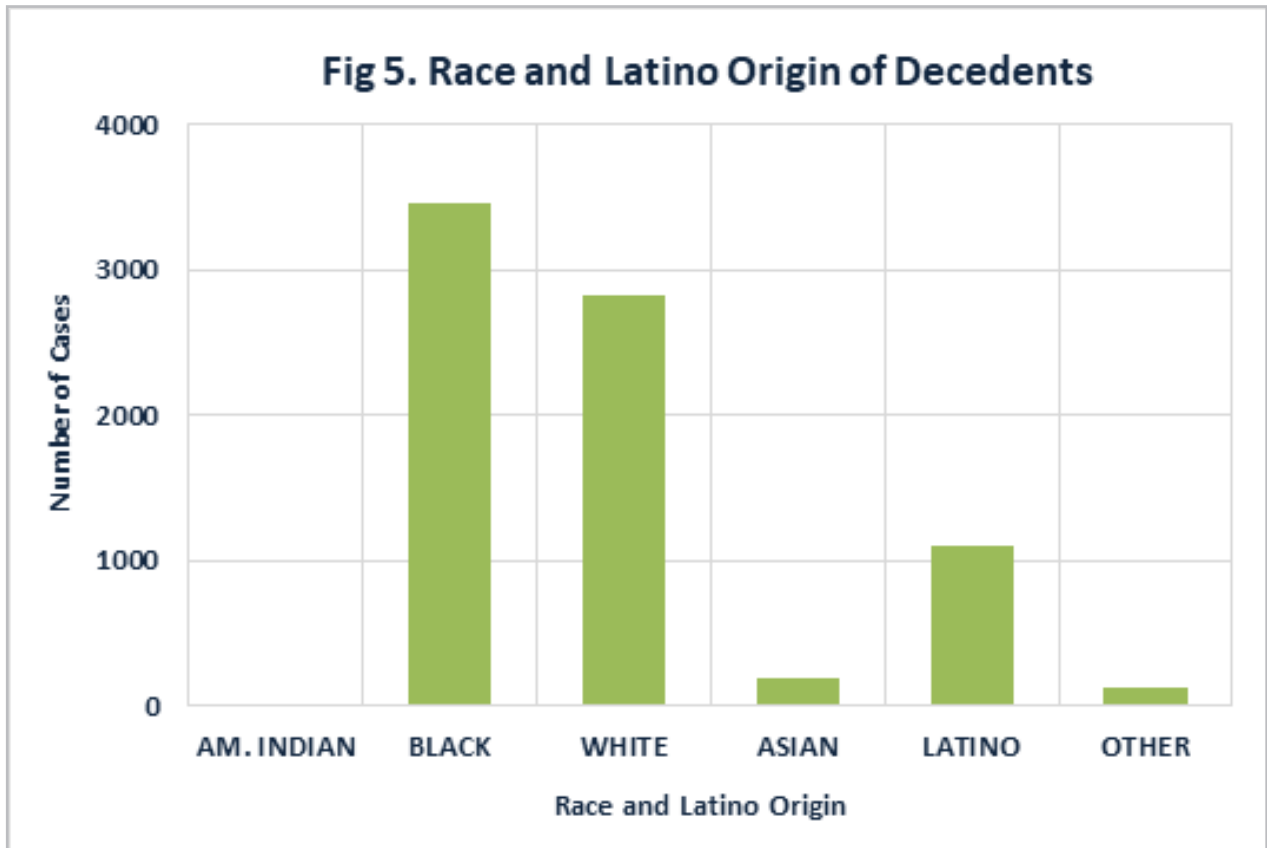
AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Under 1	61	0.79%
1 to 4	14	0.18%
5 to 15	51	0.66%
15 to 24	530	6.85%
20 to 34	950	12.28%
35 to 44	1011	13.07%
45 to 54	1123	14.51%
55 to 64	1551	20.04%
65 to 74	1275	16.48%
75 to 84	675	8.72%
85 & older	497	6.42%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 4. RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN OF DECEDENTS

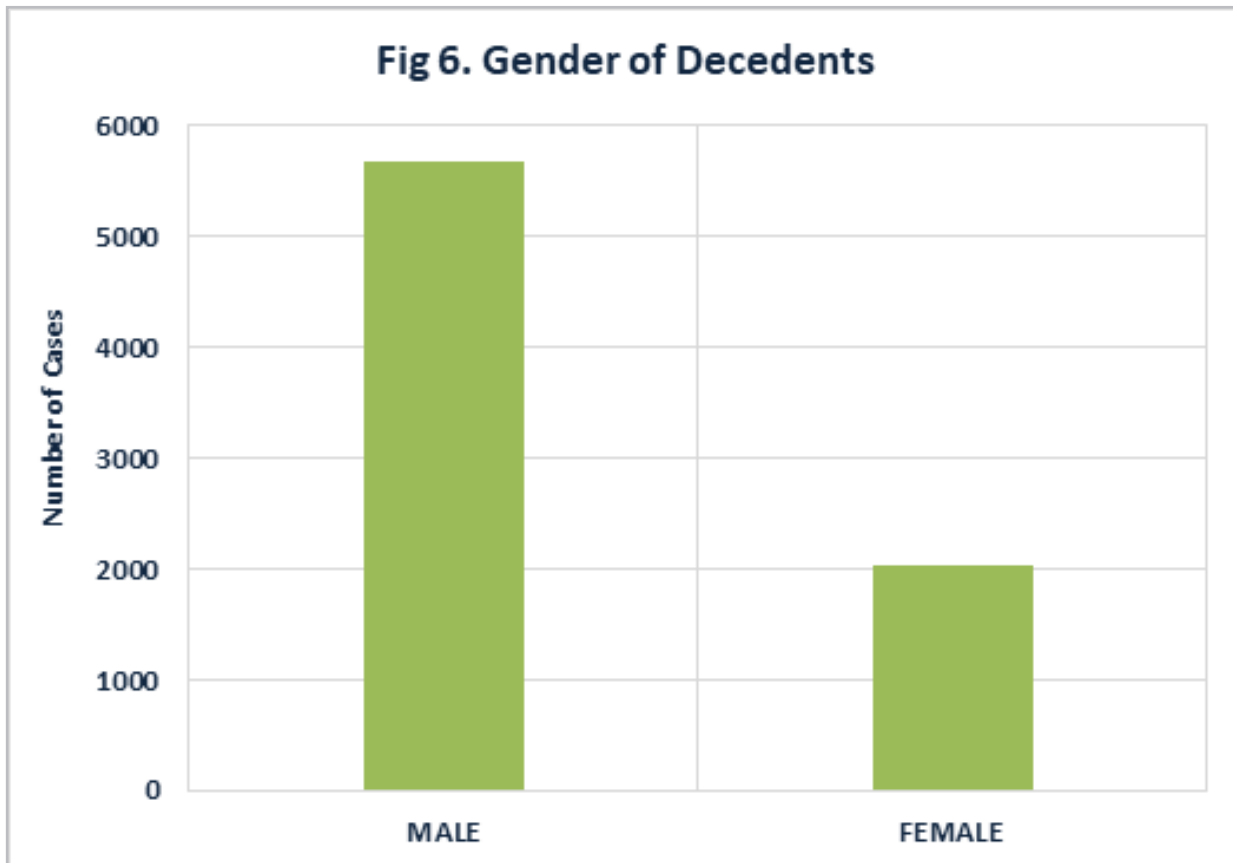
RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT
AM, INDIAN	5	0.06%
BLACK	3464	44.77%
WHITE	2831	36.59%
ASIAN	200	2.58%
LATINO	1140	14.73%
OTHER	98	1.27%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 5. GENDER OF DECEDENTS

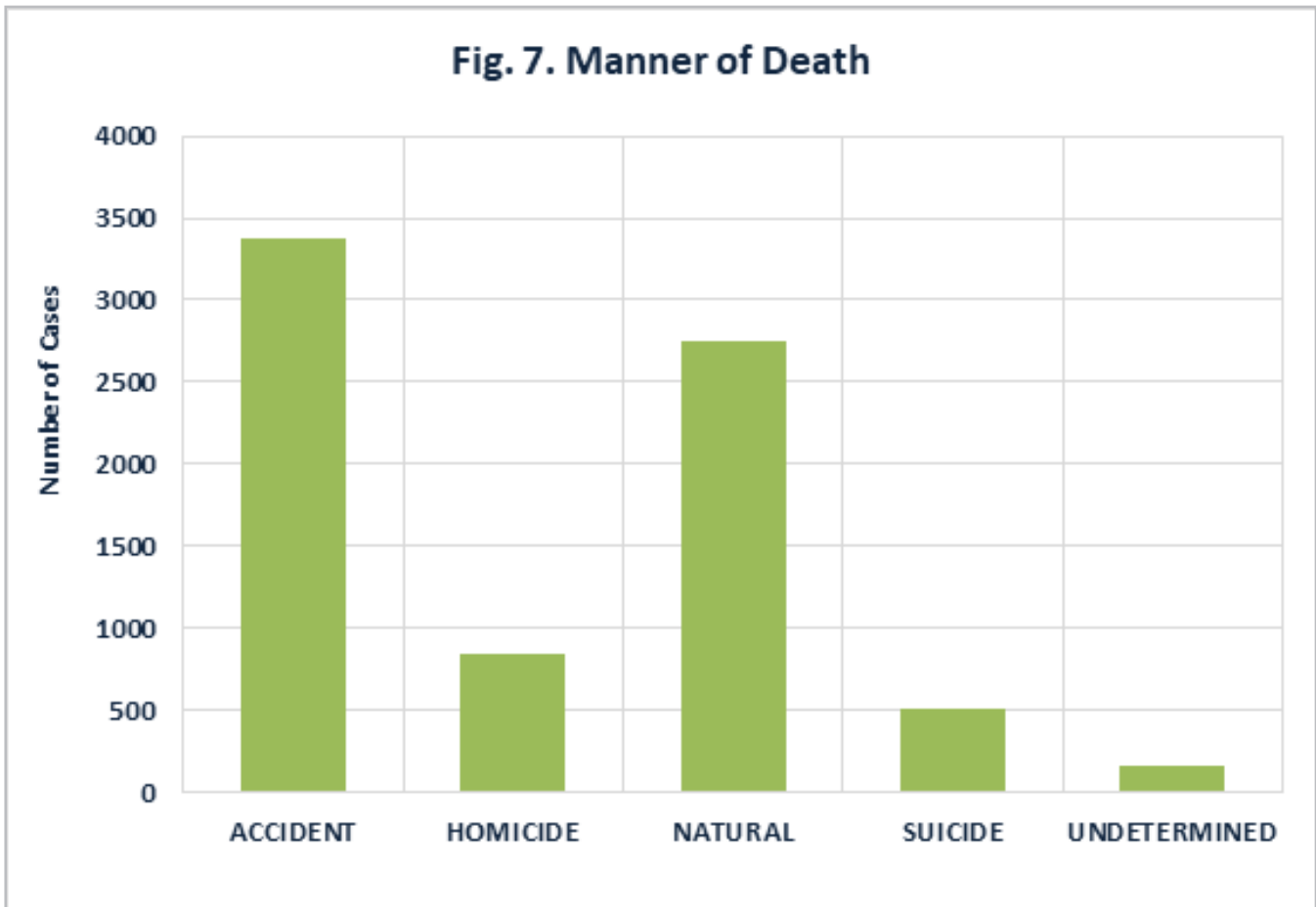
GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENT
MALE	5676	73.35%
FEMALE	2034	26.29%
NOT KNOWN	28	0.36%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 6. MANNER OF DEATH³

MANNER	NUMBER	PERCENT
ACCIDENT	3384	35.79%
HOMICIDE	850	9.14%
NATURAL	2776	48.80%
SUICIDE	508	0.08%
UNDETERMINED	170	4.79%

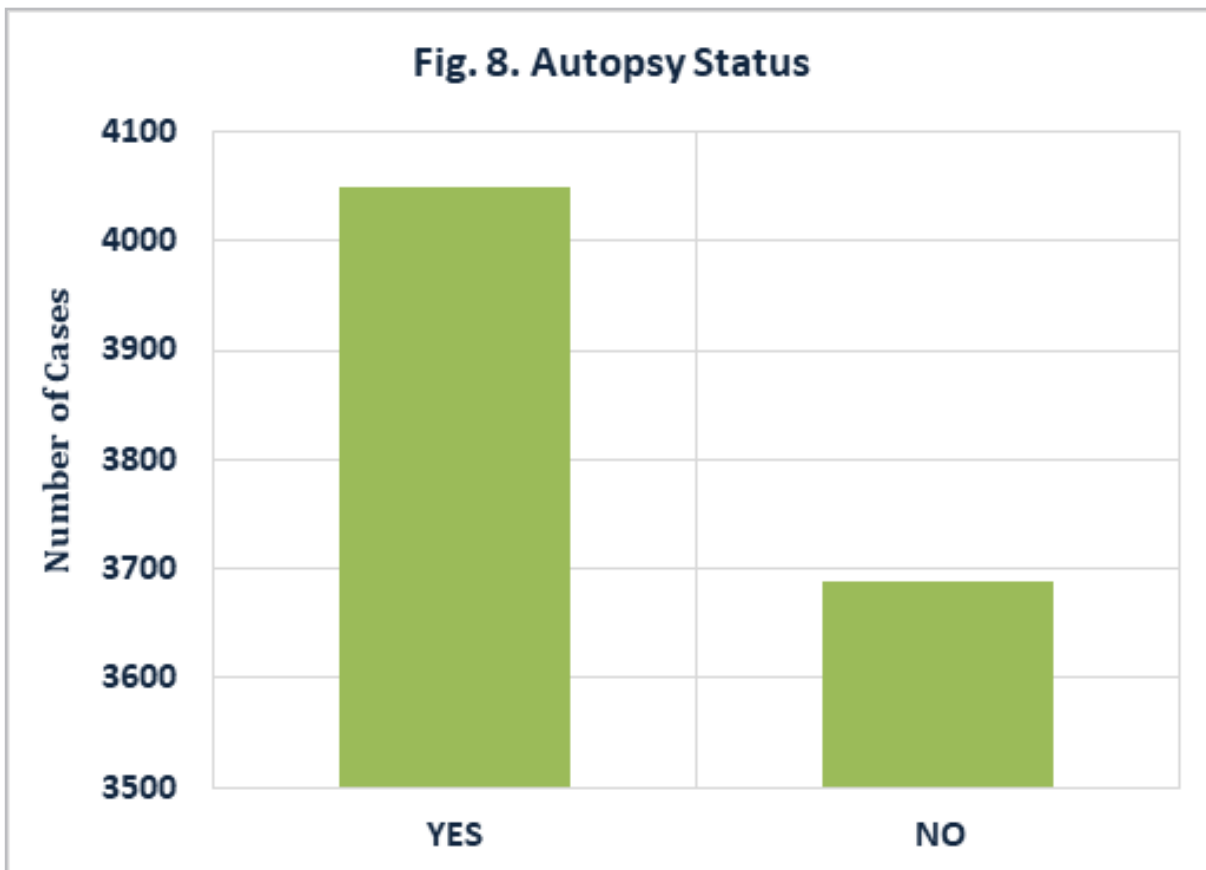


³ category of cases without manner (n=50) of death is not shown

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 7. AUTOPSY STATUS⁴

AUTOPSY	NUMBER	PERCENT
YES	4050	52.34%
NO	3688	47.66%

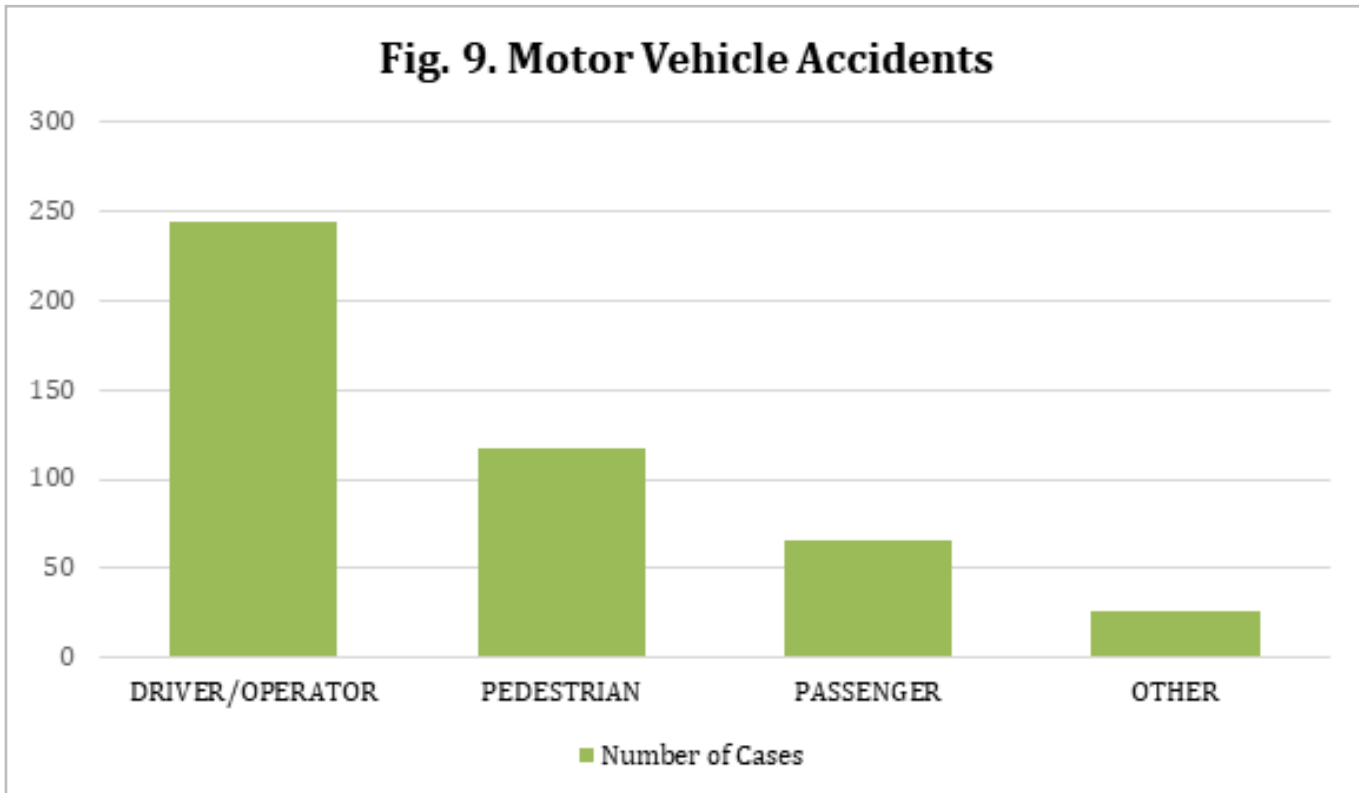


⁴Table and graph do not show cases without manner (n=50).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 8. MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENT
DRIVER/OPERATOR	244	53.86%
PEDESTRIAN	117	25.83%
PASSENGER	66	14.57%
OTHER	26	5.74%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 9. MANNER OF DEATH BY MONTH OF INCIDENT⁵

MONTH	ACCIDENT	HOMICIDE	NATURAL	SUICIDE	UNDETERMINED	TOTAL
JANUARY	293	55	236	56	13	653
FEBRUARY	286	50	196	40	10	582
MARCH	288	50	230	41	18	627
APRIL	287	78	226	46	13	650
MAY	280	91	234	48	13	666
JUNE	291	92	224	47	14	668
JULY	246	77	218	42	14	597
AUGUST	268	84	236	45	16	649
SEPTEMBER	262	70	225	41	16	614
OCTOBER	278	72	204	40	12	606
NOVEMBER	243	64	221	28	20	576
DECEMBER	280	59	258	30	9	636
NOT KNOWN	82	8	68	4	2	164
Total	3,384	850	2,776	508	170	7,688

⁵ Table does not show cases without manner (n=50).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 10. MANNER OF DEATH BY WEEKDAY OF INCIDENT⁶

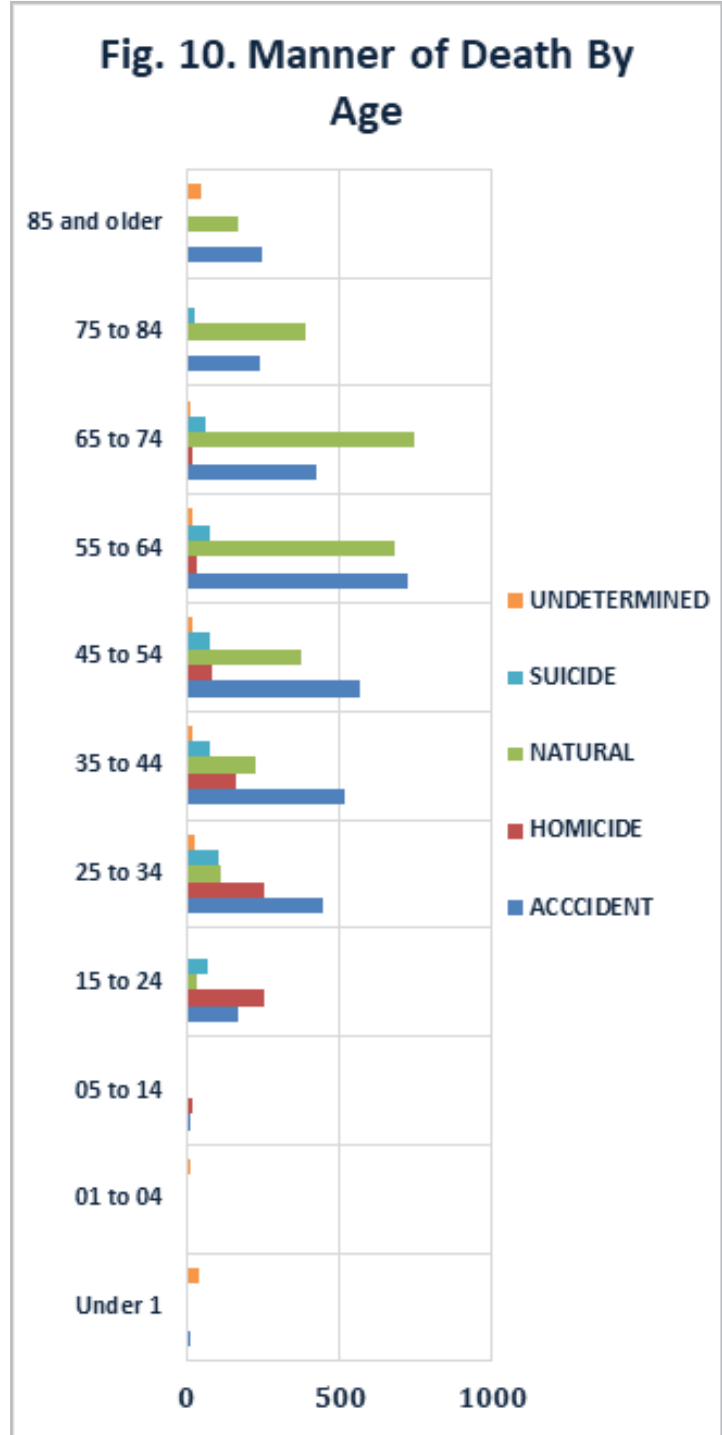
MANNER	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	NOT KNOWN
ACCIDENT	528	462	474	400	466	480	492	82
HOMICIDE	153	109	110	102	87	118	163	8
NATURAL	378	448	413	384	368	372	345	68
SUICIDE	73	87	68	74	69	66	67	4
UNDETERMINED	29	23	27	16	25	22	26	2
Total	1,161	1,129	1,092	976	1,015	1,058	1,093	164

⁶ All cases do not have incident date, so weekday of incident cannot be determined for all cases. Table does not show cases without manner (n=50).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 11. AGE GROUP AND MANNER OF DEATH⁷

	ACCID.	HOM.	NATU.	SUIC.	UNDETER.
<1	11	5	4	0	35
1-4	1	2	3	0	8
5-14	9	19	9	8	6
15-24	168	255	31	70	6
25-34	447	253	116	106	28
35-44	518	164	230	76	23
45-54	569	82	379	73	20
55-64	731	37	684	79	16
65-74	428	23	750	61	10
75-84	244	6	393	28	2
>=85	258	4	177	7	16
Total	3384	850	2776	508	170

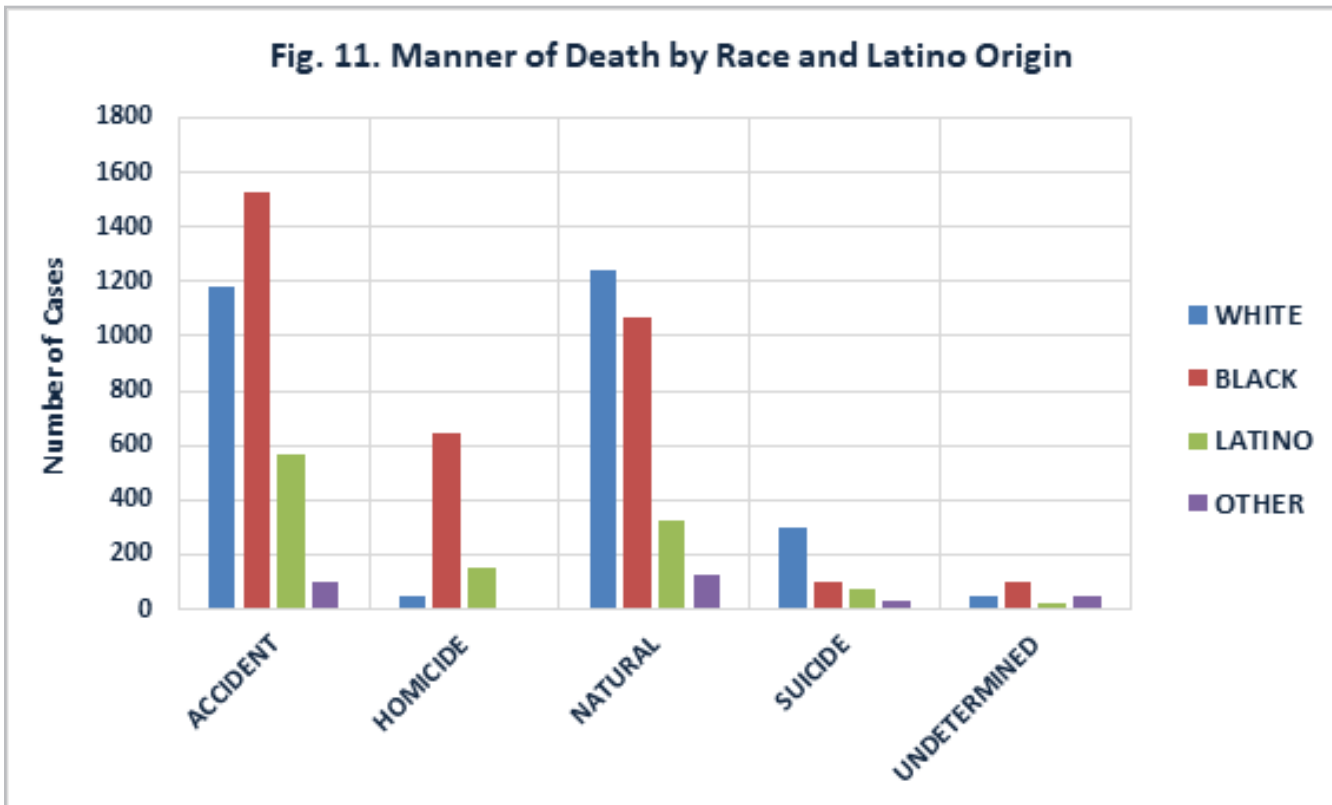


⁷ The graph and table do not show cases without manner (n=50).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 12. MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE (WHITE/BLACK) AND LATINO ORIGIN⁸

MANNER	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
ACCIDENT	1183	1534	567	100
HOMICIDE	45	647	151	7
NATURAL	1251	1078	324	123
SUICIDE	300	102	78	28
UNDETERMINED	46	92	20	12
Total	2825	3453	1140	270

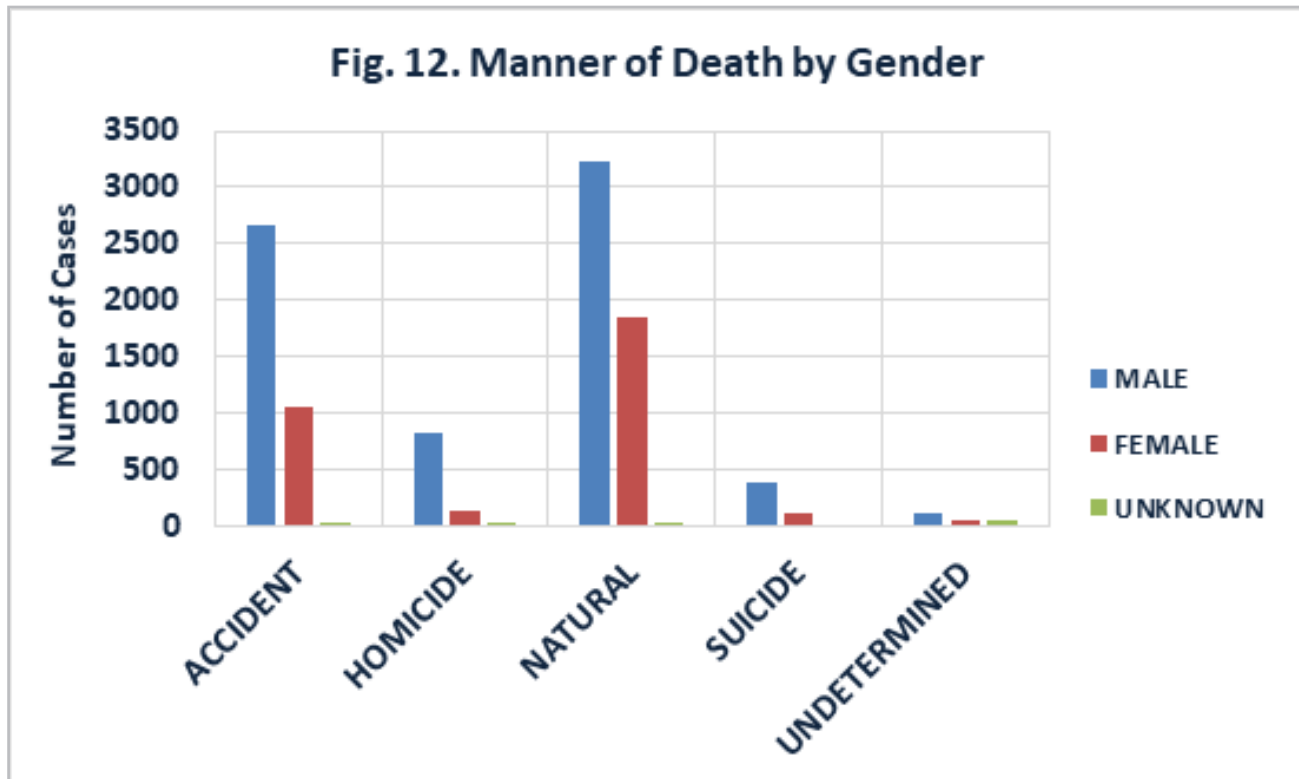


⁸ This table does not show Asian, Am. Indian, and Other Race. The graph and table do not show cases without manner (n=50).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 13. MANNER OF DEATH BY GENDER OF DECEDENT⁹

MANNER	WHITE	FEMALE	NOT KNOWN	Total
ACCIDENT	2480	904	0	3384
HOMICIDE	717	133	0	850
NATURAL	1956	820	0	2776
SUICIDE	393	115	0	508
UNDETERMINED	120	50	0	170
Total	5666	2022	0	7688



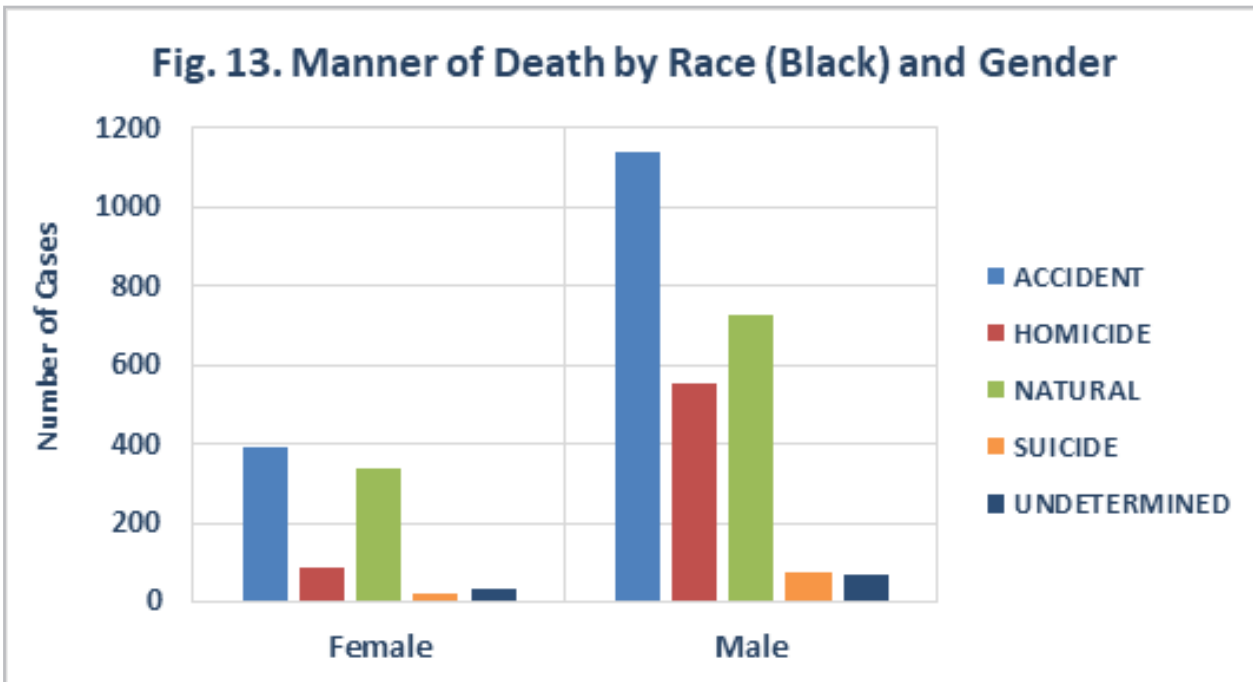
⁹ Table and graph do not show 28 unknown gender which belongs to the category of cases without manner of death.

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 14. MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN AND GENDER OF DECEDENT¹⁰

RACE: BLACK

GENDER	ACCIDENT	HOMICIDE	NATURAL	SUICIDE	UNDETERMINED	Total
Female	393	90	345	23	26	877
Male	1141	557	733	79	66	2576
Total	1534	647	1078	102	92	3453



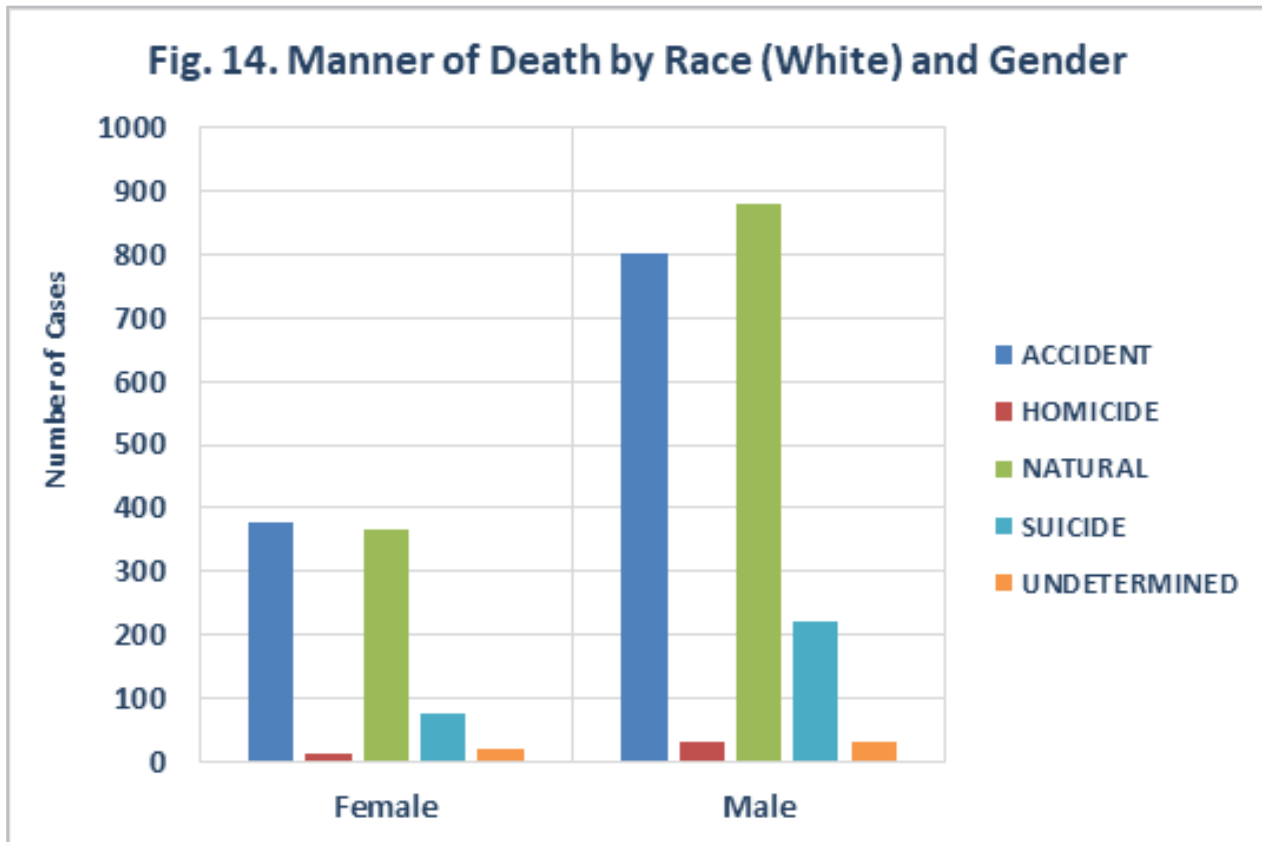
¹⁰ Table and graph do not show cases without manner of death in this category (n=11).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 15. MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN AND GENDER OF DECEDENT¹¹

RACE: WHITE

GENDER	ACCIDENT	HOMICIDE	NATURAL	SUICIDE	UNDETERMINED	Total
Female	380	14	368	77	18	857
Male	803	31	883	223	28	1968
Total	1183	45	1251	300	46	2825



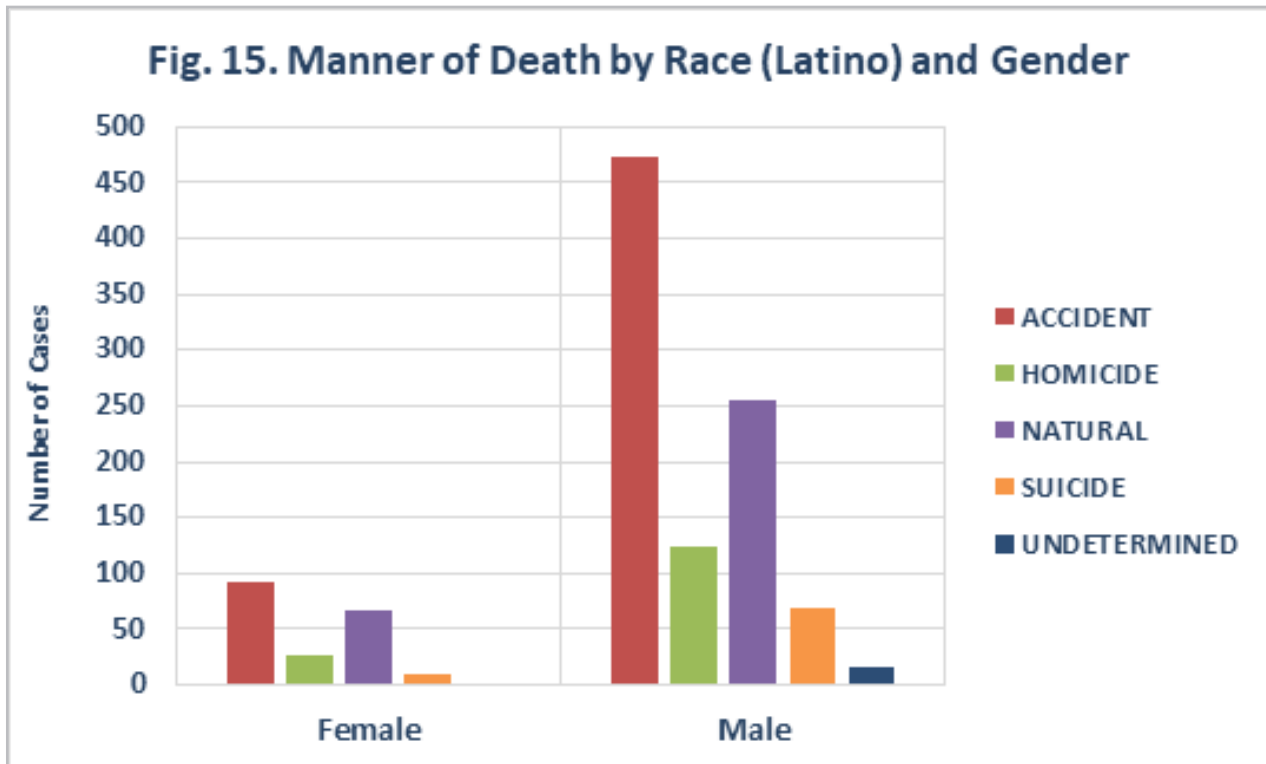
¹¹ Table and graph do not show cases without manner of death in this category (n=6).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 16. MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN AND GENDER OF DECEDENT

RACE: LATINO

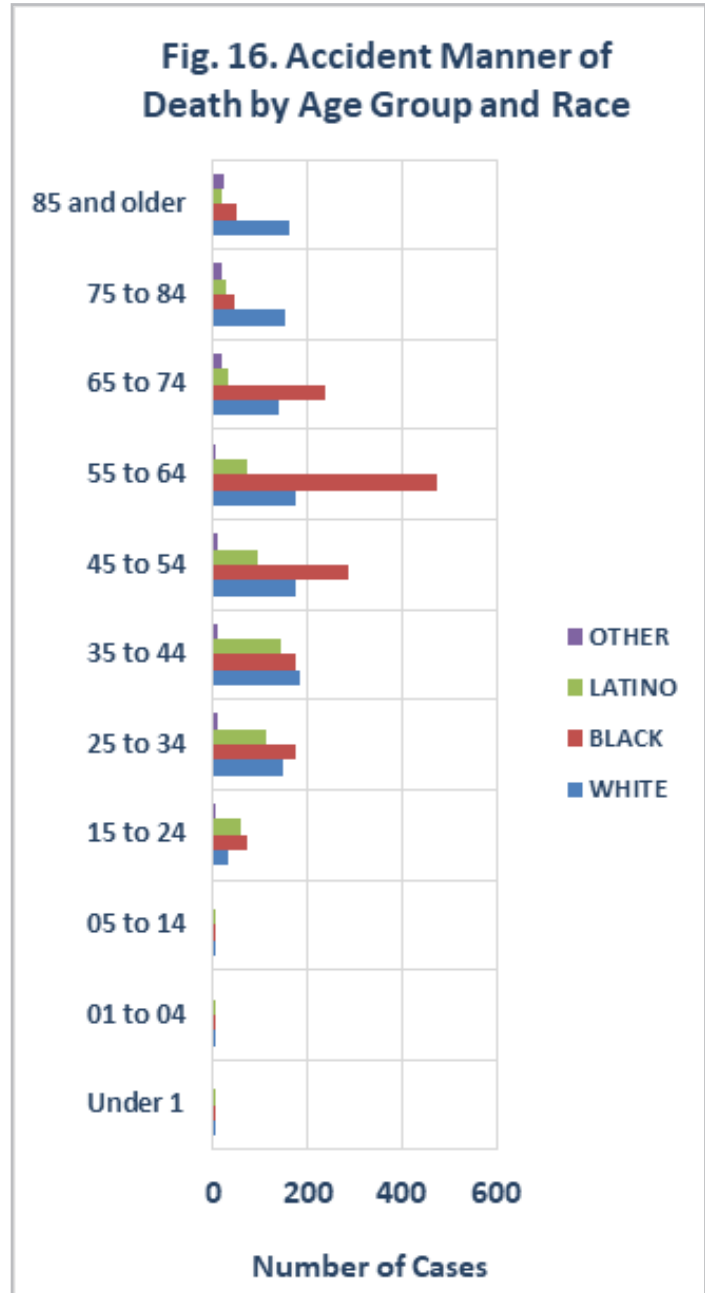
GENDER	ACCIDENT	HOMICIDE	NATURAL	SUICIDE	UNDETERMINED	Total
Female	93	27	67	10	2	199
Male	474	124	257	68	18	941
Total	567	151	324	78	20	1140



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 17. ACCIDENT MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP

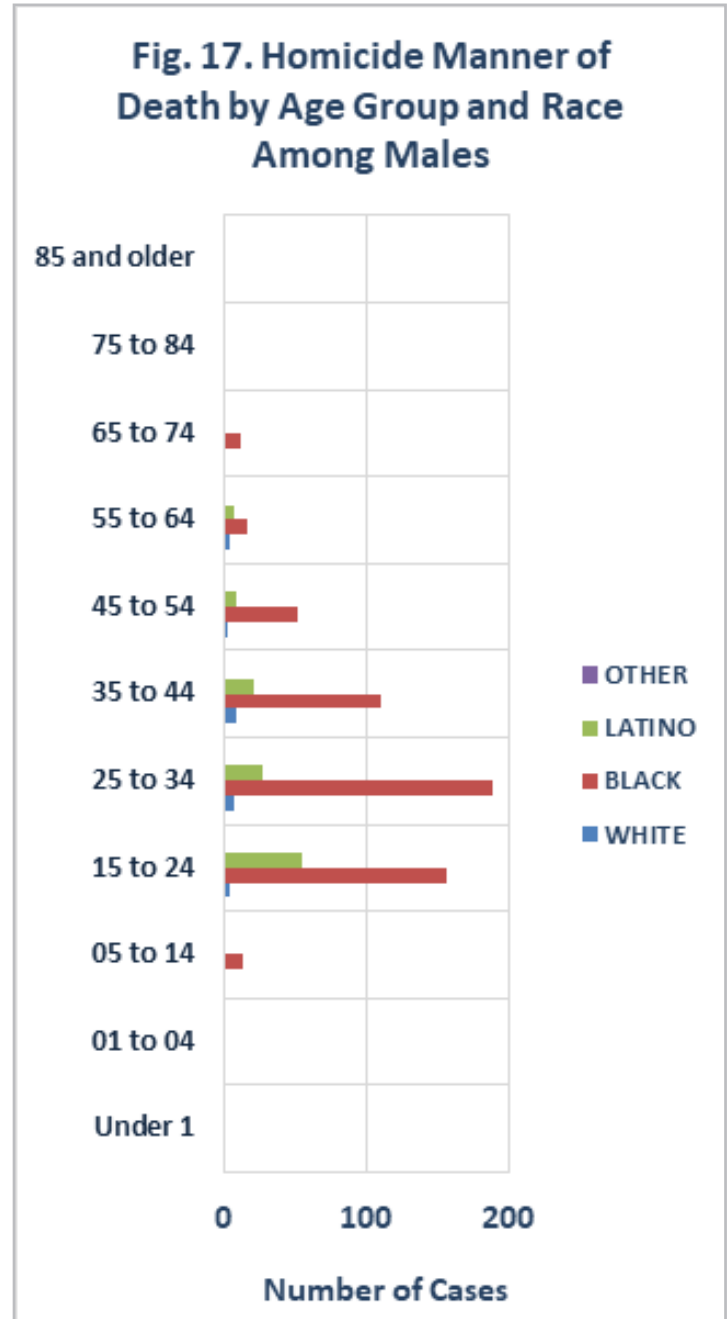
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	2	7	2	0
1-4	0	0	1	0
5-14	3	5	1	0
15-24	33	70	60	5
25-34	147	177	113	10
35-44	185	177	145	11
45-54	176	287	97	9
55-64	179	475	70	7
65-74	139	239	31	19
75-84	153	47	26	18
>=85	163	50	21	21
Total	1183	1534	567	100



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 18. HOMICIDE MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP AMONG MALES

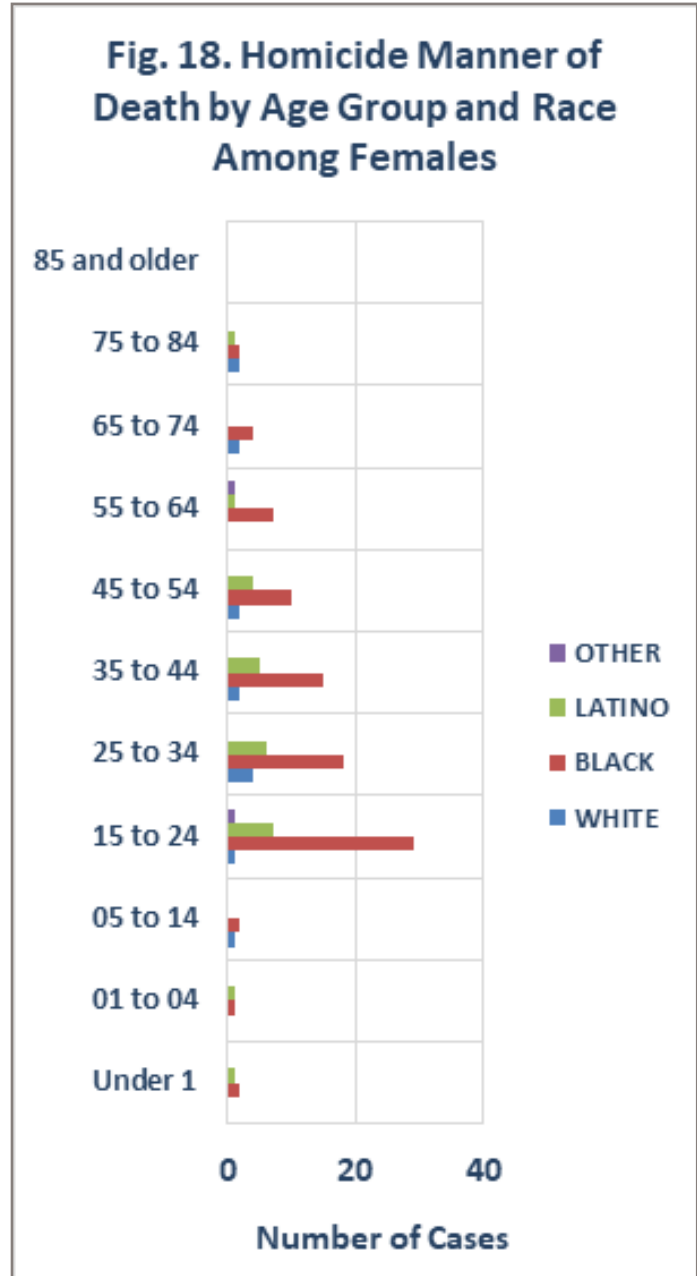
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	0	1	0	1
1-4	0	1	1	0
5-14	1	14	1	0
15-24	4	157	55	1
25-34	7	190	27	1
35-44	9	110	22	1
45-54	3	53	9	1
55-64	5	16	7	0
65-74	2	12	2	0
75-84	0	1	0	0
>=85	0	2	0	0
Total	31	557	124	5



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 19. HOMICIDE MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP AMONG FEMALES

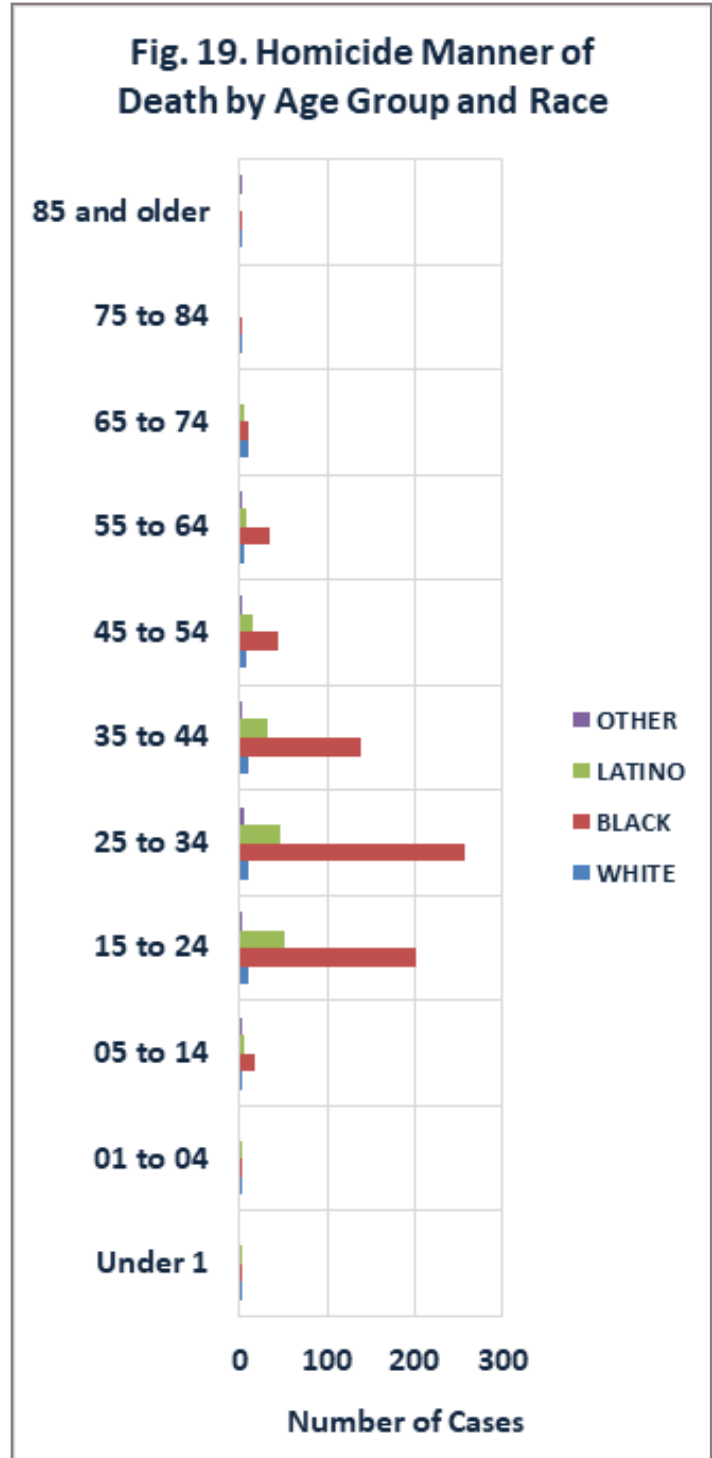
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	0	2	1	0
1-4	0	0	0	0
5-14	1	2	0	0
15-24	1	29	7	1
25-34	4	18	6	0
35-44	2	15	5	0
45-54	2	10	4	0
55-64	0	7	1	1
65-74	2	4	1	0
75-84	2	2	1	0
>=85	0	0	1	0
Total	14	90	27	2



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 20. HOMICIDE MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP

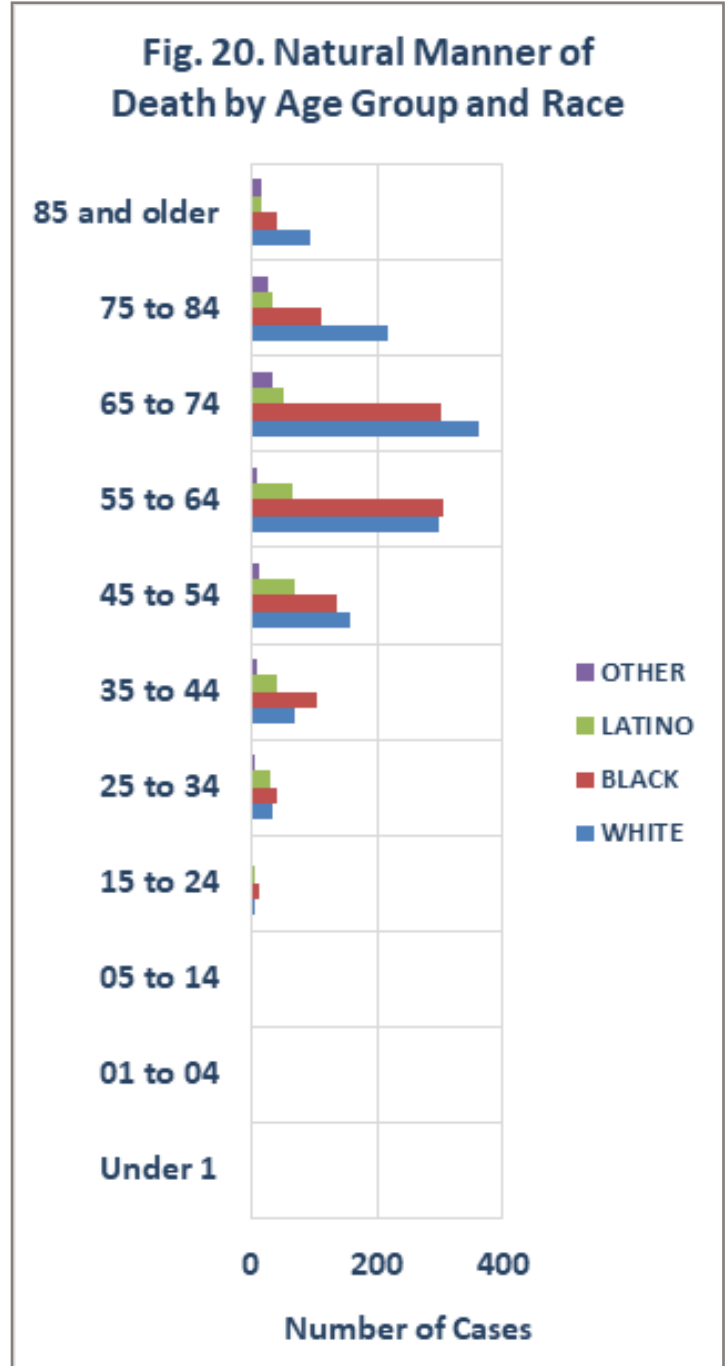
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	0	3	1	1
1-4	0	3	1	0
5-14	2	16	1	0
15-24	5	186	62	2
25-34	11	208	33	1
35-44	11	125	27	1
45-54	5	63	13	1
55-64	5	23	8	1
65-74	4	16	3	0
75-84	2	3	1	0
>=85	0	3	1	0
Total	45	647	151	7



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 21. NATURAL MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP

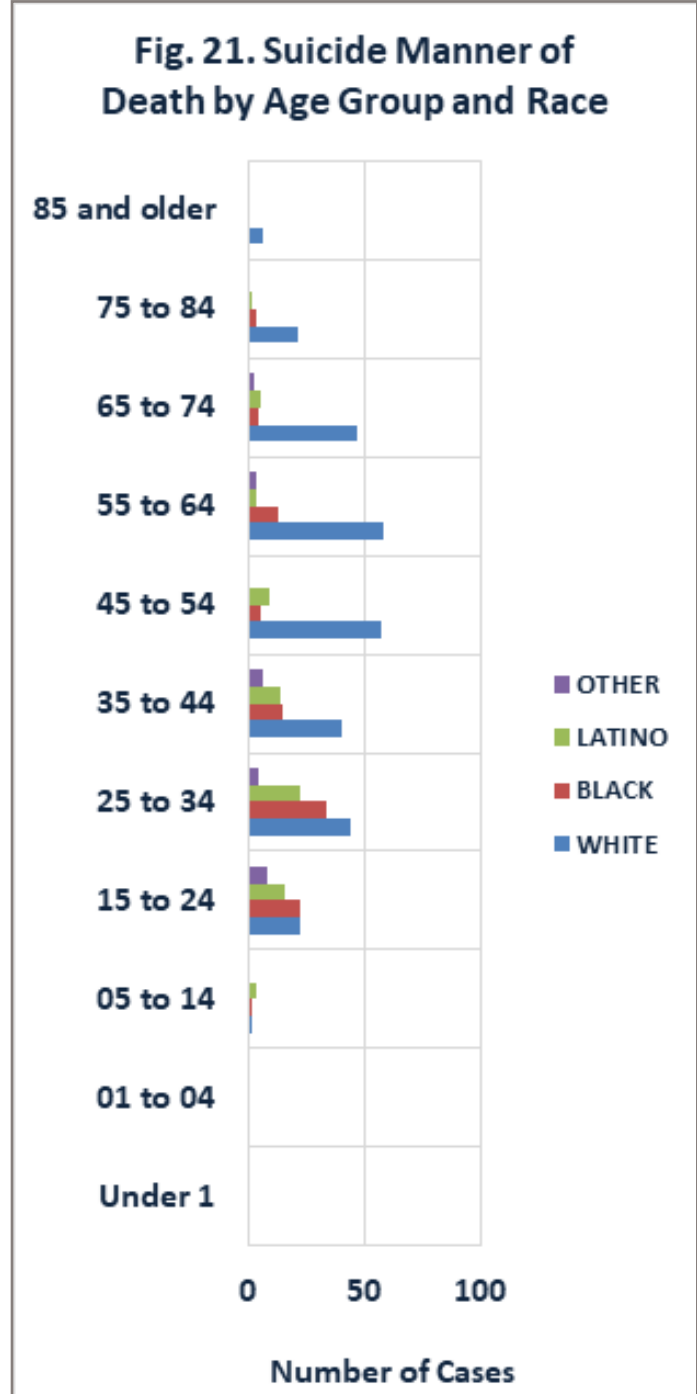
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	1	1	2	0
1-4	1	2	0	0
5-14	3	4	2	0
15-24	8	15	7	1
25-34	35	42	31	10
35-44	71	106	43	10
45-54	156	139	69	15
55-64	300	307	68	9
65-74	362	301	52	35
75-84	217	114	34	28
>=85	97	47	16	17
Total	1251	1078	324	125



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 22. SUICIDE MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP

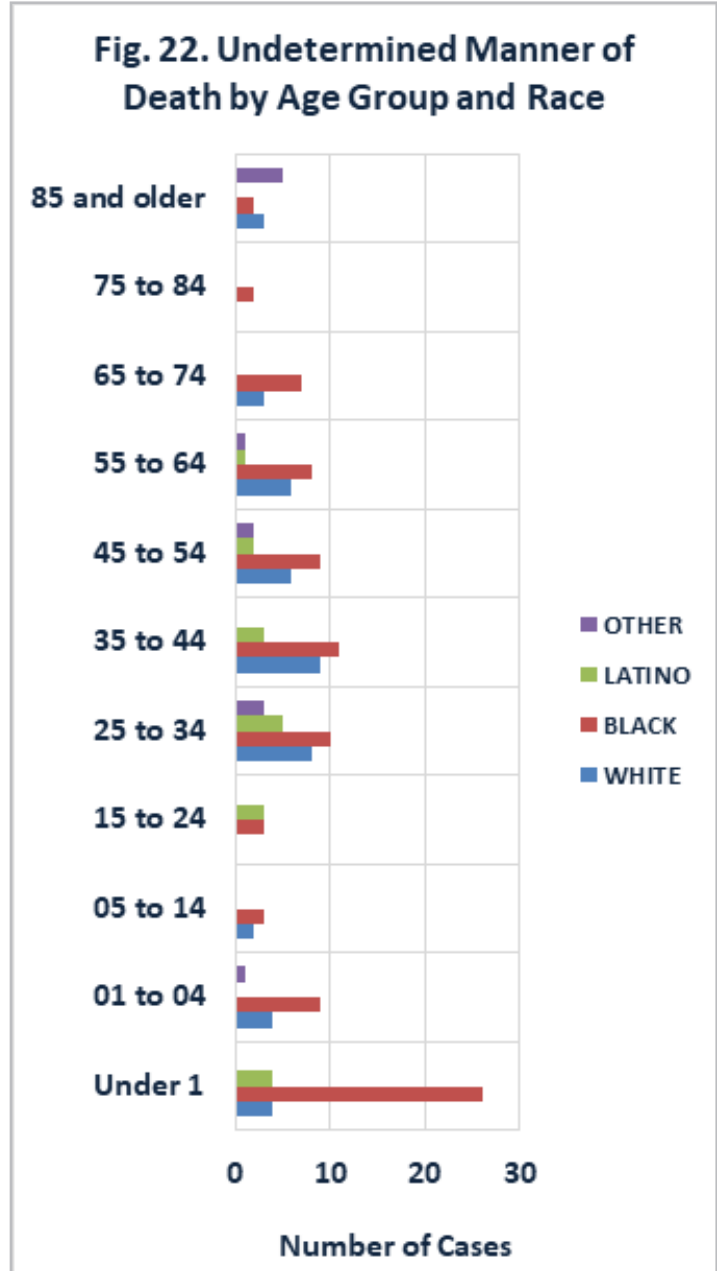
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	0	0	0	0
1-4	0	0	0	0
5-14	2	2	4	0
15-24	23	23	16	8
25-34	44	34	23	5
35-44	40	15	14	7
45-54	57	6	9	1
55-64	58	13	4	4
65-74	47	5	6	3
75-84	22	4	2	0
>=85	7	0	0	0
Total	300	102	78	28



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 23. UNDETERMINED MANNER OF DEATH BY RACE/LATINO ORIGIN AND AGE GROUP

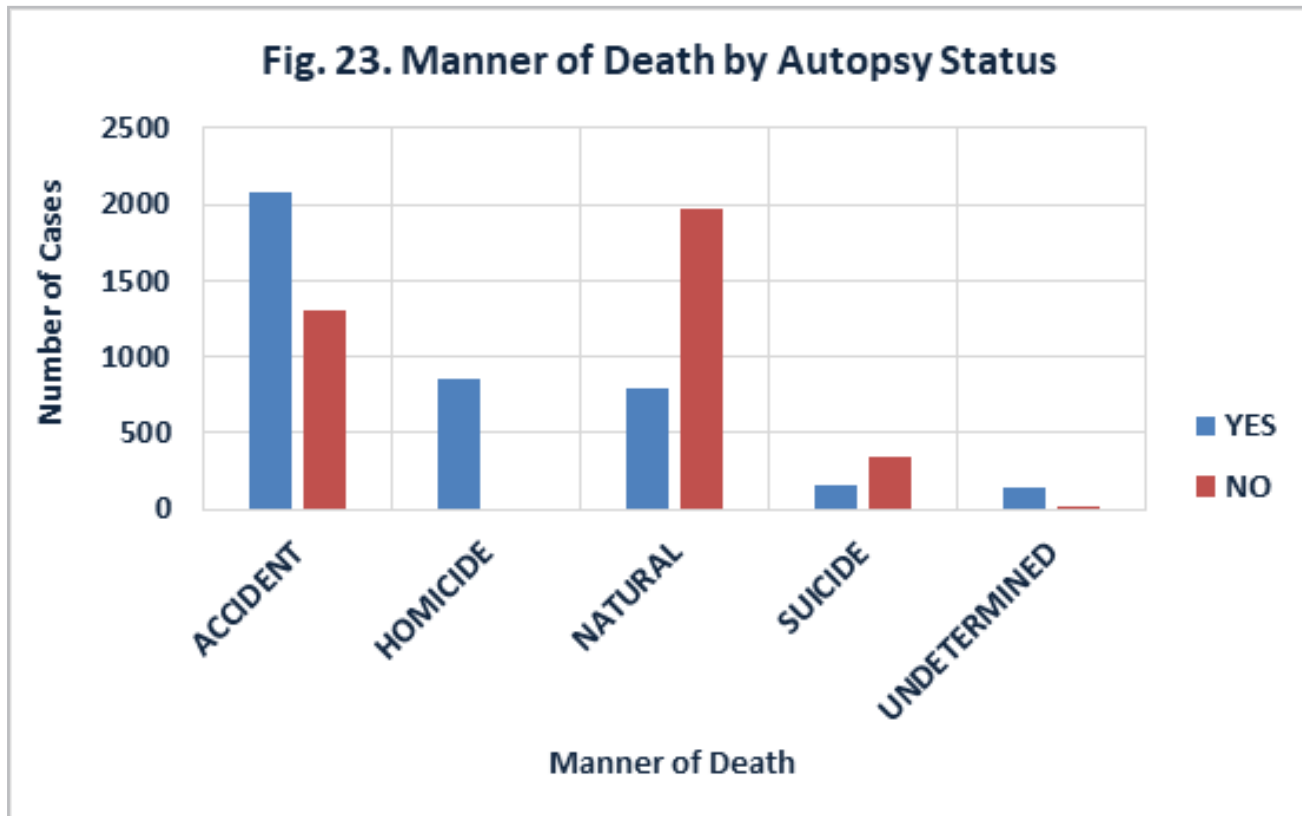
	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
<1	4	27	4	0
1-4	1	6	0	1
5-14	2	3	1	0
15-24	0	3	3	0
25-34	9	11	5	3
35-44	9	11	3	0
45-54	6	9	3	2
55-64	6	8	1	1
65-74	3	7	0	0
75-84	0	2	0	0
>=85	6	2	0	5
Total	46	89	20	12



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 24. MANNER OF DEATH BY AUTOPSY STATUS¹²

MANNER	AUTOPSY YES	AUTOPSY NO	TOTAL
ACCIDENT	2077	1307	3384
HOMICIDE	850	0	850
NATURAL	805	1971	2776
SUICIDE	158	350	508
UNDETERMINED	148	22	170
Total	4038	3650	7688

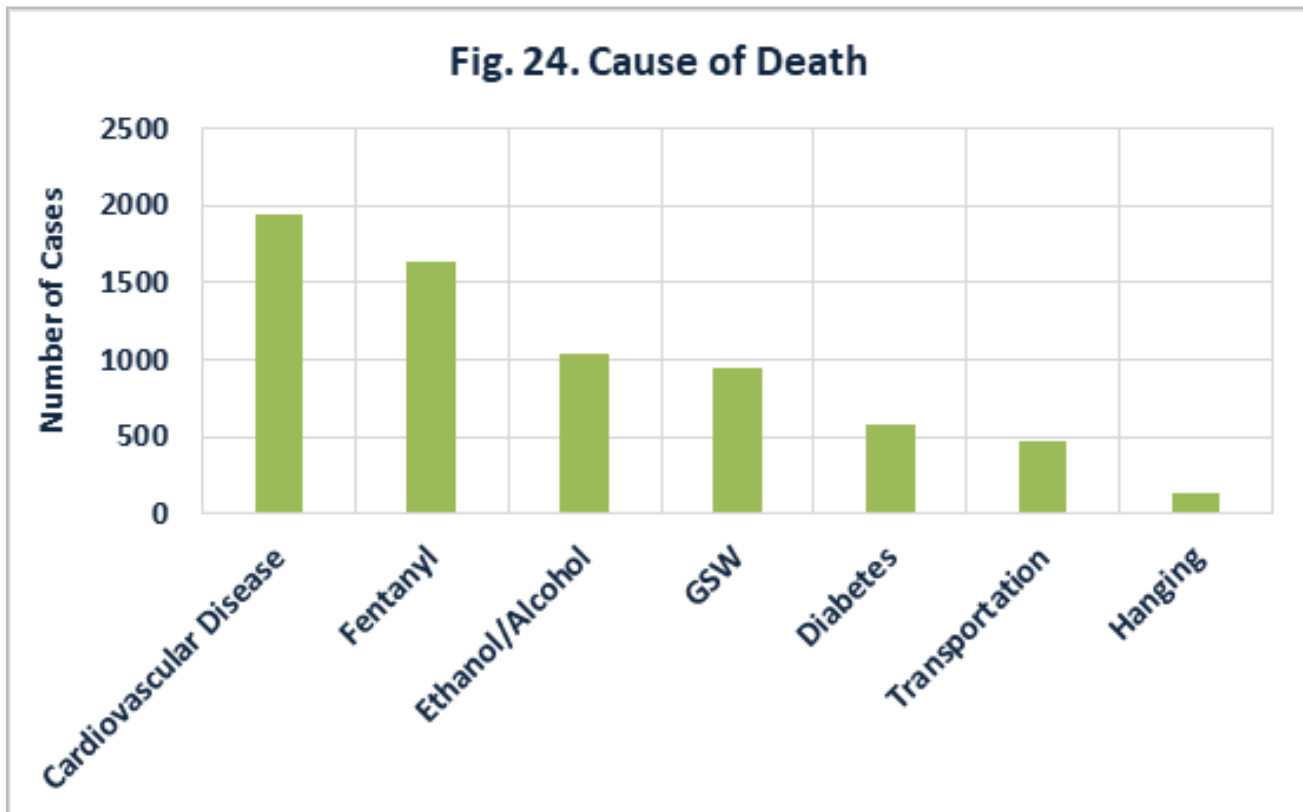


¹² Table and graph do not show cases without manner of death in this category (n=12).

MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 25. CAUSE OF DEATH (GENERAL)

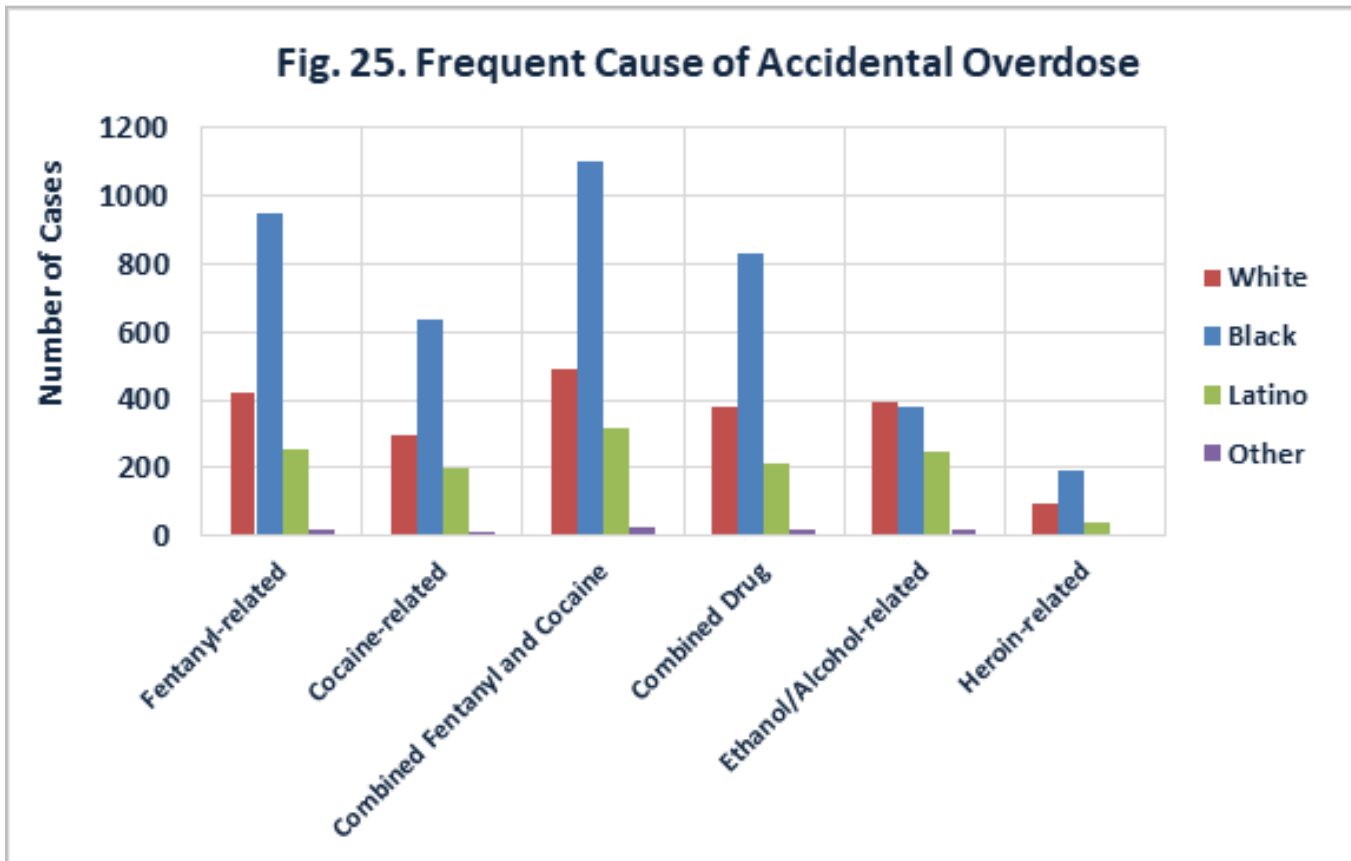
CAUSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Cardiovascular Disease	1945	25.14%
Fentanyl	1645	21.26%
Diabetes	1039	13.43%
GSW	942	12.17%
Ethanol/Alcohol	573	7.41%
Transportation	453	5.85%
Hanging	140	1.81%



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 26. FREQUENT CAUSE OF ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSE BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN

DRUG	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER
Fentanyl-related	421	950	256	18
Cocaine-related	271	594	174	8
Combined Fentanyl and Cocaine	489	1056	321	23
Combined Drug	551	1148	339	25
Ethanol/Alcohol-related	391	383	246	19
Heroin-related	93	193	40	6



MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 27. FREQUENT CAUSE OF DEATH BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN (HOMICIDE MANNER OF DEATH)

CAUSE	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER	Total
Gunshot Wound	25	574	137	3	739
Stab or Sharp Force	7	24	6	1	38
Other	5	22	5	1	33
Multiple Injuries	6	25	2	1	34
Blunt Force	1	12	1	0	14
Asphyxiation/Asphyxia	0	0	0	1	1

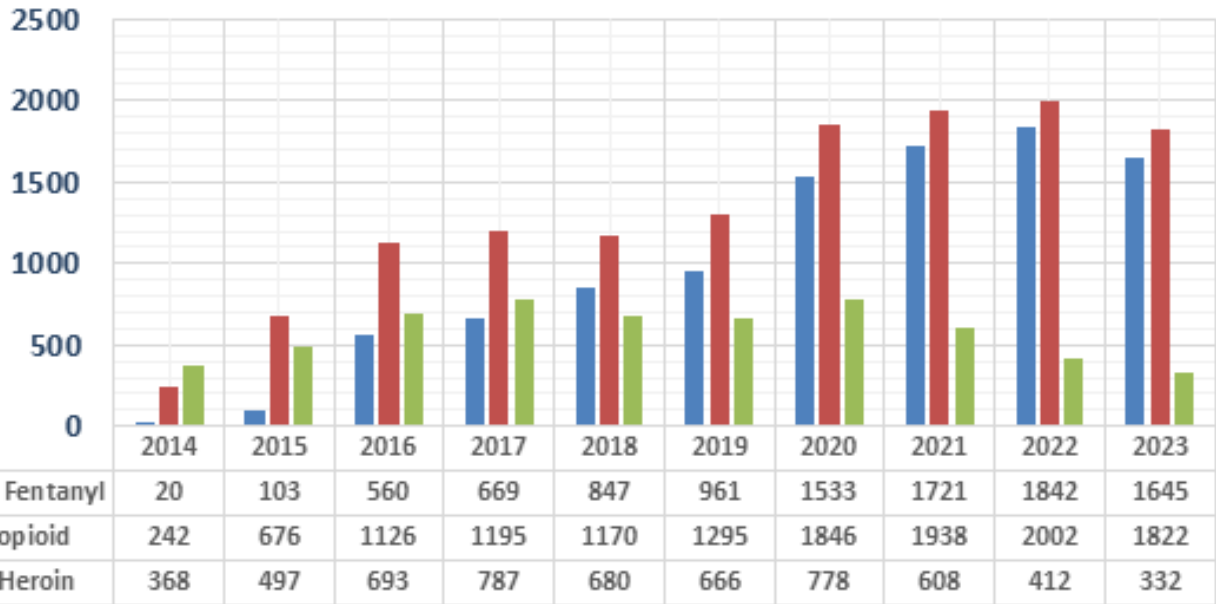
MEDICAL EXAMINER 2023 CASE DATA

TABLE 28. FREQUENCY OF HOMICIDE BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN

	2022		2023	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
White	58	5.31%	45	5.29%
Black	713	76.15%	647	76.12%
Latino	168	17.71%	151	17.76%
Other	12	0.83%	7	0.82%
Total	951		850	

OPIOID DEATHS

Fig. 26. Number of Opioid, Fentanyl, Heroin and Fentanyl-involved Cases Examined by CCMEO, 2014-2023



OPIOID DEATHS

DRUG	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
OPIOID	242	676	1126	1195	1170	1295	1846	1938	2002	1822
HEROIN-RELATED	368	497	693	787	680	666	778	608	412	332
FENTANYL-RELATED ¹³	20	103	560	669	847	961	1533	1721	1842	1645

DEMOGRAPHICS OF OPIOID CASES

GENDER	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
MALE	166	486	833	909	870	967	1420	1476	1559	1438
FEMALE	76	190	293	286	300	328	426	462	443	384

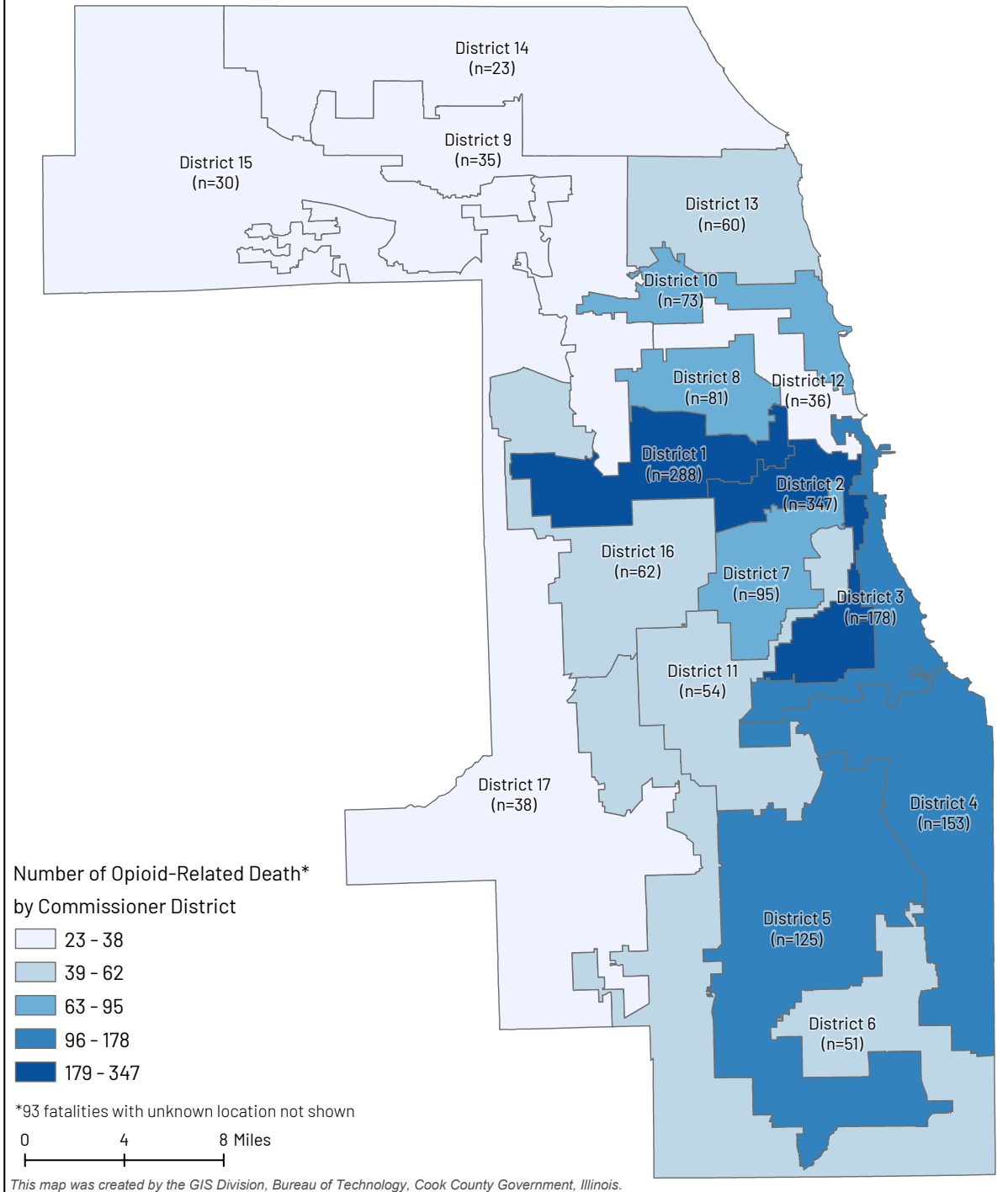
RACE/ETHNICITY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NL WHITE	158	409	545	578	509	534	655	601	579	485
NL BLACK	81	219	408	487	502	593	901	1032	1101	1040
LATINO	0	28	161	123	155	153	270	281	296	278

AGE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1
1-4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
5-14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
15-24	16	47	86	74	73	60	95	122	106	88
25-34	47	145	251	243	235	212	314	318	337	288
35-44	60	134	240	252	240	259	378	354	386	358
45-54	70	184	311	336	304	390	481	471	452	406
55-64	40	144	206	242	269	294	438	521	529	478
65-74	6	18	26	42	46	72	124	137	176	181
75-84	1	1	4	5	3	3	12	7	13	11
>=85	2	2	2	0	0	5	3	3	0	6
Total	242	676	1126	1195	1170	1295	1846	1938	2002	1822

¹³ Fentanyl and heroin cases are not mutually exclusive. Opioid cases frequently have a combination of opioids and other substances.

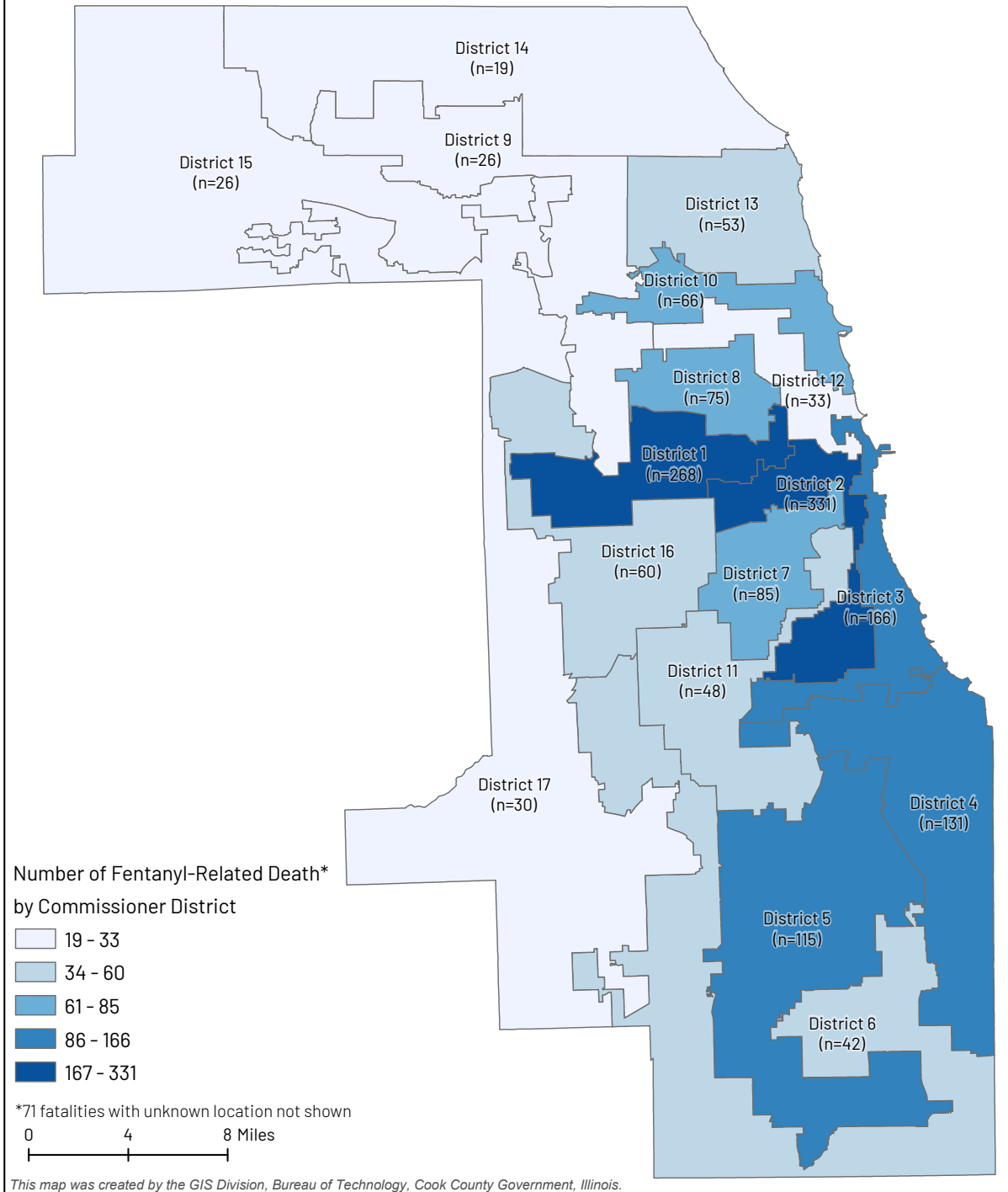
OPIOID DEATHS

Geographic Distribution of Opioid-Related Death by Commissioner District in Cook County, 2023 (N=1822)



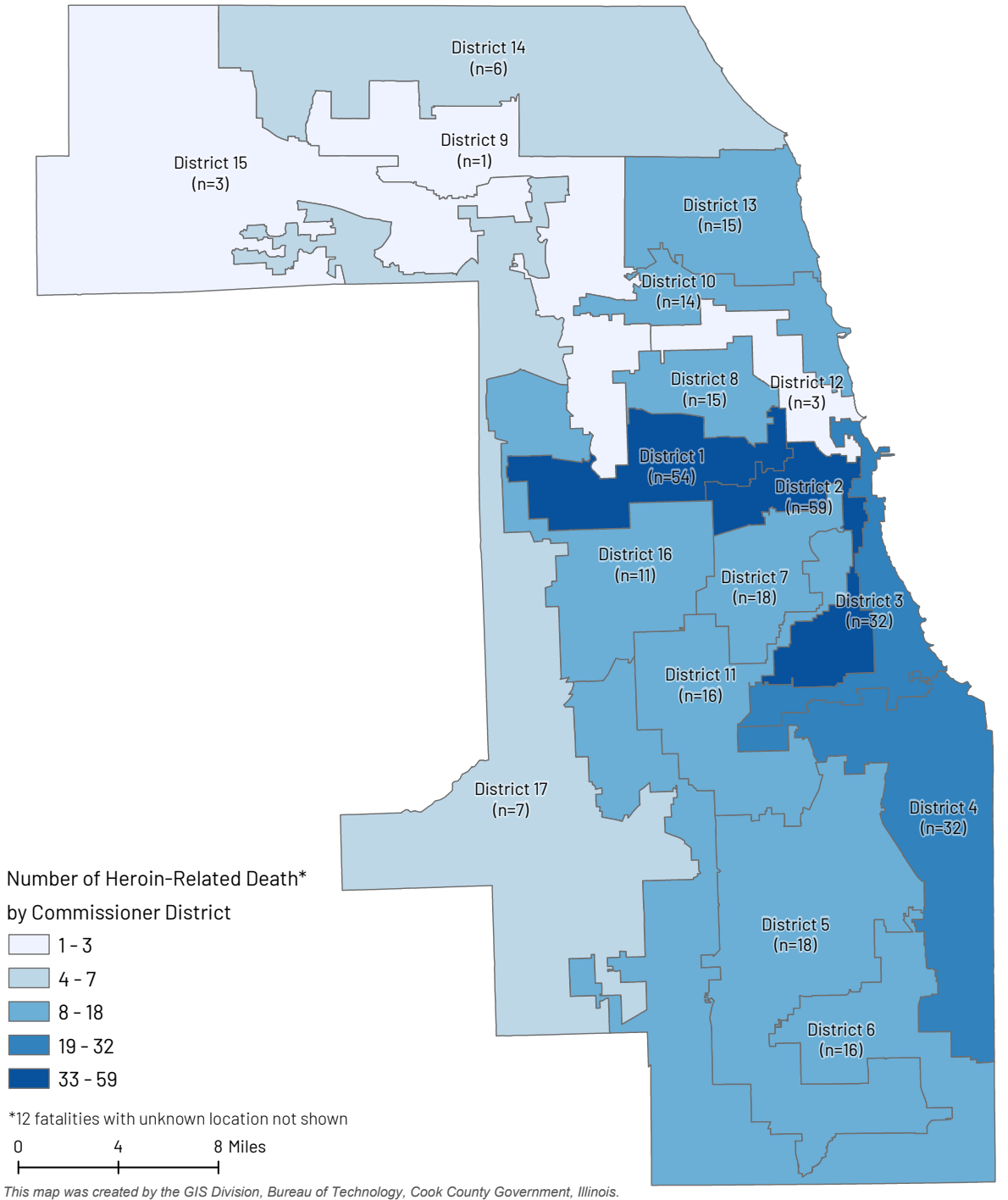
FENTANYL DEATHS

Geographic Distribution of Fentanyl-Related Death by Commissioner District in Cook County, 2023 (N=1645)



HEROIN DEATHS

Geographic Distribution of Heroin-Related Death by Commissioner District in Cook County, 2023 (N=332)



GUN HOMICIDE DEATHS

DRUG	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GUN HOMICIDE	457	526	809	744	601	584	884	1008	826	739

DEMOGRAPHICS OF GUN HOMICIDE CASES

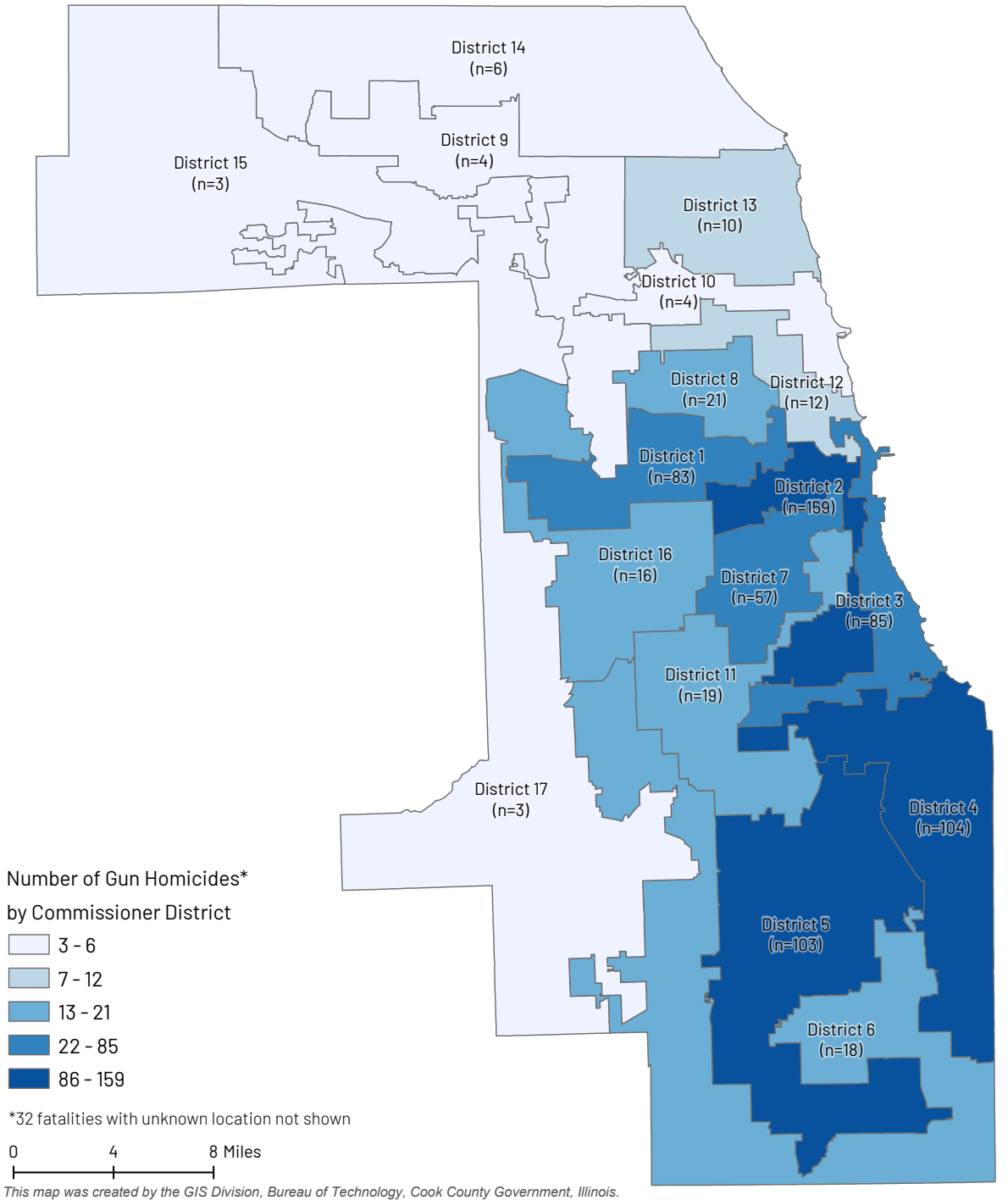
GENDER	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
MALE	422	496	753	680	547	524	813	902	732	651
FEMALE	35	30	56	64	54	60	71	106	94	88

RACE/ETHNICITY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NL WHITE	28	24	35	27	28	28	29	36	31	25
NL BLACK	359	422	644	589	492	472	702	819	650	574
LATINO	65	77	126	125	78	80	148	139	139	137

AGE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
1-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
5-14	9	10	4	9	9	3	11	19	20	16
15-24	234	239	371	331	221	235	280	317	254	241
25-34	119	167	249	247	212	200	344	382	295	234
35-44	50	67	112	90	89	80	159	164	161	148
45-54	29	22	42	37	36	41	48	80	49	64
55-64	8	16	22	18	20	18	27	34	31	24
65-74	5	1	4	6	10	4	6	10	11	8
75-84	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	0
>=85	2	2	2	2	2	0	4	1	1	4
Total	457	526	809	744	601	584	884	1008	826	739

GUN HOMICIDE DEATHS

Geographic Distribution of Gun Homicide by Commissioner District in Cook County, 2023 (N=739)



INFANT DEATHS

CCMEO investigated a total of 75 infant¹⁴ deaths in 2023.

TABLE 29. INFANT DEATH BY MONTH AND YEAR

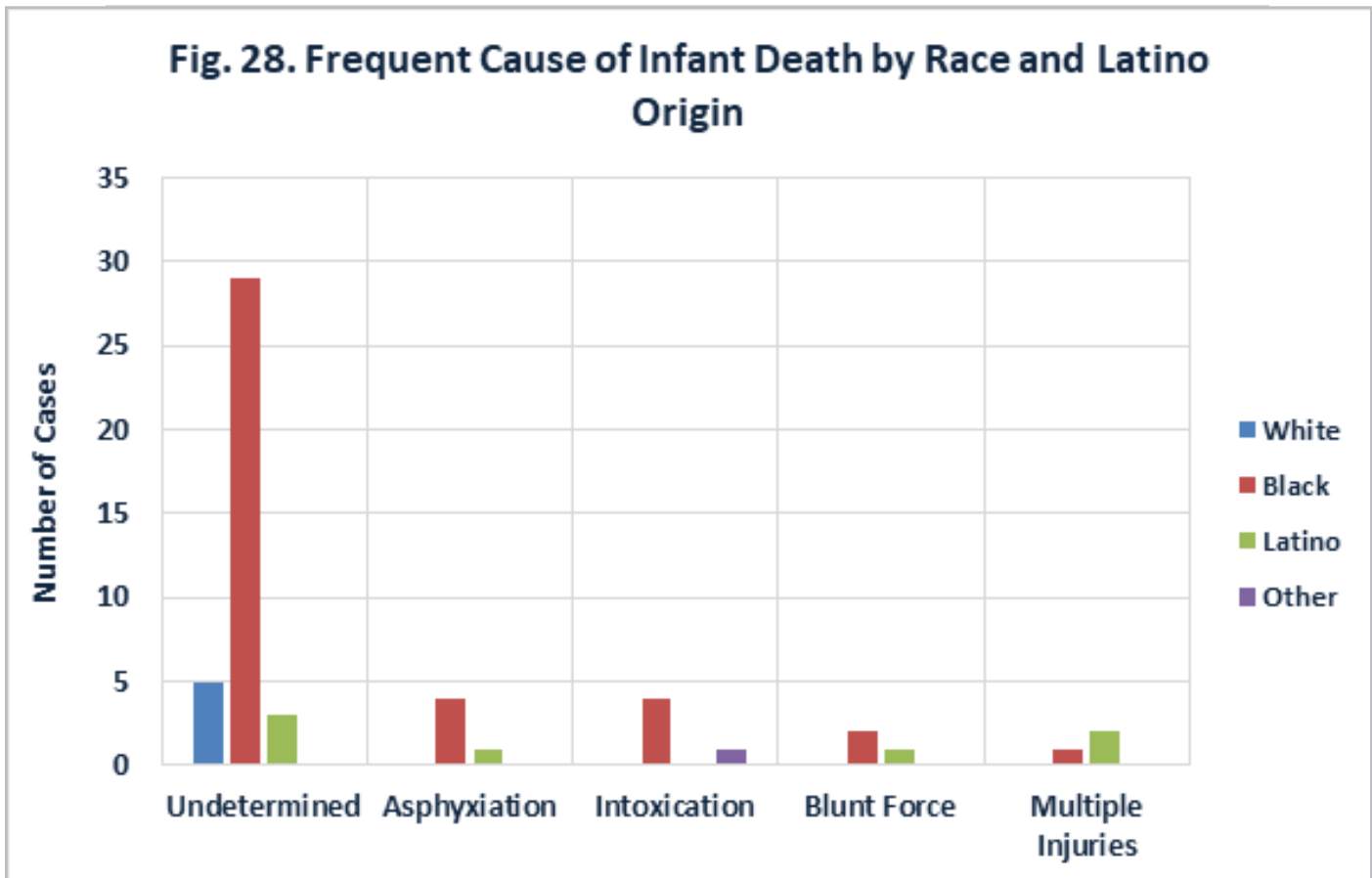
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2016	6	7	10	12	11	13	6	6	7	9	12	13	112
2017	7	7	8	3	8	8	12	11	6	8	6	12	96
2018	9	3	8	6	5	6	14	10	6	3	15	10	95
2019	10	4	8	8	8	9	9	8	3	2	5	9	83
2020	6	4	3	12	11	10	4	5	5	5	10	5	80
2021	8	6	9	3	11	10	9	7	6	7	8	6	90
2022	4	2	8	6	6	8	8	3	6	7	2	6	66
2023	5	4	8	10	7	4	5	4	6	4	8	10	75

¹⁴ 0-1-year-old

INFANT DEATHS

TABLE 31. FREQUENT CAUSE OF INFANT DEATH BY RACE AND LATINO ORIGIN

CAUSE	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	OTHER	Total
Undetermined	5	30	3	1	38
Asphyxiation	0	4	1	0	5
Intoxication	0	4	0	1	5
Blunt Force	0	2	1	0	3
Multiple Injuries	0	1	2	0	3

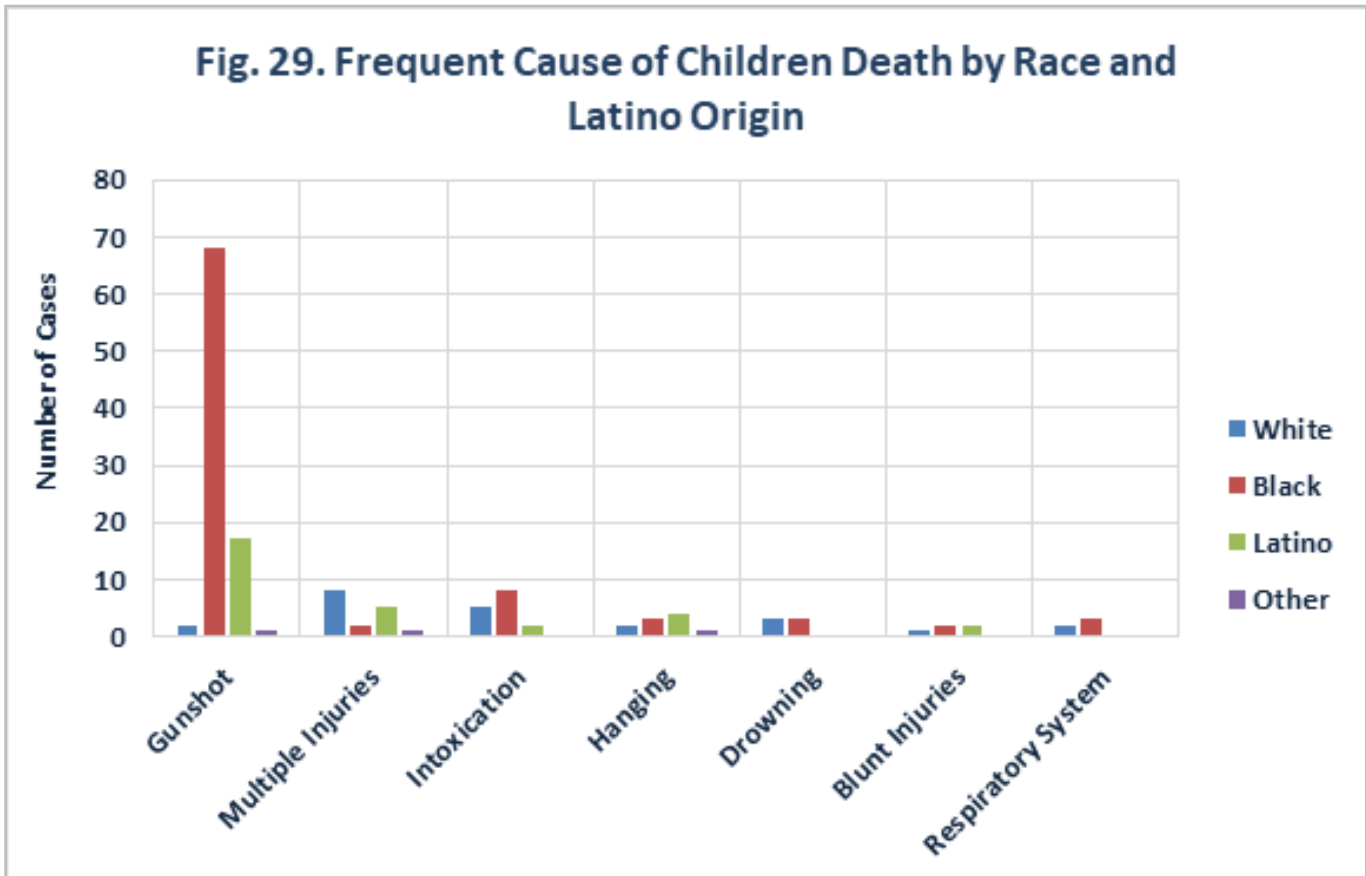


CHILDREN DEATHS

CCMEO investigated a total of 174 children's deaths¹⁵ in 2023.

TABLE 32. CHILDREN DEATH BY MONTH AND YEAR

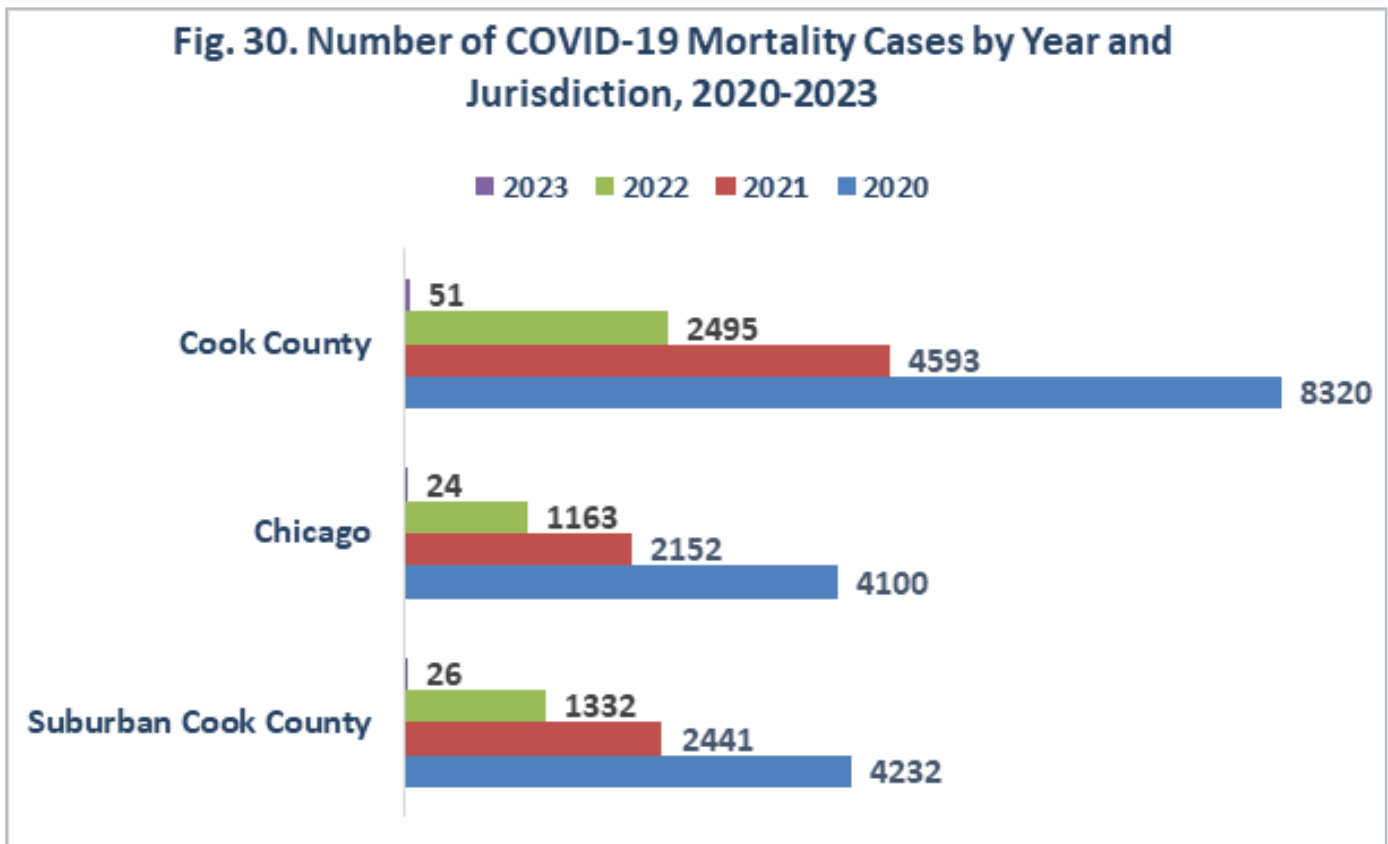
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2016	13	10	8	8	16	15	18	14	6	15	13	13	149
2017	10	16	10	11	17	22	13	17	12	10	11	7	156
2018	7	7	12	5	14	14	15	32	12	17	10	4	149
2019	6	11	12	9	11	10	13	12	12	15	7	13	131
2020	16	3	10	14	37	15	9	12	6	6	9	16	153
2021	15	10	14	13	22	17	24	14	18	19	18	8	192
2022	11	14	7	9	15	24	23	14	12	20	21	12	182
2023	16	10	14	16	20	18	14	16	11	18	7	14	174



¹⁵ Age 2-17

COVID-19 DEATHS

CCMEO investigated 51 COVID-19 cases from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. The breakdown of deaths due to COVID-19 by jurisdiction and year is shown.



APPENDIX A

The “At A Glance” section was prepared using data produced by LabLynx between January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Data for manner of death (accident, homicide, natural, suicide, undetermined), autopsied cases by manner of death, MVA, organ, tissue and cornea donations were pulled independently.

All the tables and figures reflect cases that start with ME2023. If these data are filtered by date of death, date of incident or date of examination, these numbers will be different. The trend figures reflect cases that start with ME2016, ME2017, ME2018, ME2019, ME2020, ME2021 and ME2022.

To find the city of incident, cases were filtered for each jurisdiction including Cook County, City of Chicago and suburban Cook County. The only exception is COVID-19 deaths which were filtered by city of residence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Mojde Mir

Epidemiologist

Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

Cody Davis

Executive Producer

Cook County Bureau of Administration

EDITING, REVIEW AND COMMENTS:

Richard Cancino

Data Analyst

Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

Dr. Ponni Arunkumar

Chief Medical Examiner

Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

Mark Ertler

Executive Officer

Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

Natalia Derevyanny

Director of Communications

Cook County Bureau of Administration

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FRANK AGUILAR

ALMA W ANAYA

SCOTT R. BRITTON

JOHN P. DALEY

DENNIS DEER

BRIDGET DEGNEN

BRIDGET GAINER

BILL LOWRY

DONNA MILLER

STANLEY MOORE

JOSINA MORITA

KEVIN B. MORRISON

SEAN M. MORRISON

ANTHONY QUEZADA

TARA STAMPS

MAGGIE TREVOR

