

An unusual [mortality](#) increase during a specific period, in a given population, is often referred to as an excess mortality. Eurostat's excess mortality indicator is expressed as a percentage of additional deaths in a month compared to a baseline period. In 2020, the baseline is given by average monthly deaths in the period 2016-2019. The higher the value, the more additional deaths have occurred compared to the baseline. A negative value means that fewer deaths occurred in a particular month compared with the baseline period.

The excess mortality indicator can draw attention to the magnitude of the crisis by providing a comprehensive comparison of additional deaths amongst the European countries and allowing for further analysis of its causes. The number of deaths from all causes observed during this pandemic, thus, can be compared with the expected number of deaths during a certain period in the past.

The reasons for an excess mortality may vary according to different phenomena, the current being linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Excess mortality is a more comprehensive measure of the total impact of the pandemic on deaths than the confirmed COVID-19 death count alone. In addition to confirmed deaths, excess mortality captures COVID-19 deaths that were not correctly diagnosed and reported, as well as deaths from other causes that can be attributed to the overall crisis condition. It also accounts for the partial absence of deaths from other causes like accidents that did not occur due, e.g., to the limitations in commuting or travel during the lockdown periods.

Further information

- [Health publications](#)
- [Excess mortality](#) (ESMS metadata file — demo_mexrt)

Related concepts

- [Mortality](#)

Statistical data

- [Excess mortality - statistics](#)
- [Weekly death statistics](#)