

Facts about Covid

 swprs.org/covid19-facts

Updated: May 2022

Fully referenced facts about covid, provided by experts in the field, to help our readers make a realistic risk assessment. (Regular updates below).

“The only means to fight the plague is honesty.” (Albert Camus, 1947)

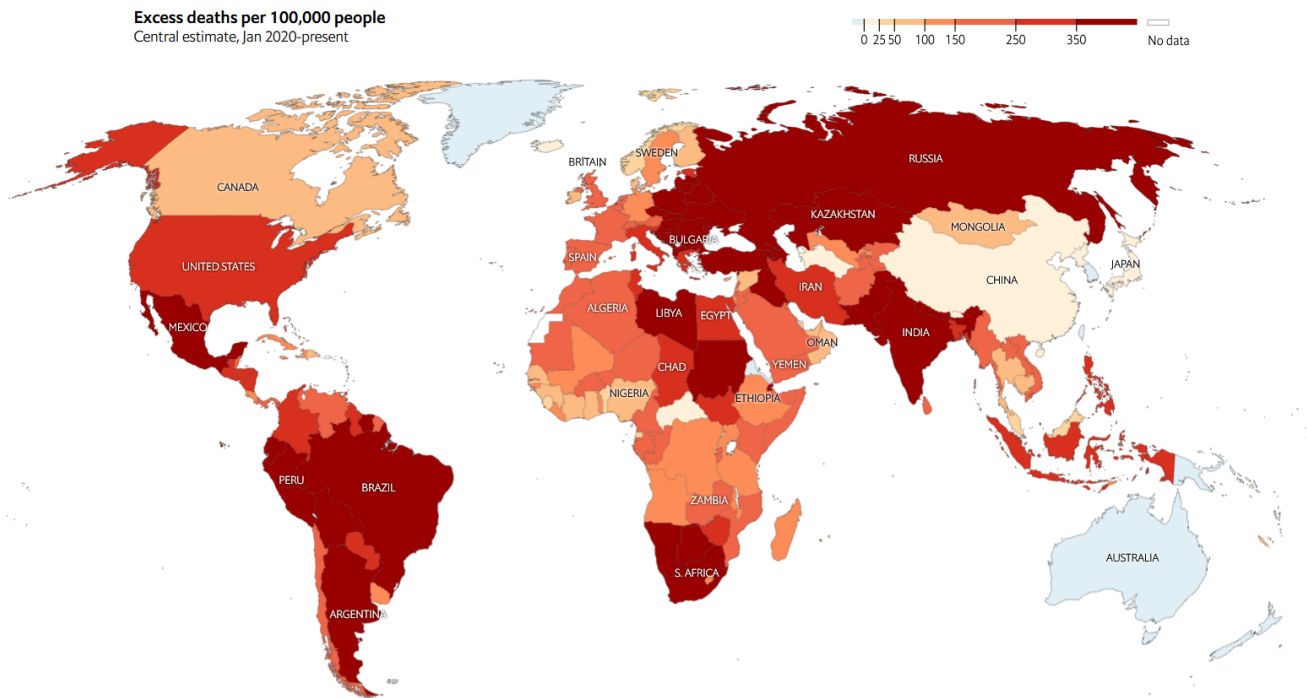
Overview

1. **Lethality:** The overall infection fatality rate (IFR) of the novel coronavirus in the general population (excluding nursing homes) is about 0.1% to 0.5% in most countries, which is most closely comparable to the medium influenza pandemics of 1936, 1957 and 1968.
2. **Age profile:** The median age of covid deaths is over 80 years in most Western countries (78 in the United States) and about 5% of the deceased had no medical preconditions. In many Western countries, about 50% of all covid deaths occurred in nursing homes.
3. **Vaccine protection:** Covid vaccines provide a very high, but rapidly declining protection against severe disease. Vaccination cannot prevent infection and transmission. A prior infection generally confers superior immunity compared to vaccination (in part due to mucosal immunity).
4. **Vaccine injuries:** Covid vaccinations can cause severe and fatal vaccine reactions, including cardiovascular, neurological and immunological reactions. Because of this, the risk-benefit ratio of covid vaccination in healthy children and adults under 40 years of age remains controversial.
5. **Excess mortality:** In most countries, the pandemic increased mortality by about 5% to 25%. Some of the additional deaths were caused not by covid, but by indirect effects of the pandemic and lockdowns (including an increase in drug overdose deaths).
6. **Symptoms:** About 30% of all infected persons show no symptoms. Overall, about 95% of all people develop at most mild or moderate symptoms and do not require hospitalization. Obesity, in particular, is a major risk factor for severe covid.
7. **Treatment:** For people at high risk or high exposure, early or prophylactic treatment is essential to prevent progression of the disease. Numerous studies found that early outpatient treatment of covid can significantly reduce hospitalizations and deaths.
8. **Long covid:** Up to 10% of symptomatic people experience post-acute or long covid, i.e. covid-related symptoms that last several weeks or months. Long covid may also affect young and previously healthy people whose initial course of disease was rather mild.

9. **Transmission:** Indoor aerosols appear to be the main route of transmission of the coronavirus, while outdoor aerosols, droplets, as well as most object surfaces appear to play a minor role.
10. **Masks:** Face masks had no influence on infection rates, which was already known from studies prior to the pandemic. Even N95 masks had no influence on infection rates in the general population. Moreover, long-term or improper use of face masks can lead to health issues.
11. **Lockdowns:** In contrast to early border controls (e.g. by Australia), lockdowns had no significant effect on infection rates. However, according to the World Bank lockdowns caused an “historically unprecedented increase in global poverty” of close to 100 million people.
12. **Children and schools:** In contrast to influenza, the risk of severe covid in children is rather low. Moreover, children were not drivers of the pandemic and the closure of schools had no impact on infection rates in the general population.
13. **PCR tests:** The highly sensitive PCR tests are prone to producing false positive or false negative results (e.g. after an acute infection). Overall, PCR and antigen mass testing had no impact on infection rates in the general population (exception: to sustain border controls).
14. **Contact tracing:** Manual contact tracing and contact tracing apps on mobile phones had no effect on infection rates. Already in 2019, a WHO study on influenza pandemics concluded that contact tracing is “not recommended in any circumstances”.
15. **Vaccine passports:** Vaccine passports had no impact on infection rates as vaccination cannot prevent infection. Vaccine passports could, however, serve as a basis for the introduction of digital biometric identity and payment systems. NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden warned as early as March 2020 that surveillance could be expanded during the pandemic.
16. **Virus mutations:** Similar to influenza viruses, mutations occur frequently in coronaviruses. The omicron variant, which may have emerged from vaccine research, showed significantly higher infectiousness and immune escape, but 90% lower lethality.
17. **Sweden:** In Sweden, covid mortality without lockdown was comparable to a strong influenza season and somewhat below the EU average. About 50% of Swedish deaths occurred in nursing homes and the median age of Swedish covid deaths was about 84 years.
18. **Influenza viruses:** Influenza viruses largely disappeared during the coronavirus pandemic. Yet this was not a result of “covid measures”, but a result of temporary displacement by the novel coronavirus, even in countries without measures (such as Sweden).
19. **Media:** The reporting of many media was rather unprofessional, increased fear and panic in the population and led to a hundredfold overestimation of the lethality of the coronavirus. Some media even used manipulative pictures and videos to dramatize the situation.

20. **Virus origin:** Genetic evidence points to a laboratory origin of the new coronavirus. Both the Virological Institute in Wuhan (WIV) as well as some US laboratories that cooperated with the WIV performed various kinds of research on similar coronaviruses.

Overview diagrams



Excess mortality by February 2022 (S)

Basics

US Mortality by Age in Pandemic Years (1892-2020)

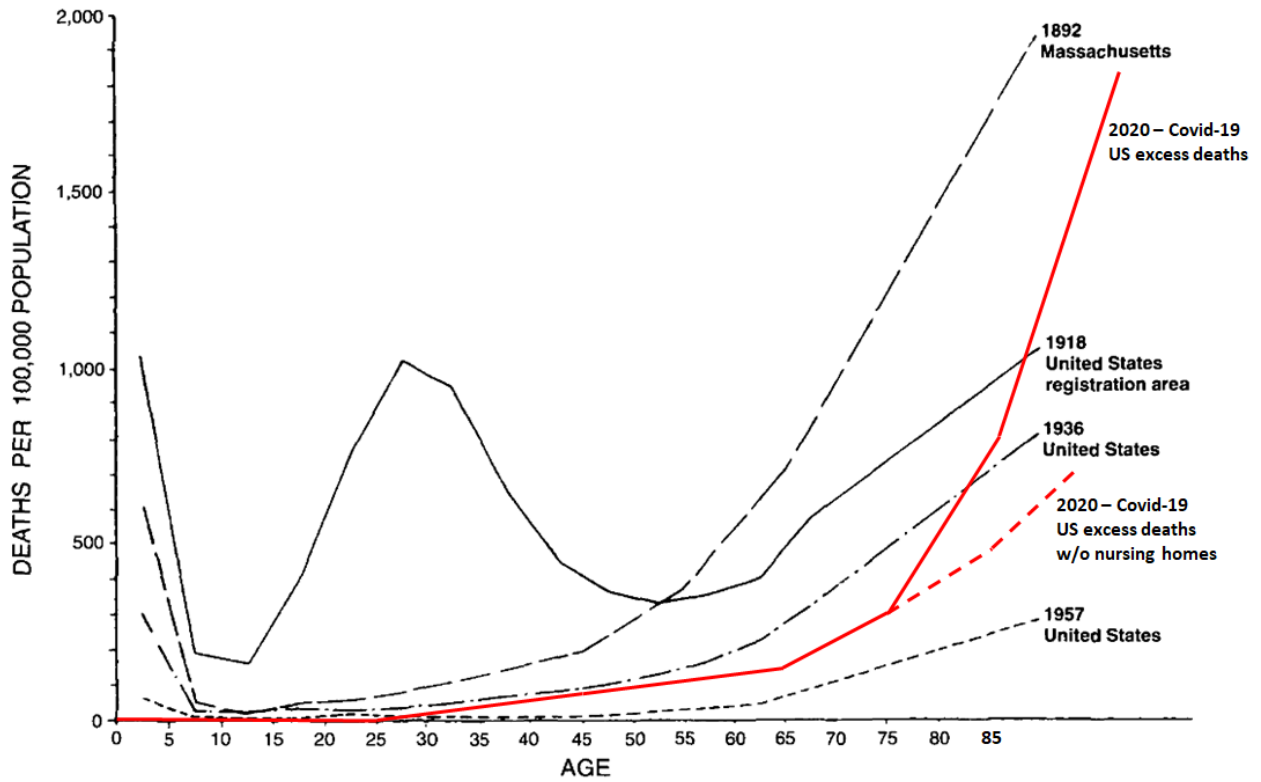


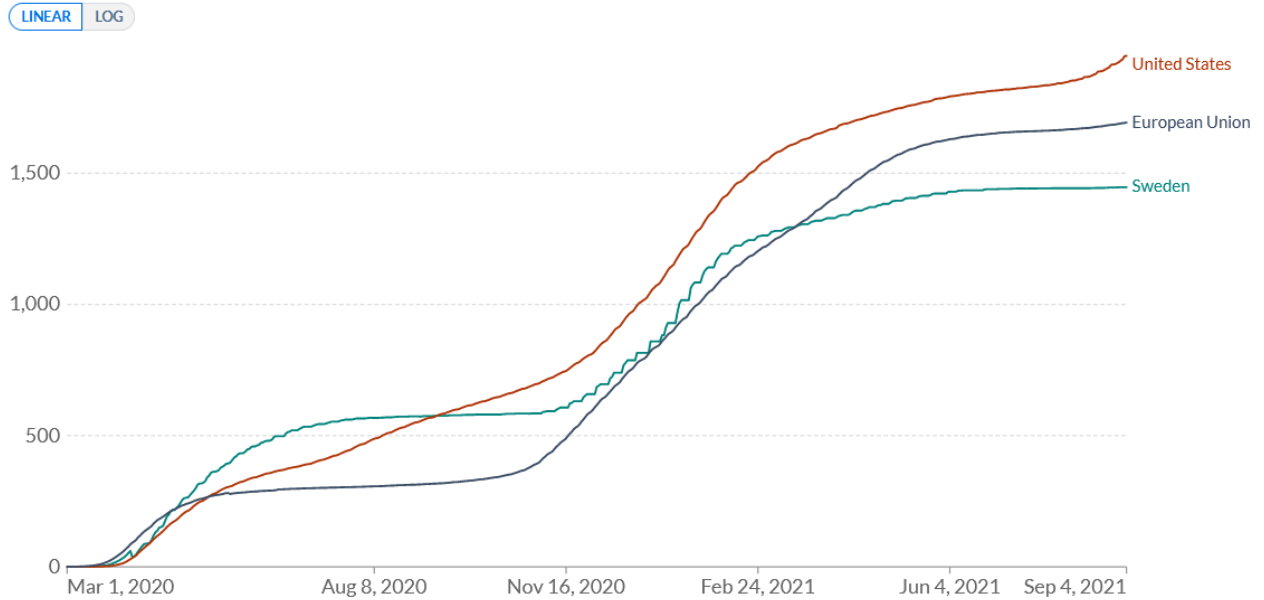
FIGURE 1. Pneumonia and influenza mortality by age in certain epidemic years. (From Dauer and Serfling (17).)

Sources: 2020: SPR based on CDC data; 1892-1957: W. Paul Glezen (1996)

Covid vs. flu pandemics (S)

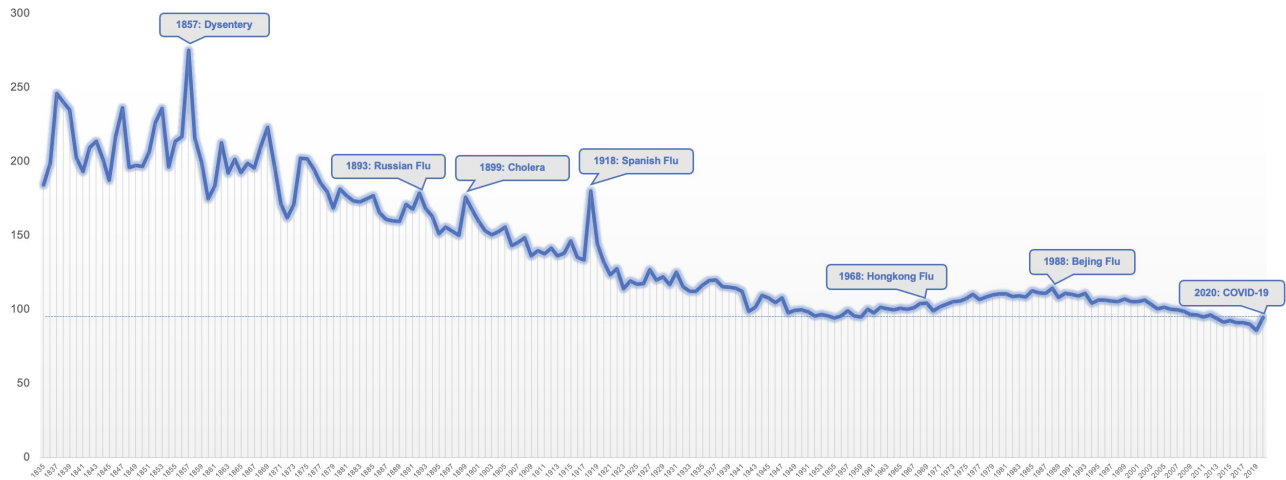
Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

Limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death means that the number of confirmed deaths may not be an accurate count of the true number of deaths from COVID-19.



Covid mortality in Sweden, the EU, and the US (S)

Deaths per 10,000 Population

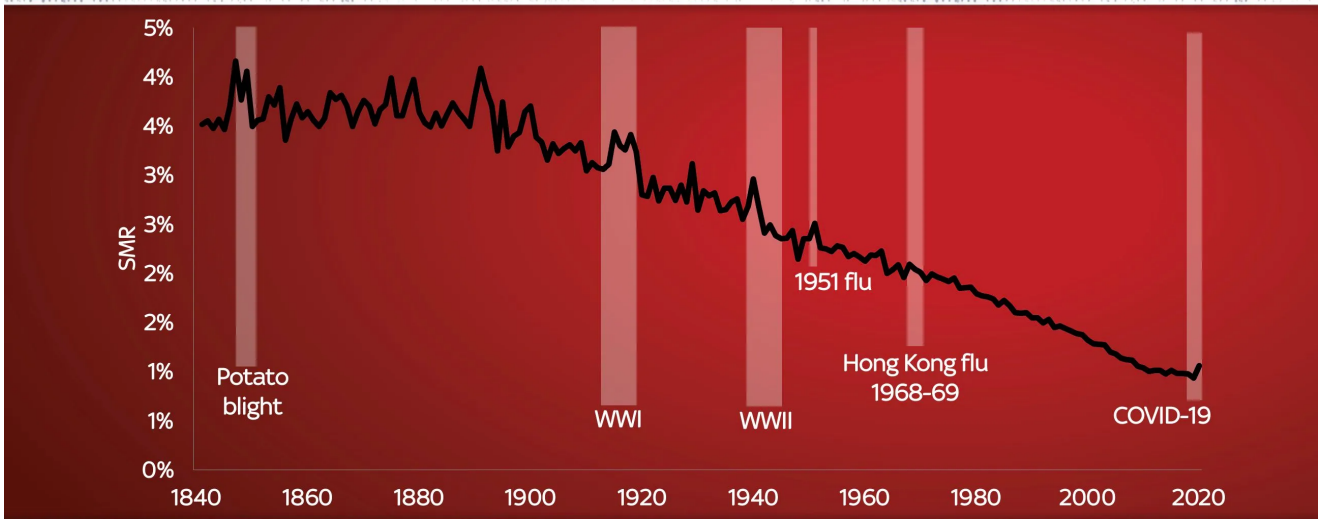


Source: <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/yearly-statistics--the-whole-country/population-and-population-changes/>

Date: 01.03.2021

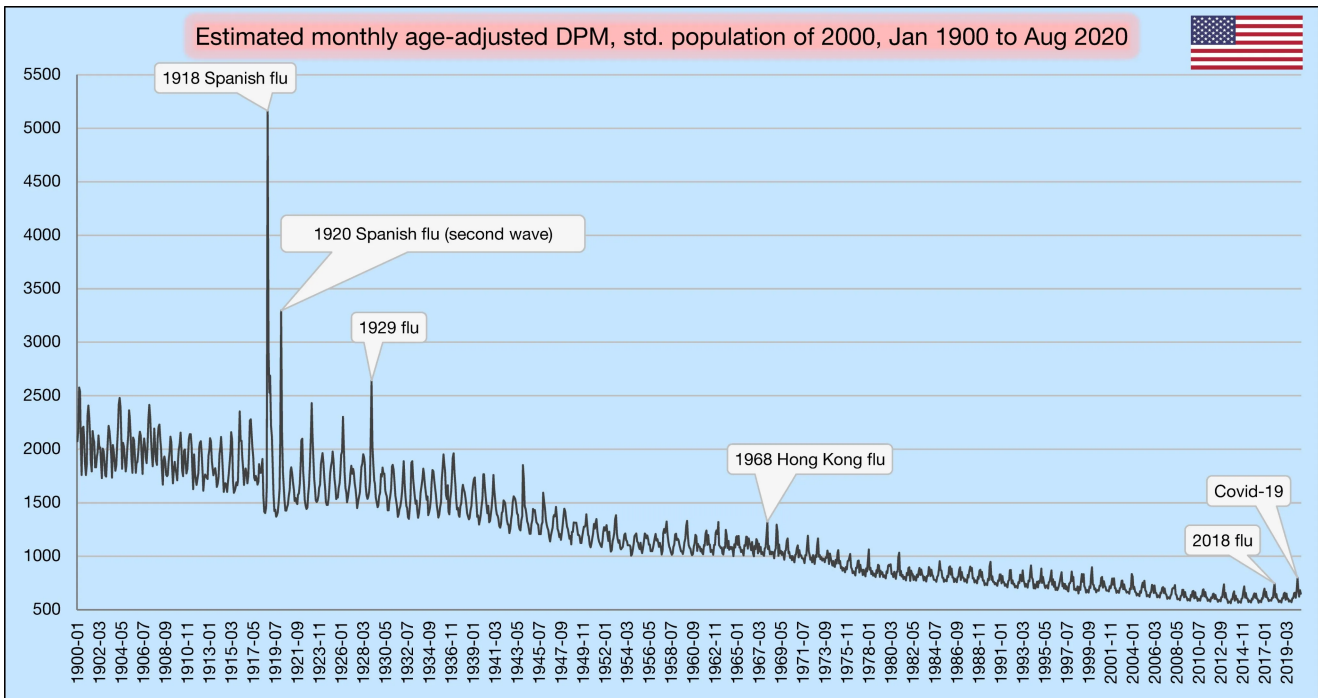
Sweden: Mortality since 1835 (S)

ENGLAND & WALES MORTALITY RATE: 1841-2020

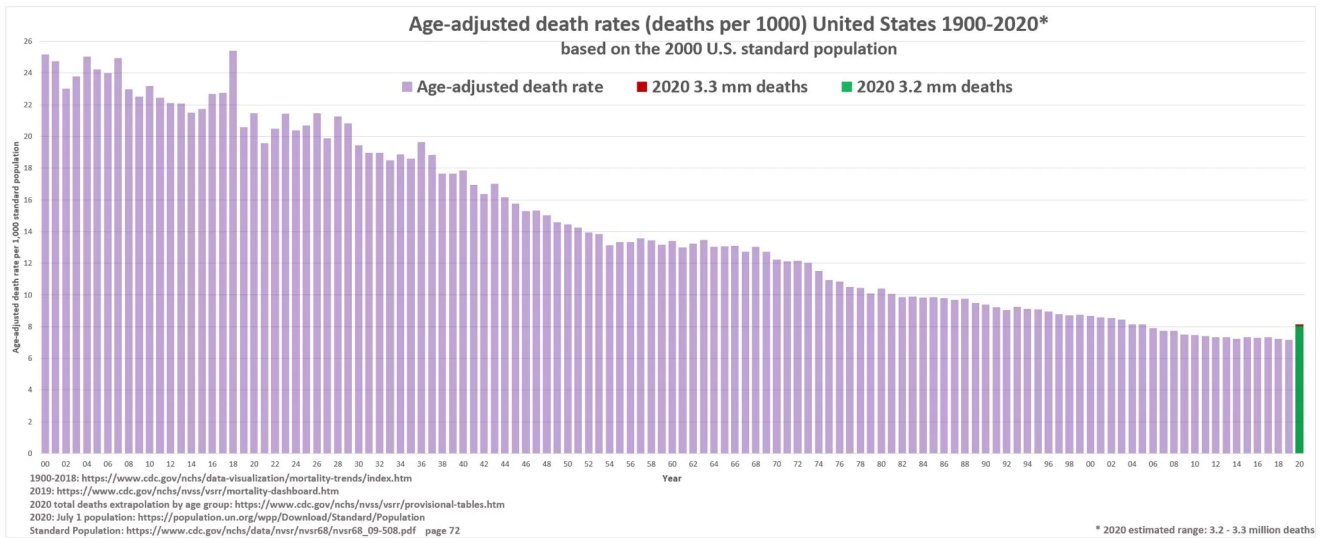


SOURCE: SKY/ONS/CMI

UK: Mortality since 1842, age-adjusted (S)



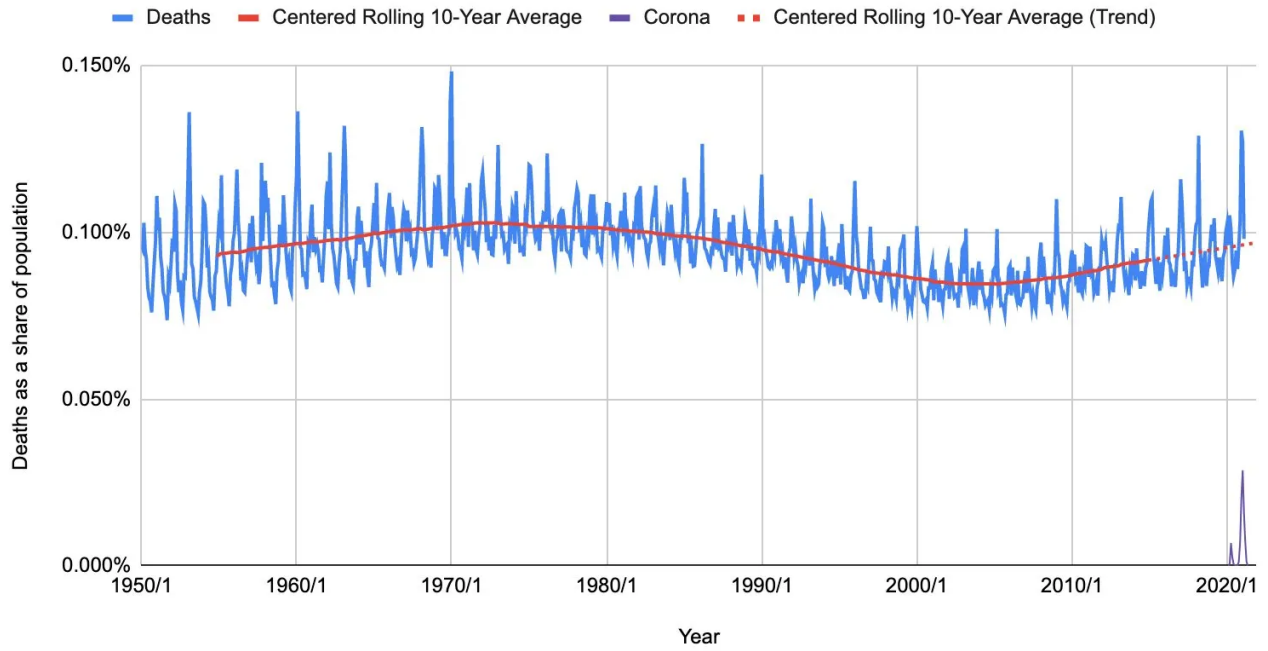
US: Monthly age-adjusted mortality (S)



US: Yearly age-adjusted mortality (S)

Monthly Deaths in Germany

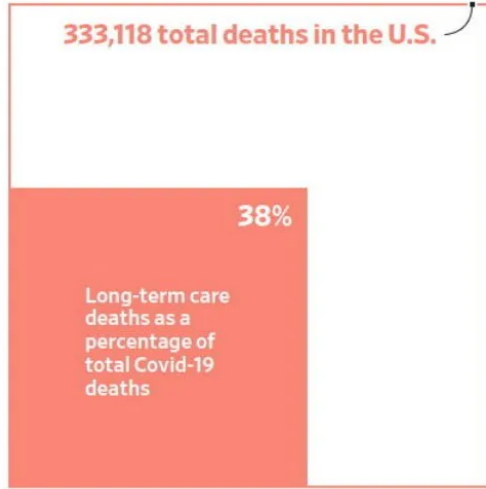
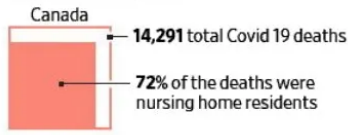
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Worldometer, Statista



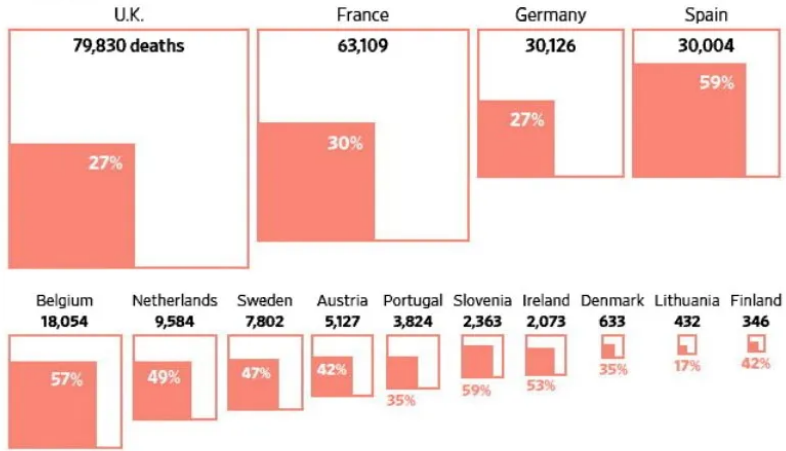
Germany: Monthly mortality s. 1950 (S)

Covid-19 has been particularly devastating for residents of long-term care facilities, who represent small fractions of overall populations but huge shares of coronavirus deaths.

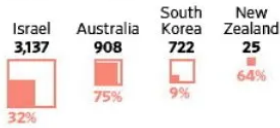
NORTH AMERICA



EUROPE



ASIA and OCEANIA

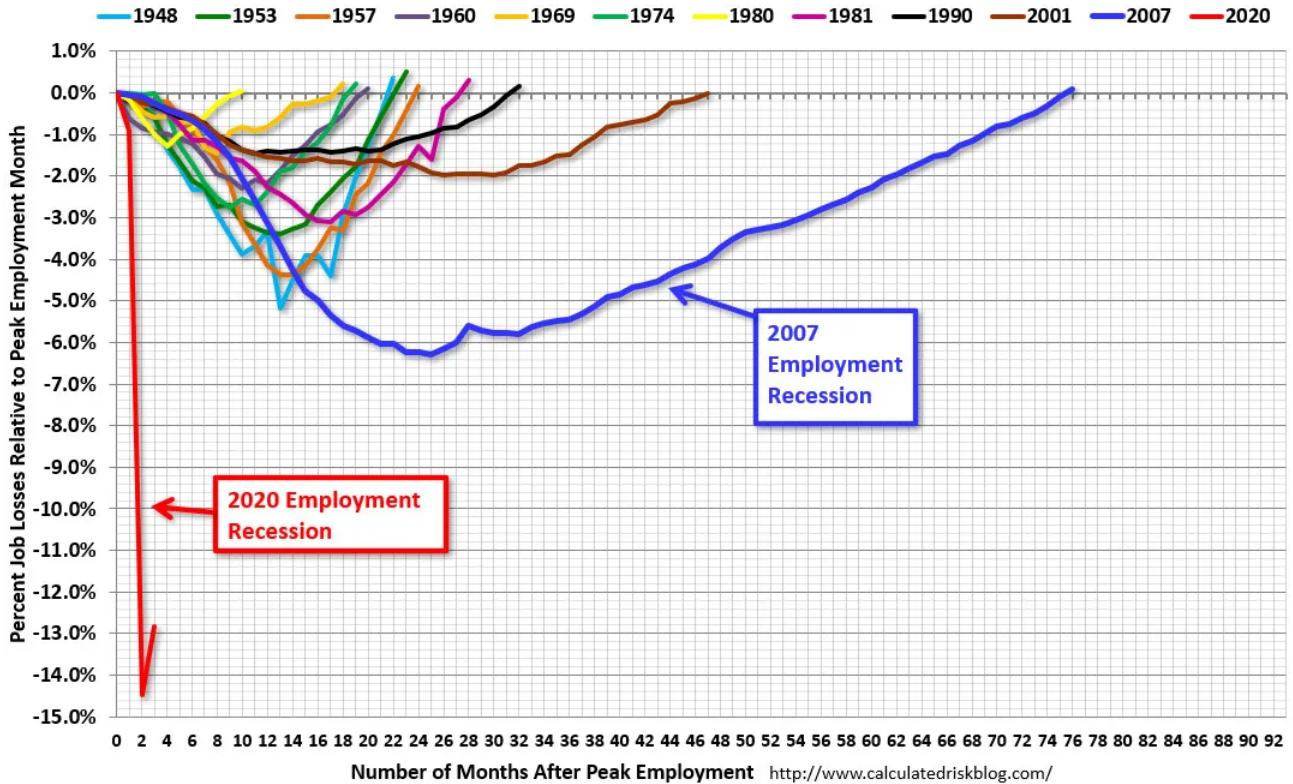


Note: Select countries. National definitions of long-term care and standards for counting the deaths of residents from these facilities often differ. Data from most countries is from late November or more recently; exceptions include Spain, Denmark and Finland, where as-of dates are Sept. 15, Sept. 21 and Oct. 8, respectively. Reporting on U.S. long-term care numbers lag overall Covid-19 death reporting.

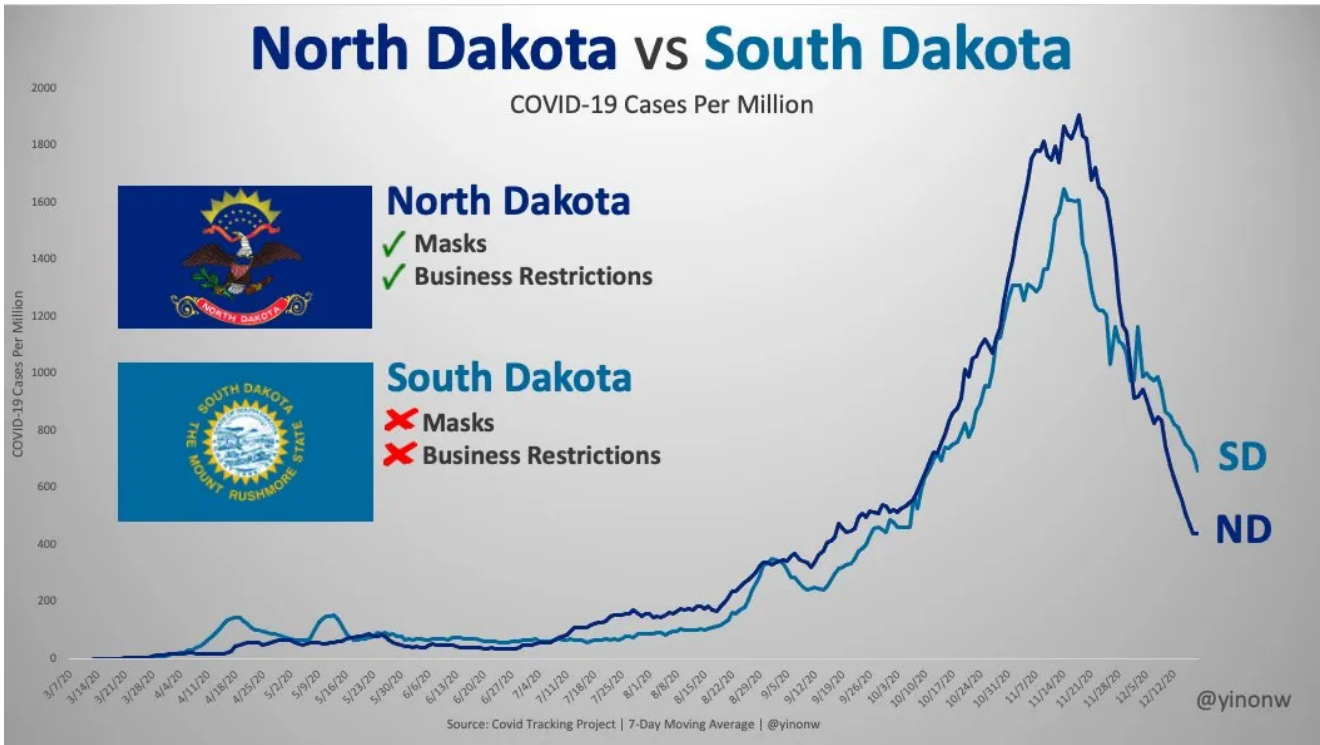
Sources: WSJ analysis of data from national and local health and infectious disease authorities; National Institute on Ageing in Canada; Johns Hopkins University

Percentage of care home deaths (S)

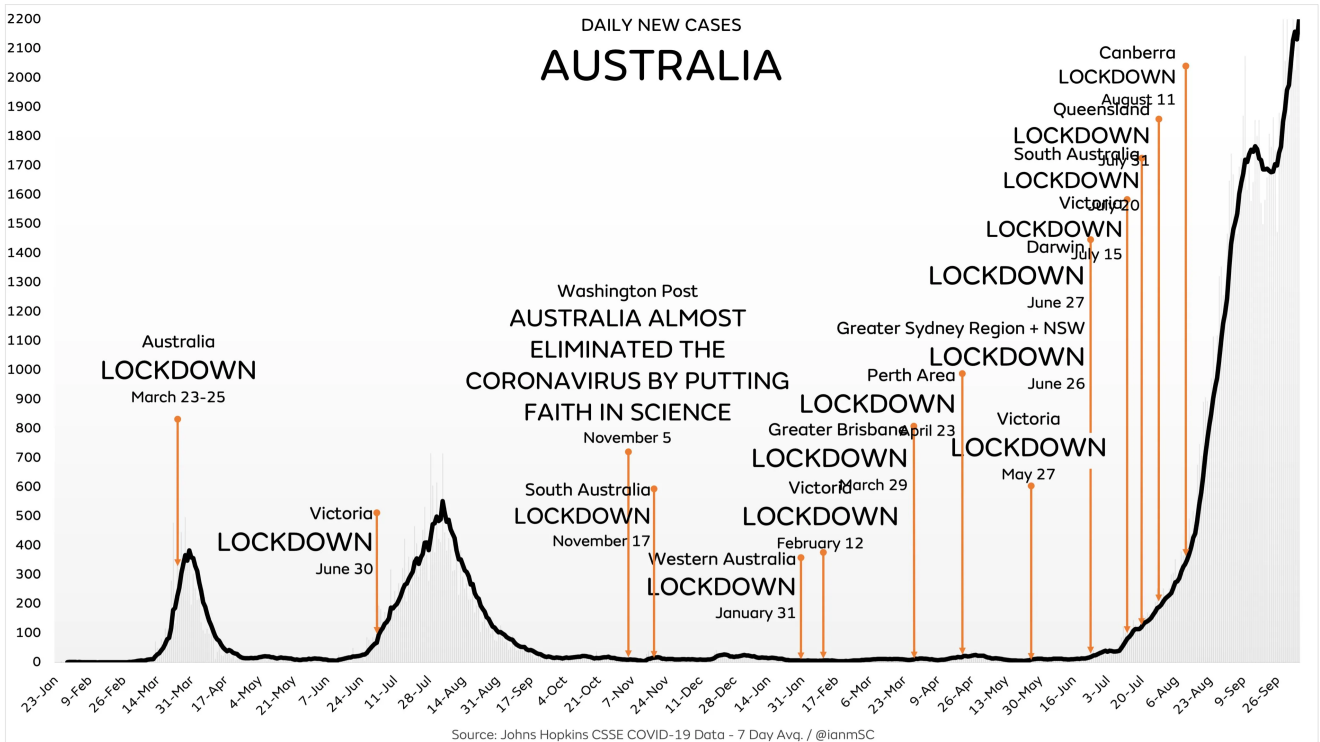
Percent Job Losses in Post WWII Recessions



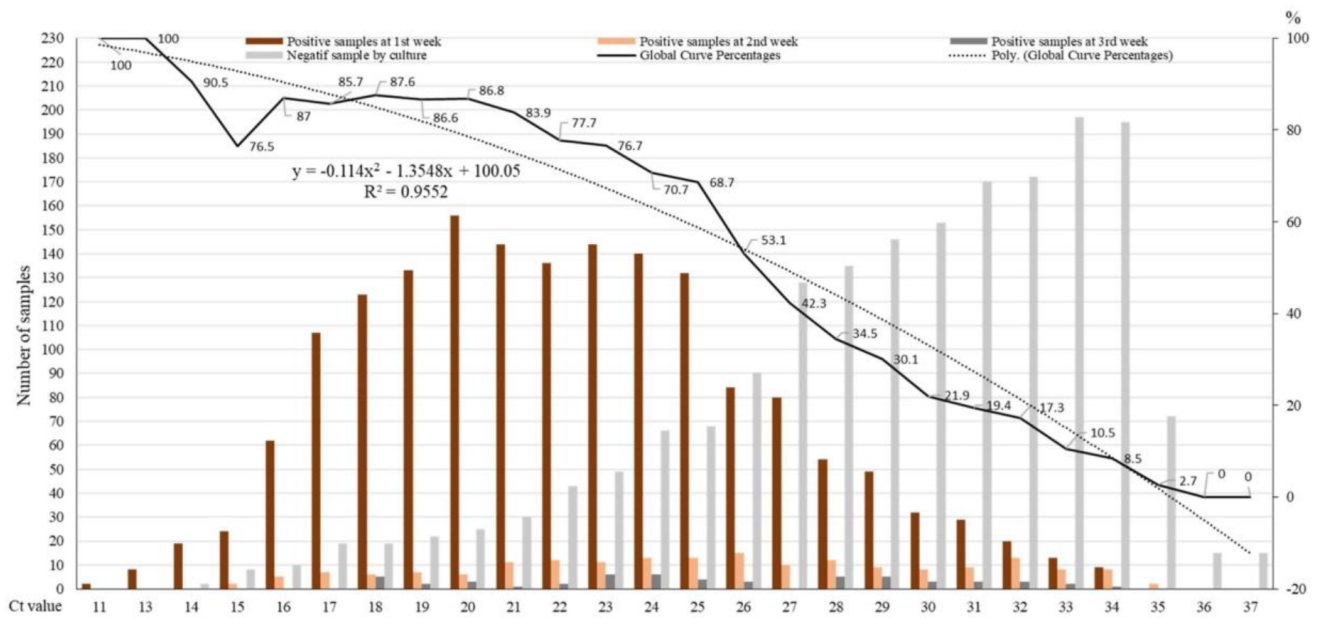
US recessions in comparison (S)



North Dakota vs. South Dakota (S)



Lockdowns in Australia (S)



PCR tests: Sensitivity vs. Infectiousness (S)

Case rates in Israel have recently climbed almost as quickly among people with **two doses** as among the **unvaccinated**

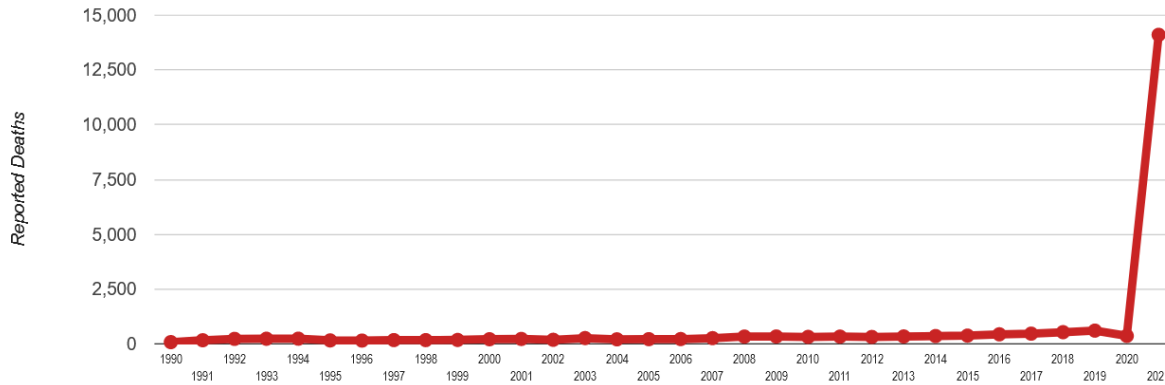
Cases per 100,000 people aged 60+, by vaccination status



Source: Israeli Ministry of Health
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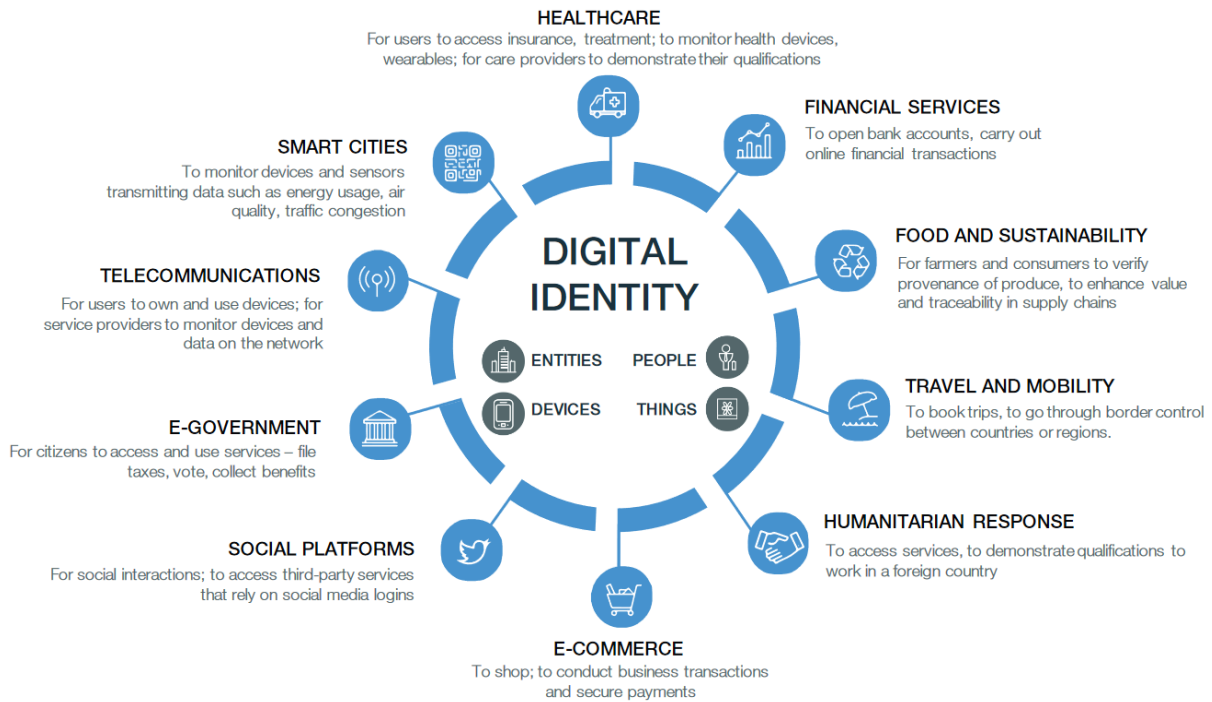
Infections in Israel (S)

All Deaths Reported to VAERS by Year



Post-vaccination deaths, USA, 1990-2021 (S)

Figure 1: Identity in everyday lives



Digital Identity (S)