

Annual  
Report

2021

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Jefferson County  
Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office



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## Introduction

The Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) was notified by law enforcement agencies and medical facilities of approximately 93% of the deaths that occurred in Jefferson County. Pursuant to State of Alabama, 45-37-60, (Act 79-454, p. 739, §1-10) notification is made when there is suspicion of criminal violence or criminal neglect, when death occurs in suspicious or unusual circumstances, when deaths are thought to result from trauma or violence, in any prison or penal institution, when in police custody, or deaths due to disease constituting a hazard to public health when requested in writing by the County Health Officer.



The Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office is fully accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners [www.thename.org](http://www.thename.org).



American Board of  
Medicolegal Death Investigators

The JCCMEO deputy coroner investigators are certified through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators [www.abmdi.org](http://www.abmdi.org).

## Mission

The mission of the Coroner/Medical Examiner office is to establish the identity of human remains and to determine the cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding death in sudden and unexpected deaths occurring within Jefferson County, Alabama.

## Death Statistics

This report contains aggregate data of the cases investigated by this office. This report does not contain data on all deaths that occurred within Jefferson County, but rather only those deaths that were investigated by the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office.

You can visit the Alabama Department of Public Health website to obtain data on all deaths that occurred within Jefferson County, Alabama [www.adph.org/healthstats](http://www.adph.org/healthstats).

## Death Certificates

The Coroner's Office cannot provide copies of death certificates; death certificates must be obtained through the Jefferson County Department of Health or the State of Alabama Vital Records office.

Jefferson County Department of Health  
1400 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35233  
(205) 933-9110  
<http://www.jcdh.org>

State of Alabama Vital Records  
P.O. Box 5625  
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5625  
(334) 206-5418  
[www.adph.org/vitalrecords](http://www.adph.org/vitalrecords)

## History



Jefferson County operated under an elected coroner system since the county's inception in 1819 until 1931. In a coroner system the County Coroner was elected to office by the citizens of Jefferson County and was typically a lay person with no formal training in medicolegal death investigation.

On May 27, 1931, the office of County Coroner was abolished by Act of State Legislature. The office was subsequently reestablished with the position of County Coroner being an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and not an elected position by the citizens of the county. The Act referred to the coroner as the "Agent, County Commission, as Coroner".

In January 1977, by Act of State Legislature, the office of County Coroner and the coroner system in Jefferson County was abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) was established. This was the end of the coroner system and the beginning of the medical examiner system in Jefferson County. The new law required the Coroner/Medical Examiner of Jefferson County to be a board-certified forensic pathologist.

On July 26, 1979, pursuant to State of Alabama Act 79-454, the office of County Coroner in Jefferson County was once again abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) as it is known today was established. As with the previous Act, the new Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner Act set forth that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be a board-certified forensic pathologist. The act also established a new regulatory commission, the "Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Commission", to promulgate rules and regulations governing the reviews and investigations of the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office and the conditions upon which such investigations shall be conducted. The act also retained in the office all the authority vested in coroners by the state laws of Alabama.

The Coroner retained a physical office on the second floor of the [Jefferson County Courthouse](#) and at the [Bessemer Courthouse](#) until 1977, when at that time both offices were consolidated and moved to its current location at [Cooper Green Mercy Health Services](#).

## Medicolegal Death Investigation



A medicolegal death investigation is an official investigation or inquest into the manner, cause, and circumstances surrounding death. As it applies a medicolegal death investigation is a combination of medicine and law, with a purpose to answer the questions of death. The answers obtained in these investigations can assist with criminal and civil litigation, insurance claims, the distribution of estates, and the health and safety of the public. These investigations are performed by trained medicolegal death investigators (MDIs) and can represent multiple different disciplines. The MDI investigators can be a coroner, deputy coroner, forensic pathologist, morgue technologist, forensic odontologist, forensic anthropologist, forensic toxicologist, or a criminalist.

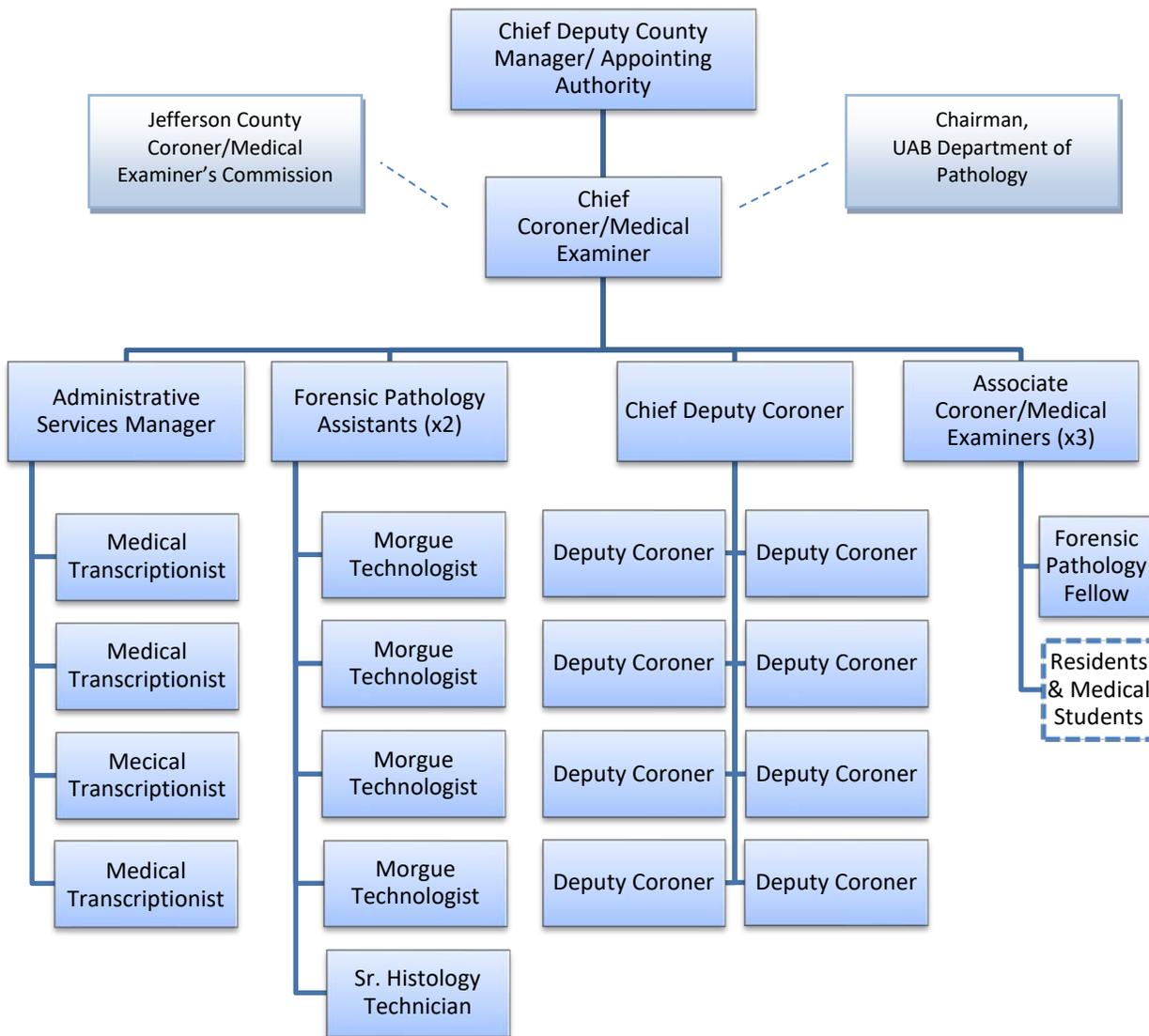
At the JCCMEO these investigations are begun by deputy coroners who are formally trained MDIs. When a death is reported to the JCCMEO it is the responsibility of the deputy coroner to determine if the death falls under the statutory jurisdiction of the JCCMEO and if so, will jurisdiction be assumed or declined. Pursuant to State of Alabama Code 11-5-35 (*Act 2006-581, p. 1527, §6.*) the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office only has the authority to certify a death if the offense, occurrence, or incident that ultimately resulted in the death occurred within the geographical boundaries of Jefferson County, Alabama. Therefore, if the sequence of events that ultimately resulted in the death began in a county or state other than Jefferson County, Alabama then the coroner's office of that county should be notified of the death.

Declined Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction is declined if investigators (i.e., law enforcement, paramedics, and/or medical staff, and the deputy coroner) find no signs of foul play, injury, and/or evidence of current substance abuse associated with the death and if the decedent has a documented significant medical history and is currently under the care of a primary care physician.

Assumed Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction is assumed if there is suspicion of criminal violence or criminal neglect, when death occurs in suspicious or unusual circumstances, when deaths are thought to result from trauma or violence, in any prison or penal institution, when in police custody, or a death due to disease constituting a hazard to public health when requested in writing by the County Health Officer.

If jurisdiction is to be assumed a deputy coroner in most cases responds to the scene of the death to begin the investigation. The decedent is transported from the scene to the JCCMEO for examination, which is usually completed within 24 hours from the time of death by one of the forensic pathologists on staff. An examination/autopsy is necessary to accurately determine cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding the death, so to satisfy statutory requirements, for the good of public health, and to assist with potential civil and criminal litigation. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the death and the evidence that is needed to substantiate the death an autopsy may not be performed in every case, but rather a less invasive external examination is performed. The final examination/autopsy report is usually available 4-6 weeks after the date of death.

## Organizational Chart



## Section 1: Summary Data

### 2020-2021 Comparison

Table 1.1: Previous year comparison data and percentage of change.

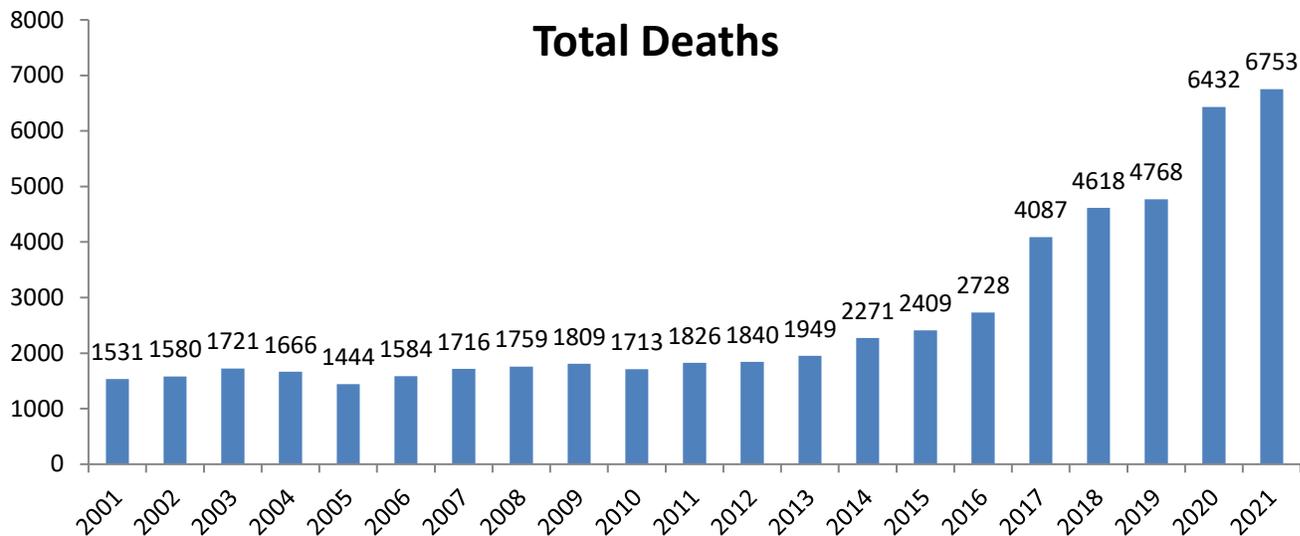
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>%</b>
Total deaths reported to the JCCMEO:	6,432	6,753	+4.9
Jurisdiction Assumed:	1,142	1,228	+7.5
Accident	490	581	+18.5
Homicide	187	216	+15.5
Natural	349	308	-11.7
Suicide	94	94	0
Undetermined	22	28	+27.2
Pending	0	0	0
Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	0	1	+100
Human tissue <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0
Jurisdiction Declined:	3,969	3,793	-4.4
Natural Causes	1,770	1,959	+10.6
Hospice	1,968	1,577	-15.8
Safekeeping	226	253	+11.9
Non-human	5	8	+60
Cremation Permits	2,392	2,835	+18.5
Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases:	229	246	+7.4
Total bodies transported by JCCMEO:	1,368	1,481	+8.2
Examination	1,142	1,228	+7.5
Safekeeping	226	253	+11.9
Total Examinations:	1,142	1,228	+7.5
Autopsies	725	825	+13.8
External Examination	417	403	-3.4
No examination performed	0	0	0
Organ/Tissue procurements:			
Organ/Tissue	19	12	-36.8
Corneas	25	20	-20
Toxicology performed:			
Yes	1,078	1,170	+8.5
No	64	58	-9.4
Total scenes visited by investigators:	605	682	+12.7
Unclaimed bodies (county burials):	97	122	+25.7
Unidentified remains (cumulative total):	55	54	-1.8

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to State of Alabama Vital Records rules, stillborn deaths are not assigned a manner of death.

<sup>2</sup> Tissue of no forensic value.

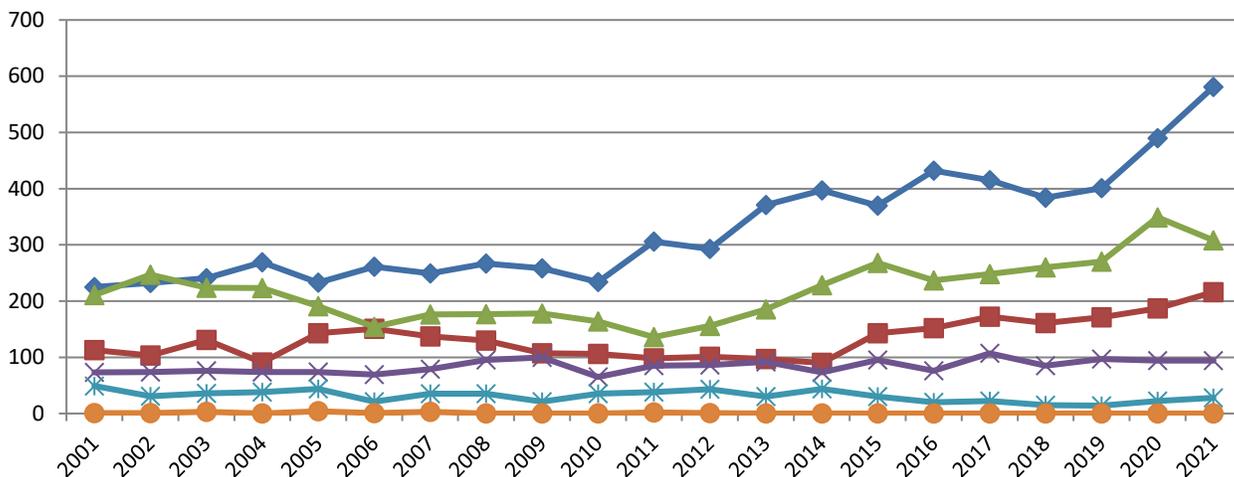
### Historical Summary: Year of Death, 2001-2021

Figure 1.1: represents the total number of deaths reported to the JCCMEO by year of death.



### Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2001-2021

Figure 1.2: represents the total number of cases by manner of death, includes only Assumed cases.



	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Accident	225	232	241	269	233	261	249	267	258	234	306	293	371	397	370	432	415	384	401	490	581
Homicide	113	103	131	91	143	151	137	130	107	106	98	101	97	90	143	152	172	161	171	187	216
Natural	211	247	224	223	191	154	176	177	178	164	136	156	185	228	268	237	248	260	270	349	308
Suicide	73	74	76	74	74	69	79	95	100	65	85	86	92	73	95	76	107	85	97	94	94
Undetermined	49	31	36	38	44	21	35	35	21	35	38	43	30	44	30	20	22	15	14	22	28
Pending	1	1	3	0	4	1	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Section 2: 2021 Total Case Data

### General Statistics and Notable Trends

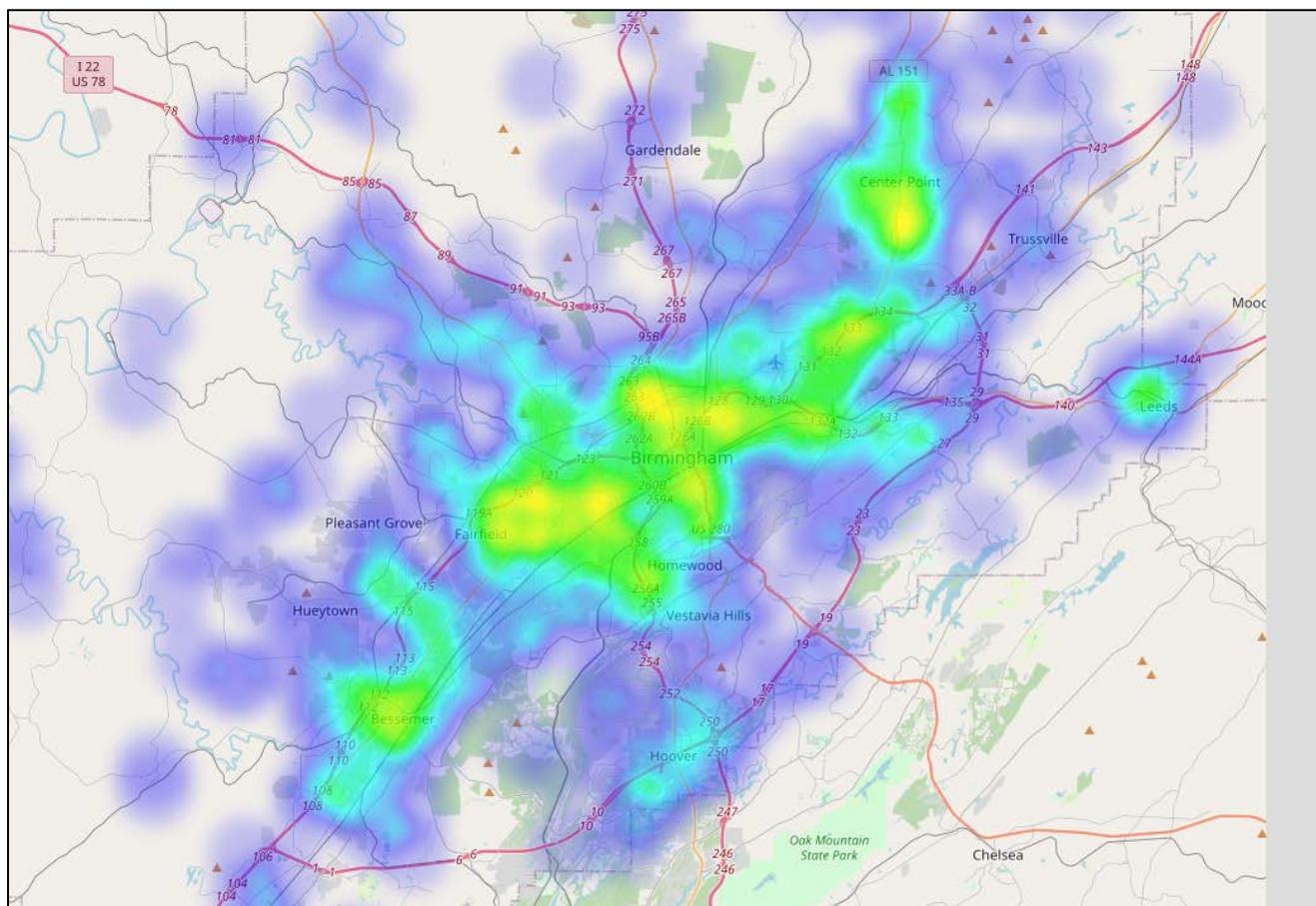
There was a 4.9% increase in the total number of deaths reported to the JCCMEO this past year, from 6,432 deaths in 2020 to 6,753 deaths in 2021.

There was a 7.5% increase in the total number of deaths where jurisdiction was assumed, from 1,142 cases in 2020 to 1,228 cases in 2021.

The total number of accident, homicide, and undetermined deaths examined by the JCCMEO increased in 2021 compared to 2020; while natural deaths decreased and there was no change in suicide deaths.

### Total Assumed Cases by Place of Death, 2021

Figure 2.1: N=1,228, represents total Assumed cases reported by place of death.



### Total Deaths Reported by Law Enforcement Agency and Jurisdiction, 2021

Table 2.1: N=2,440, represents the total deaths reported to the JCCMEO by type of jurisdiction.

<u>Law Enforcement Agency</u>	<u>Assumed</u>	<u>Declined</u>	<u>Safekeeping</u>	<u>Non-human</u>	<u>Total</u>
ALEA – State Bureau of Investigations	4	0	0	0	4
ALEA – State Troopers	23	0	0	0	23
Alabama Department of Corrections - LES	28	0	0	0	28
Adamsville Police Department	13	8	1	0	22
Argo Police Department	0	0	1	0	1
Bessemer Police Department	83	55	16	0	154
Birmingham Police Department	590	380	137	5	1,112
Brighton Police Department	3	5	1	0	9
Brookside Police Department	2	1	0	0	3
Fairfield Police Department <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
Fultondale Police Department	8	3	0	0	11
Gardendale Police Department	9	15	3	0	27
Graysville Police Department	7	3	2	0	12
Helena Police Department	1	0	1	0	2
Homewood Police Department	20	23	6	0	49
Hoover Police Department	46	35	13	1	95
Hueytown Police Department	19	23	1	0	43
Irondale Police Department	24	17	2	0	43
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	244	268	38	2	552
Kimberly Police Department	2	1	0	0	3
Leeds Police Department	18	12	1	0	31
Lipscomb Police Department	1	1	0	0	2
Midfield Police Department	14	9	0	0	23
Morris Police Department	3	5	0	0	8
Mountain Brook Police Department	9	8	0	0	17
Pleasant Grove Police Department	4	12	14	0	30
Tarrant Police Department	18	8	3	0	29
Trafford Police Department	0	1	0	0	1
Trussville Police Department	12	17	1	0	30
UAB Police Department	2	0	0	0	2
Vestavia Hills Police Department	12	37	9	0	58
Warrior Police Department	9	4	3	0	16
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1,228</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,440</b>

<sup>3</sup> The City of Fairfield no longer has a police department, with law enforcement services provided by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

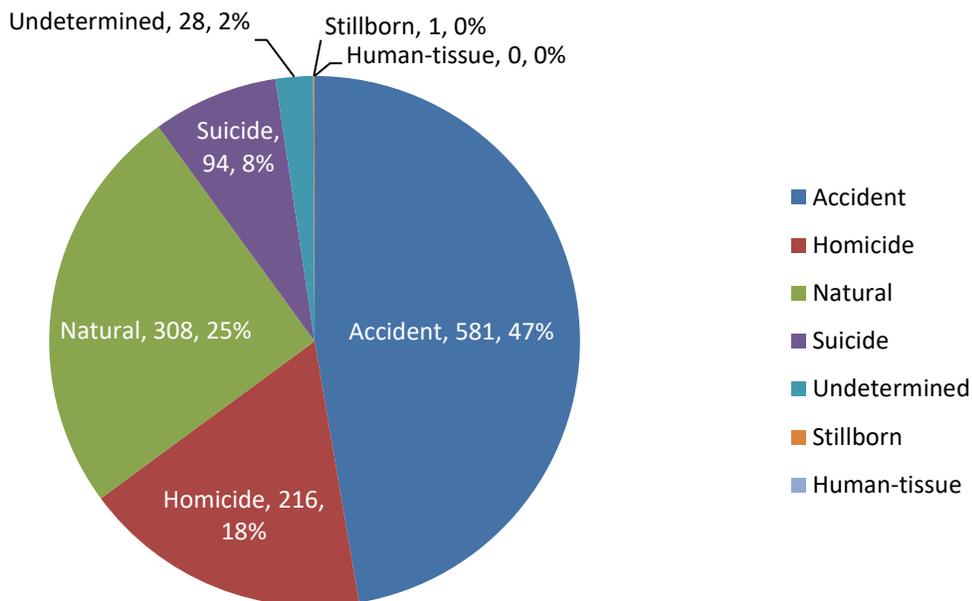
### Total Assumed Cases by Law Enforcement Agency and Manner of Death, 2021

Table 2.2: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by law enforcement agency and manner of death.

<u>Law Enforcement Agency</u>	<u>Accident</u>	<u>Homicide</u>	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Suicide</u>	<u>Undetermined</u>	<u>Stillborn<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Human Tissue<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Total</u>
ALEA - State Bureau of Investigation	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
ALEA – State Troopers	22	0	1	0	0	0	0	23
Alabama Dept. of Corrections - LES	8	2	16	1	1	0	0	28
Adamsville Police Department	6	1	5	1	0	0	0	13
Argo Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bessemer Police Department	33	29	16	2	3	0	0	83
Birmingham Police Department	280	129	132	36	12	1	0	590
Brighton Police Department	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Brookside Police Department	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Fairfield Police Department <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fultondale Police Department	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	8
Gardendale Police Department	4	0	2	2	1	0	0	9
Graysville Police Department	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	7
Helena Police Department	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Homewood Police Department	12	4	4	0	0	0	0	20
Hoover Police Department	15	2	16	13	0	0	0	46
Hueytown Police Department	9	0	7	3	0	0	0	19
Irondale Police Department	8	2	8	6	0	0	0	24
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	124	32	64	17	7	0	0	244
Kimberly Police Department	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Leeds Police Department	12	1	4	1	0	0	0	18
Lipscomb Police Department	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Midfield Police Department	10	3	1	0	0	0	0	14
Morris Police Department	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Mountain Brook Police Department	1	0	5	3	0	0	0	9
Pleasant Grove Police Department	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Tarrant Police Department	9	4	3	1	1	0	0	18
Trafford Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trussville Police Department	3	0	6	3	0	0	0	12
UAB Police Department	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Vestavia Hills Police Department	4	0	4	3	1	0	0	12
Warrior Police Department	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	9
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,228</b>

### Percentage of Assumed Cases by Manner of Death, 2021

Figure 2.2: N=1,228, represents number and percentage of cases by manner of death, includes only Assumed jurisdiction.<sup>1,2</sup>



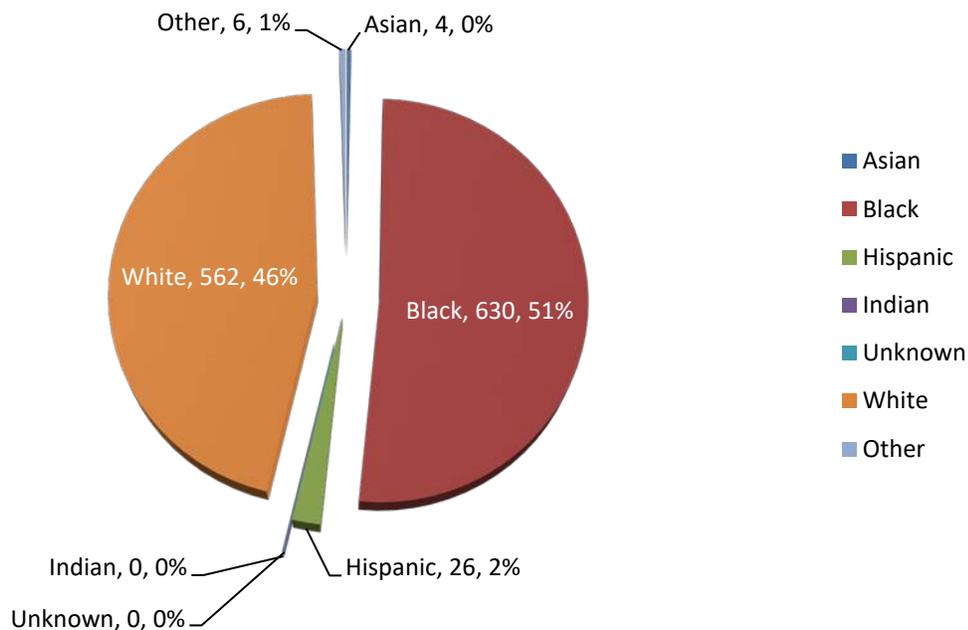
### Total Assumed Cases by Manner of Death and Type of Examination, 2021

Table 2.3: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by manner of death and type of examination performed.

Examination	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	Human-tissue <sup>2</sup>	Total
Autopsy	423 / 73%	214 / 99%	151 / 49%	11 / 12%	26 / 93%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	825
External	158 / 27%	2 / 1%	157 / 51%	83 / 88%	2 / 7%	1 / 100%	0 / 0%	403
No Exam	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,228</b>

### Total Assumed Cases by Race, 2021

Figure 2.3: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by race, with totals and percentages.



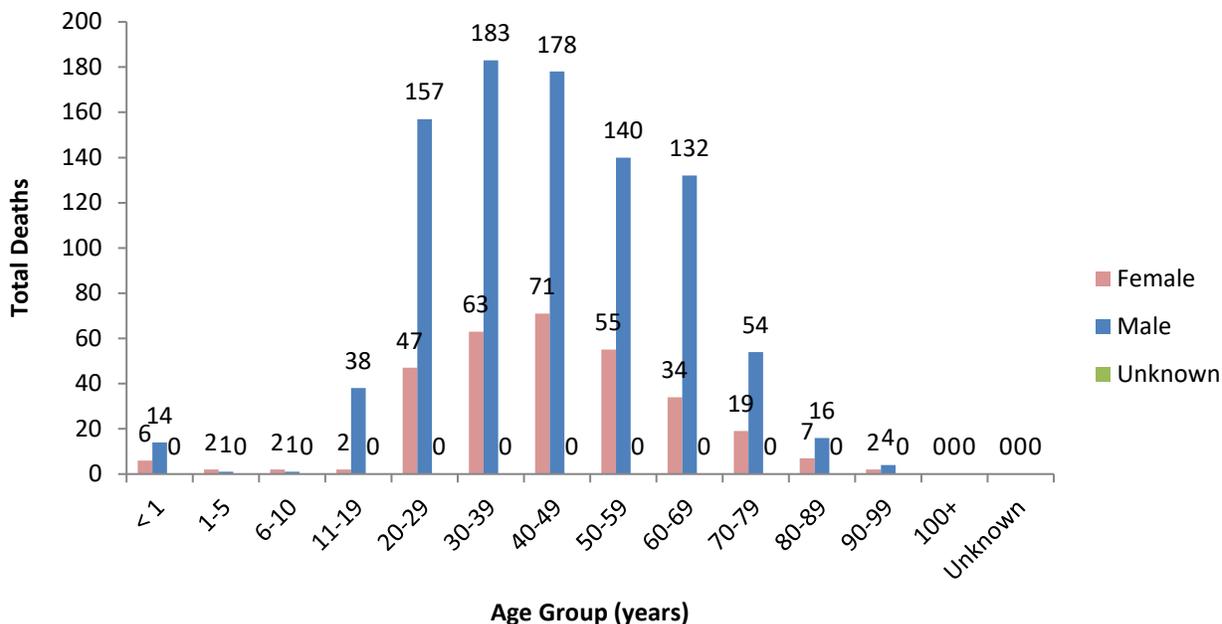
### Total Assumed Cases by Race and Manner of Death, 2021

Table 2.4: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by race and manner of death.

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	Human-tissue <sup>2</sup>	Total
Asian	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4
Black	248	188	153	26	14	1	0	630
Hispanic	11	4	6	3	2	0	0	26
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	6
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	317	23	147	63	12	0	0	562
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,228</b>

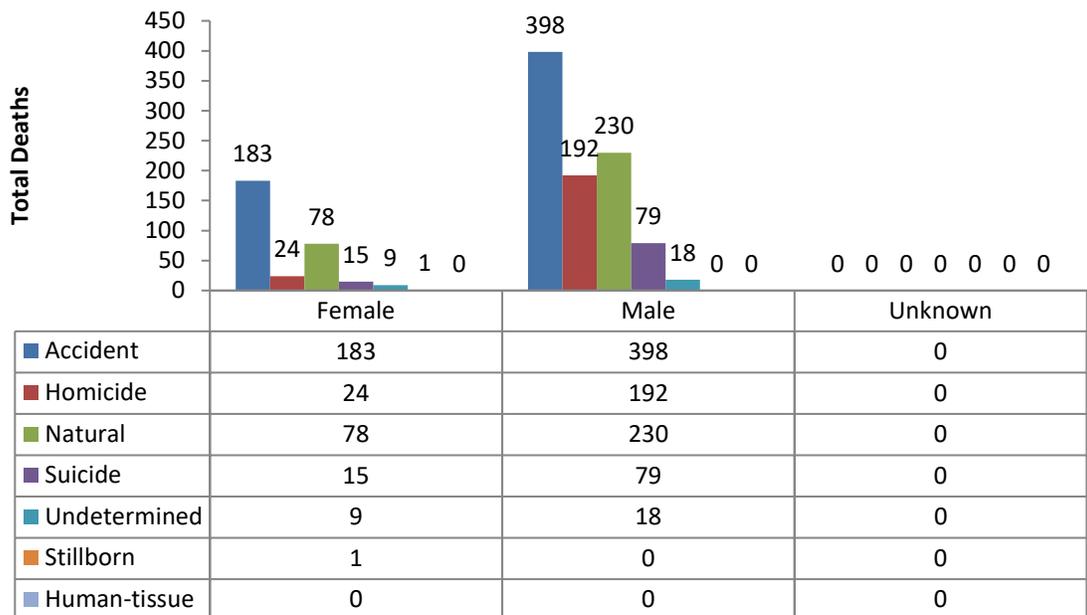
### Total Assumed Cases by Gender and Age Group, 2021

Figure 2.4: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by gender and age group.



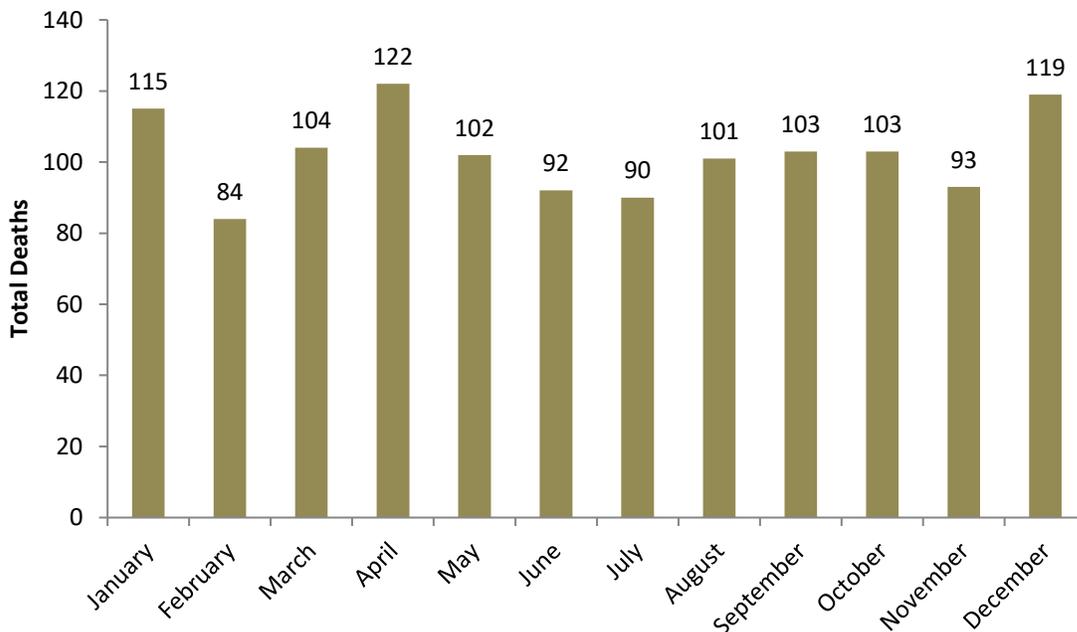
### Total Assumed Cases by Gender and Manner of Death, 2021

Figure 2.5: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by gender and manner of death.<sup>1, 2</sup>



### Total Assumed Cases by Month of Death, 2021

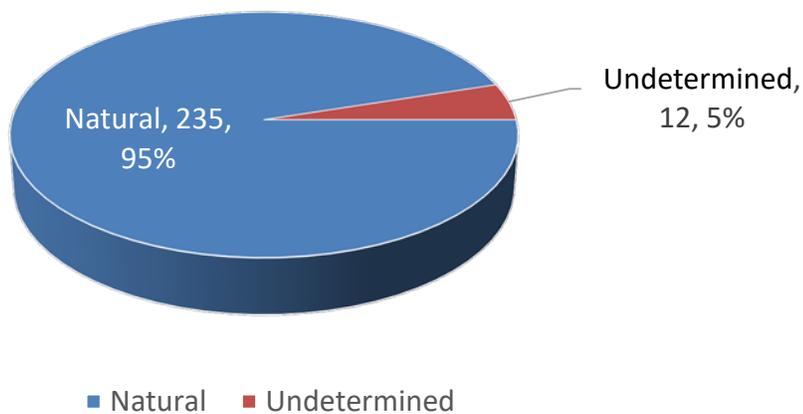
Figure 2.6: N=1,228, represents all Assumed cases by month of death.



### Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases, 2021

Figure 2.7: N=247, represents all death certificate reviews (D.C.R.) of declined jurisdiction cases, by manner of death.

Death Certificate Reviews: Manners of Death



## Section 3: Manner of Death: Assumed Jurisdiction

### Accident

Accidental deaths accounted for 47% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021 and represents the largest percentage of all manners of death.

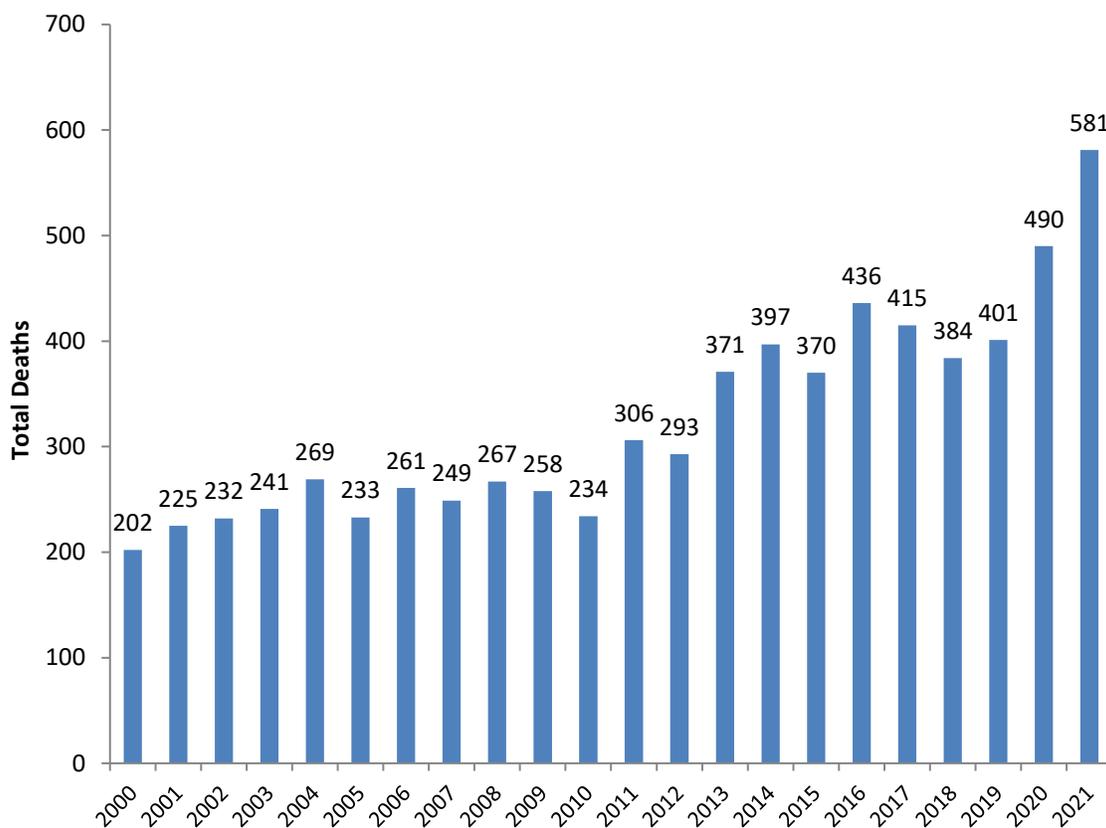
There was a 18.6% increase in the total number of accidental deaths, from 490 deaths in 2020 to 581 deaths in 2021.

Drug deaths were the most common cause of accidental death in 2021 accounting for 69% of the deaths, followed by motor vehicle deaths at 20.8% of the deaths.

The most common race was white representing 54.6% of the accidental deaths, while male was the most common gender representing 68.5% of the accidental deaths.

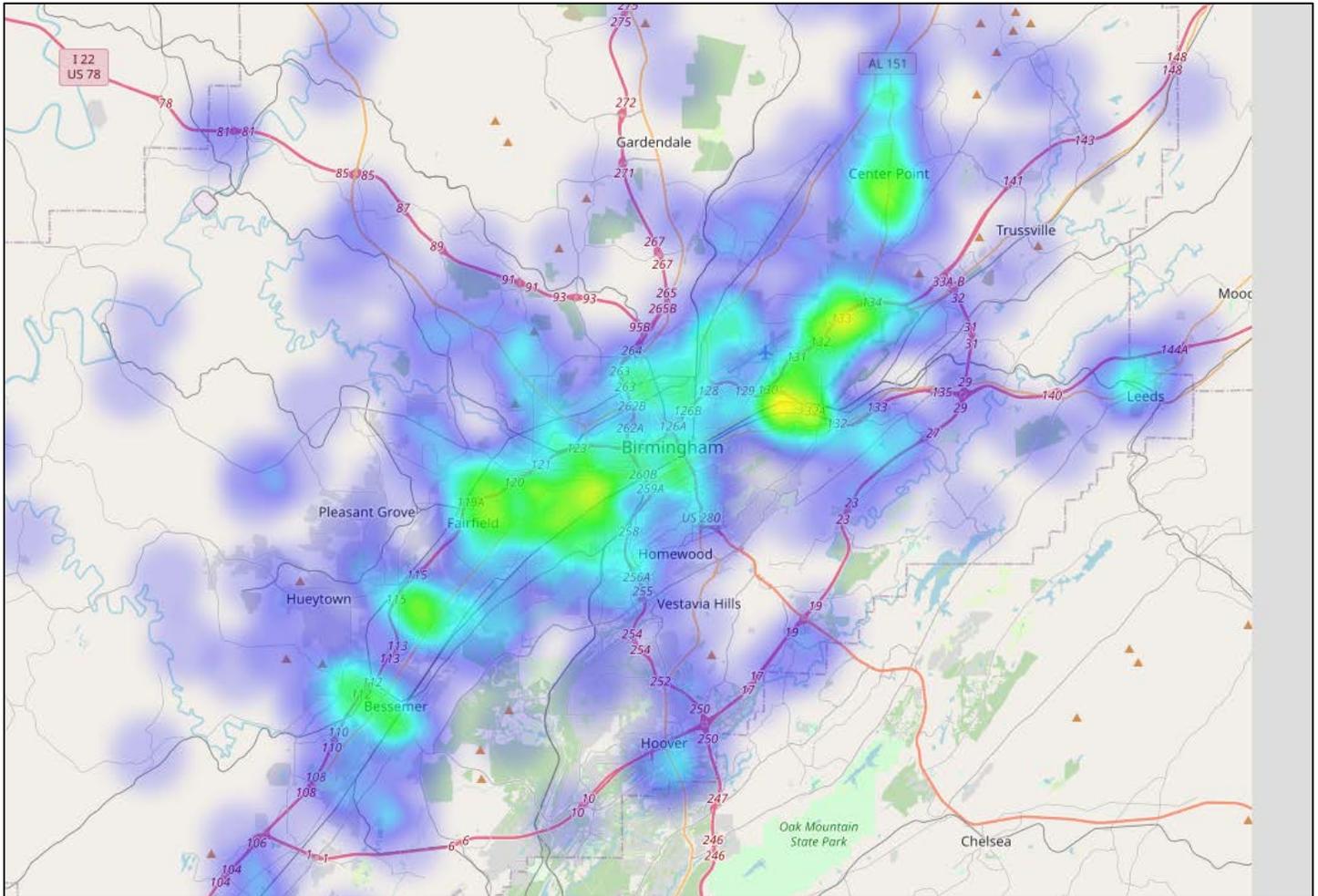
### Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 3.1: represents all accidental deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



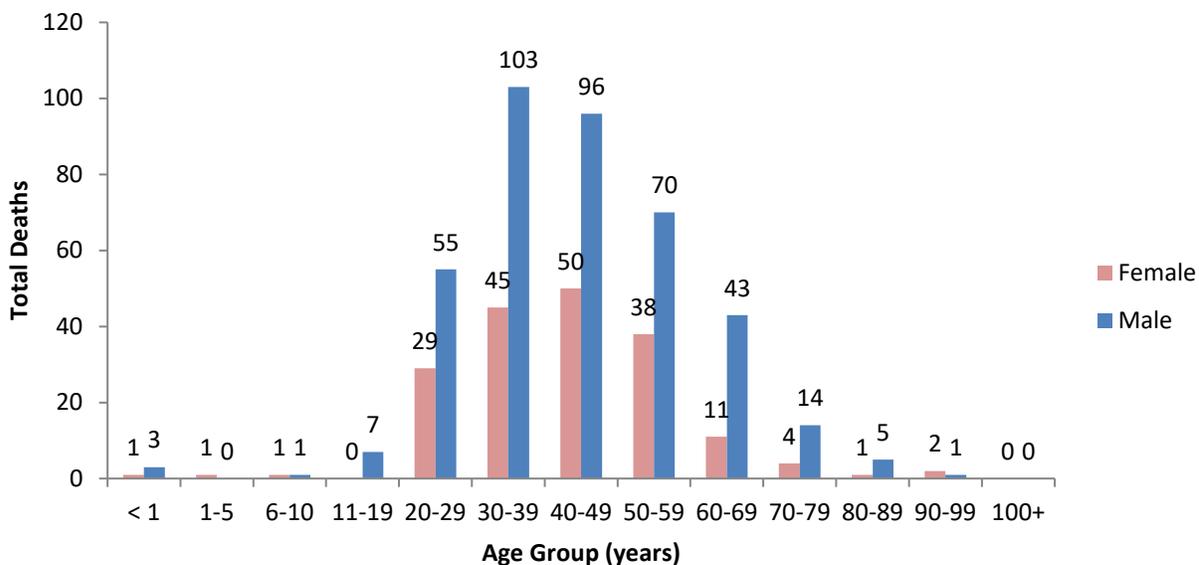
### Total Number of Accidental Deaths Place of Injury, 2021

Figure 3.2: N=581, represents all accidental deaths by place of injury.



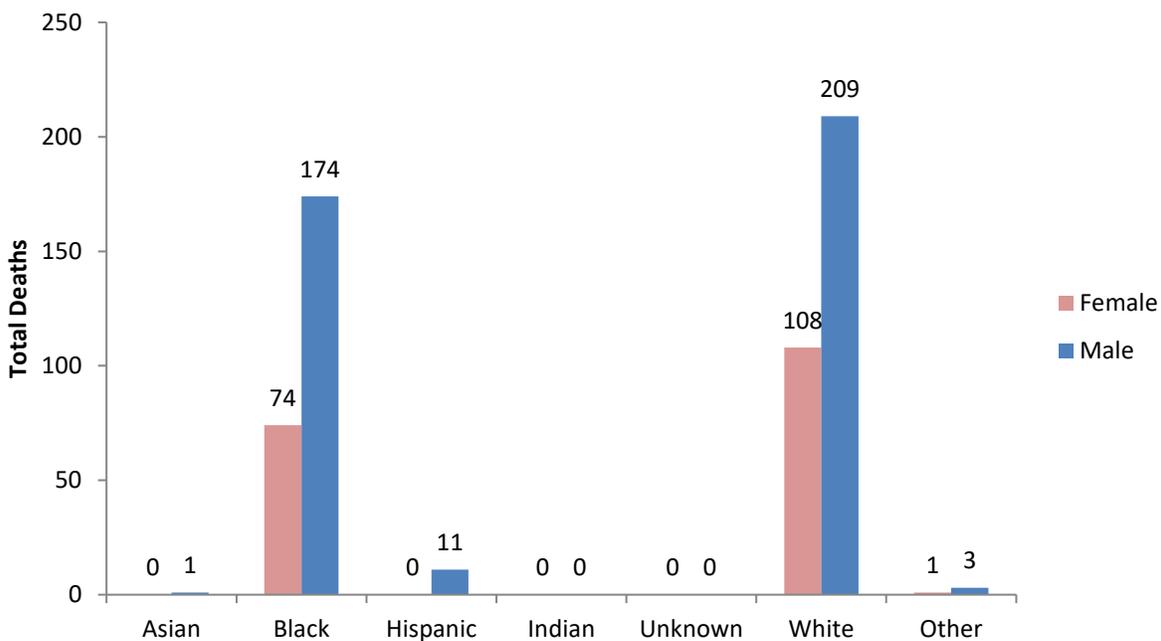
**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021**

Figure 3.3: N=581, represents all accidental deaths by gender and age group.



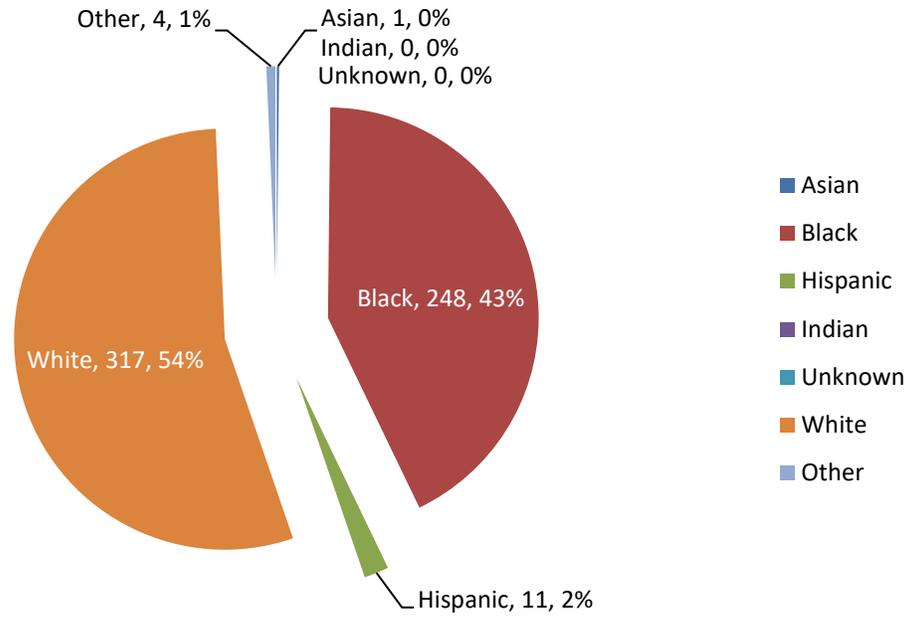
**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 3.4: N=581 represents all accidental deaths by gender and race.



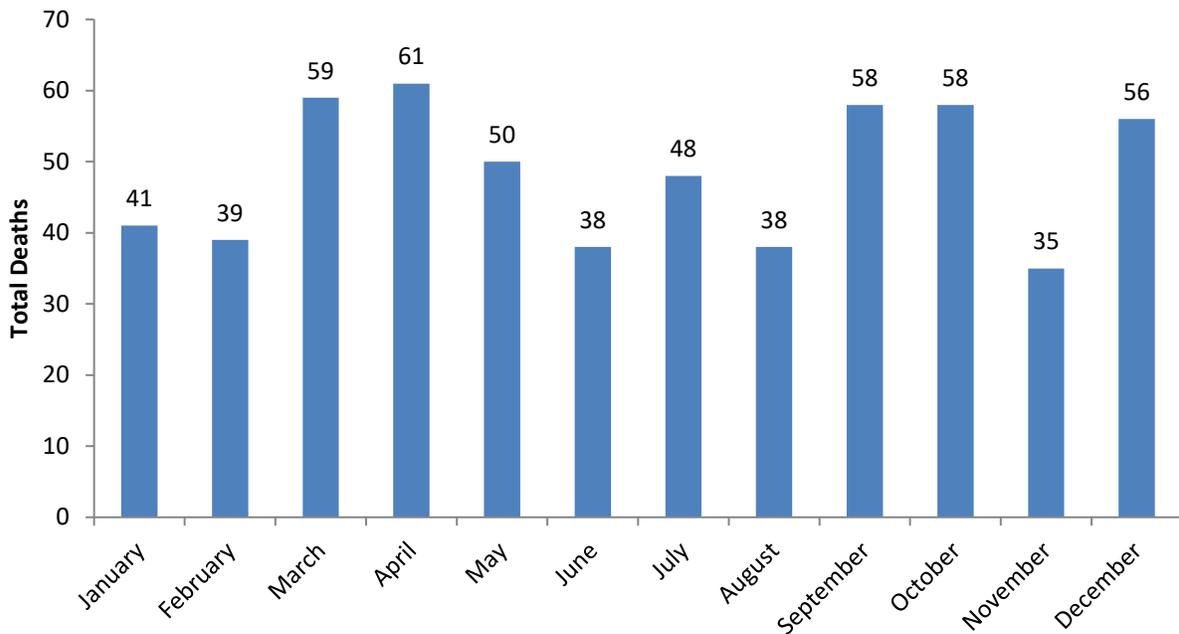
**Percentage of Accidental Deaths by Race, 2021**

Figure 3.5: N=581, represents all accidental deaths by race.



**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Month of Death, 2021**

Figure 3.6: N=581, represents all Accidental deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 3.1: N=581, represents all Accidental deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Food	4
Collapsed floor	1
Door	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	2
Couch	1
Drowning:	
Pool	2
River	2
Drug:	
Opioid	342
Other drugs – Rx and illicit drugs	54
Ethanol (alcohol) – acute toxicity	2
Electrocution: Powerlines	2
Environmental Exposure:	
Hypothermia (cold)	2
Fall:	
Bathtub	2
Bucket truck	1
Fireplace	1
Floor	3
Ground	1
Motor vehicle	1
Parking lot	1
Stairs	7
Unknown	3
Fire:	
Apartment	1
House	13
Motor vehicle	1
Firearm: Handgun	1
Motor vehicle:	
Bicycle	2
Pedestrian	29
Multiple vehicles	42
Single vehicle	48
Train:	
Pedestrian	5
Motor vehicle	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>

## Homicide

Homicides accounted for 17.6% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021.

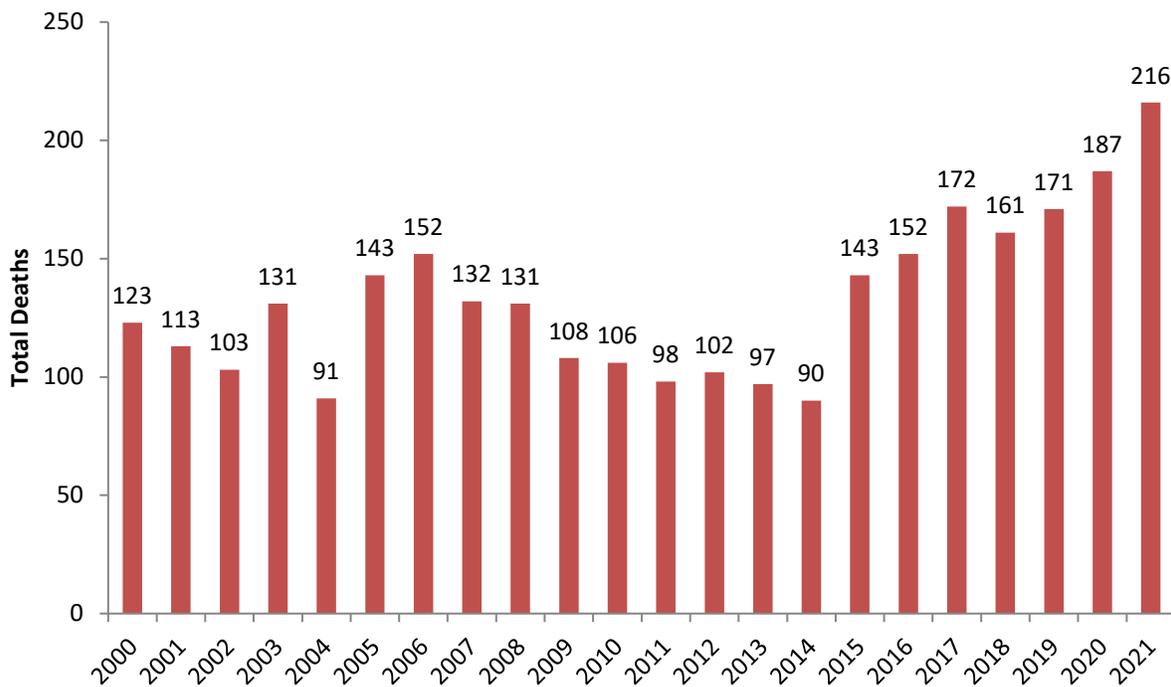
There was a 15.5% increase in the total number of homicides, from 187 deaths in 2020 to 216 deaths in 2021. This represents the highest year since the year 2000 and continues a 4-year trend in increases of homicide deaths.

Death due to firearms was the most common cause of homicide in 2021 accounting for 92.1% of the deaths.

The most common race was Black representing 87.0% of the homicides, while males were the most common gender representing 88.9% of homicide deaths.

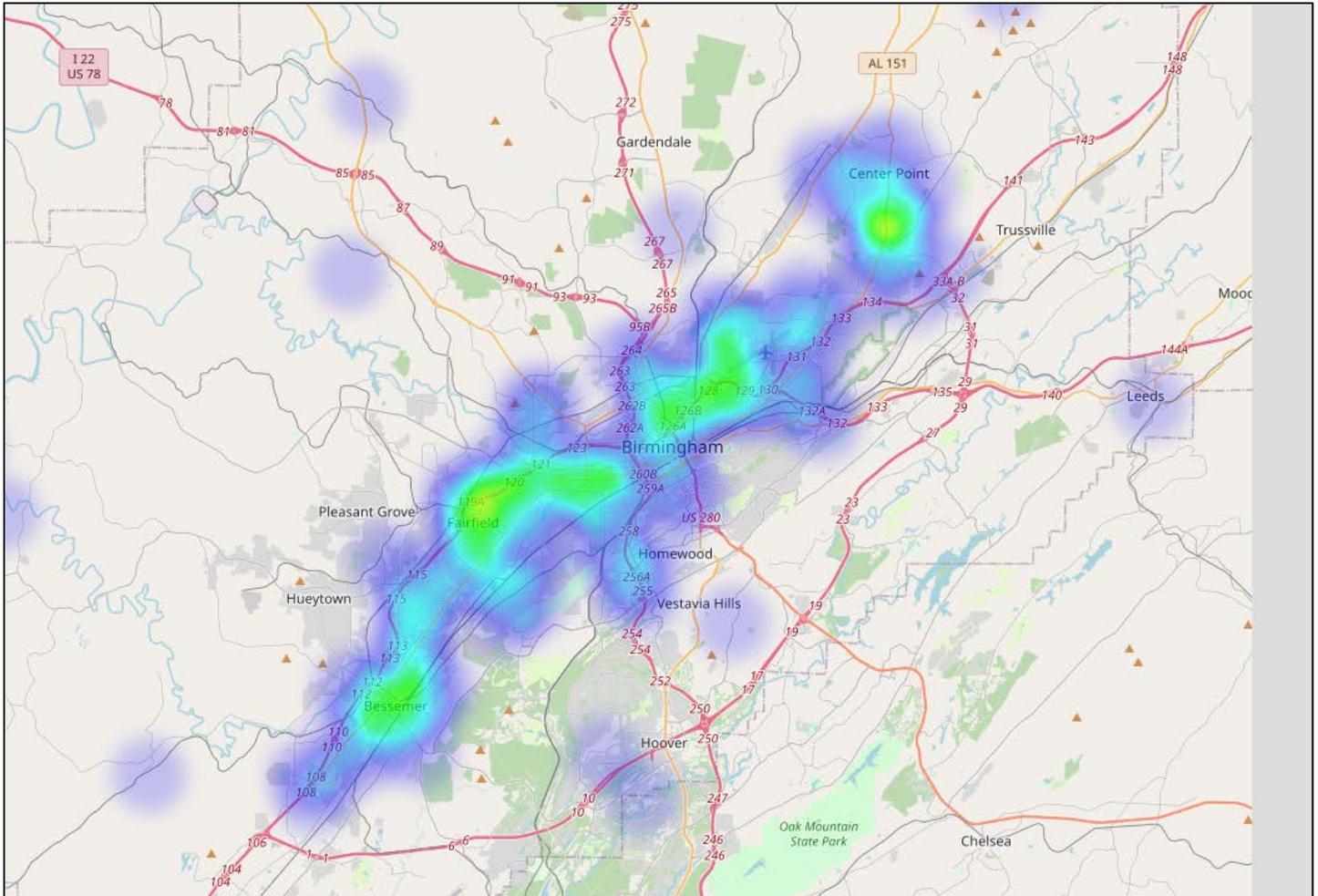
### Total Number of Homicides by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 3.7: represents all homicides investigated by the JCCMEO.



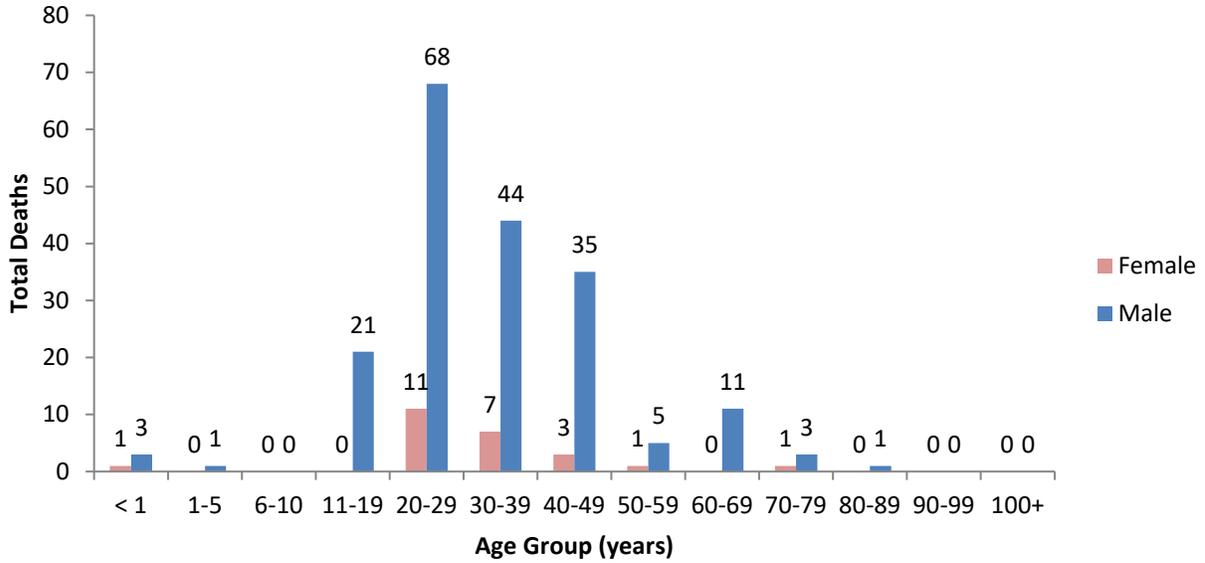
**Total Number of Homicides by Place of Injury, 2021**

Figure 3.8: N=216, represents all homicide deaths by place of injury.



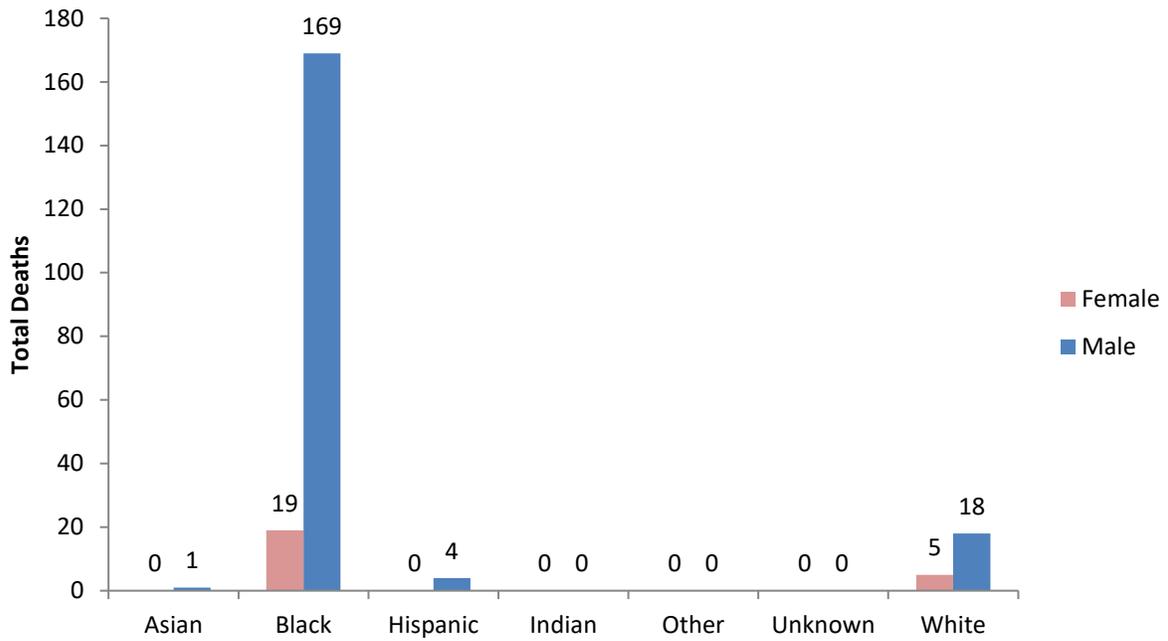
**Total Number of Homicides by Gender and Age Group, 2021**

Figure 3.9: N=216, represents all homicides by gender and age group.



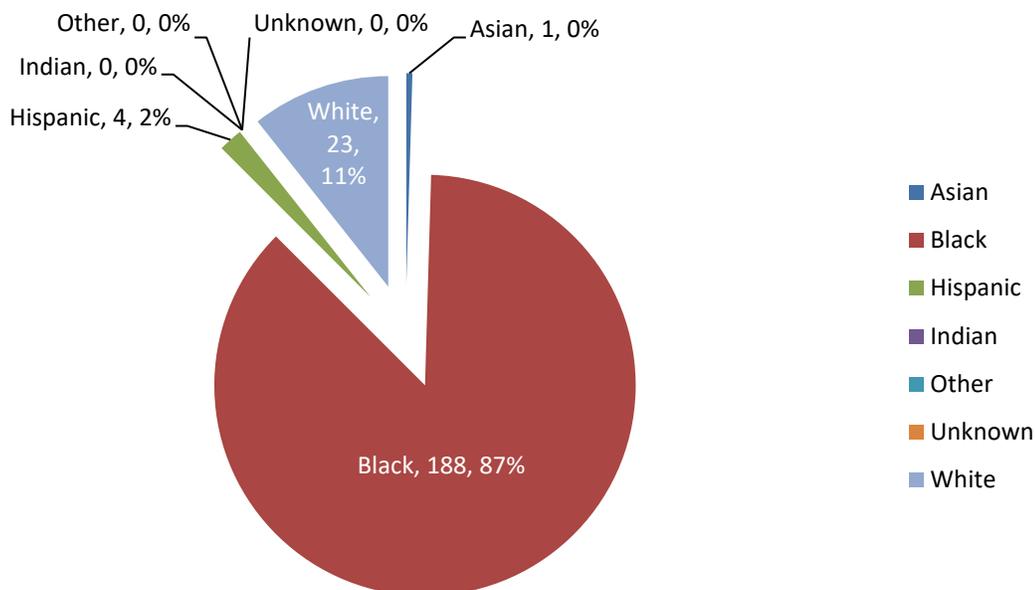
**Total Number of Homicides by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 3.10: N=216, represents all homicides by gender and race.



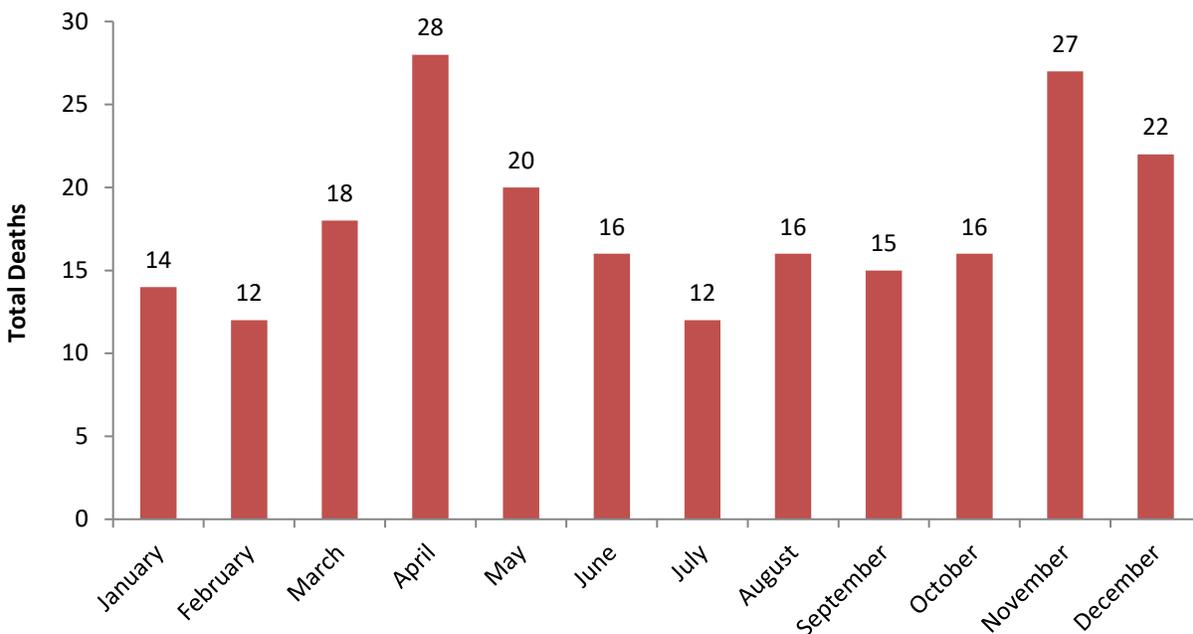
**Percentage of Homicides by Race, 2021**

Figure 3.11: N=216, represents all homicides by race.



**Total Number of Homicides by Month of Death, 2021**

Figure 3.12: N=216, represents all homicides by month of death.



**Total Number of Homicides by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 3.2: N=216, represents all Homicides by means of death and weapon type.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Unknown	2
Dog leash	1
Towel	1
Blunt:	
Crib	1
Hands	1
Space heater	1
Unknown	3
Firearm:	
Handgun	126
Handgun/Rifle	4
Rifle	14
Shotgun	5
Unknown	50
Sharp:	
Knife	5
Unknown	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>

## Natural

Natural deaths accounted for 25.1% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021.

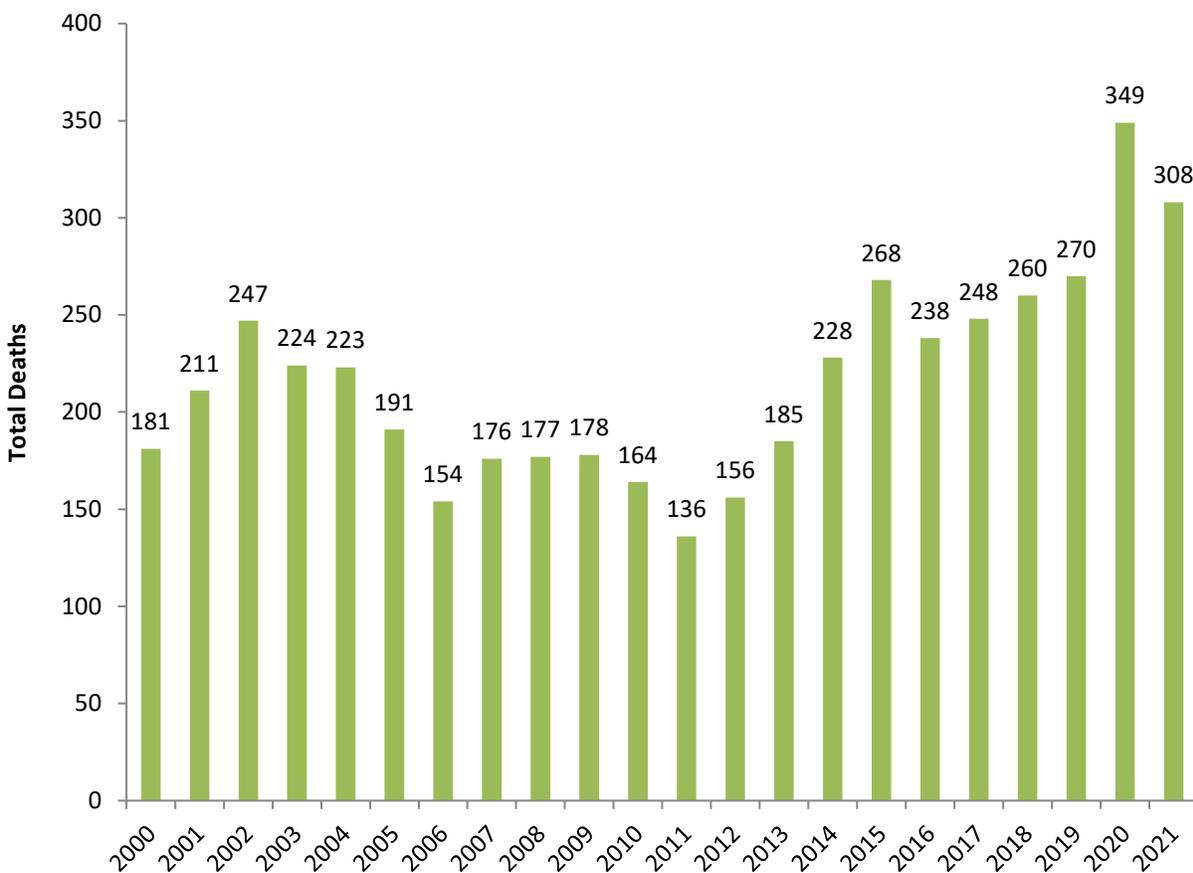
There was a 11.7% increase in the total number of natural deaths, from 349 deaths in 2020 to 308 deaths in 2021.

Deaths due to heart disease were the most common cause of natural death in 2021 accounting for 59.4% of the deaths, followed by other natural disease accounting for 12.7% of the deaths.

The most common race was white representing 49.7% of the natural deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 74.7% of natural deaths.

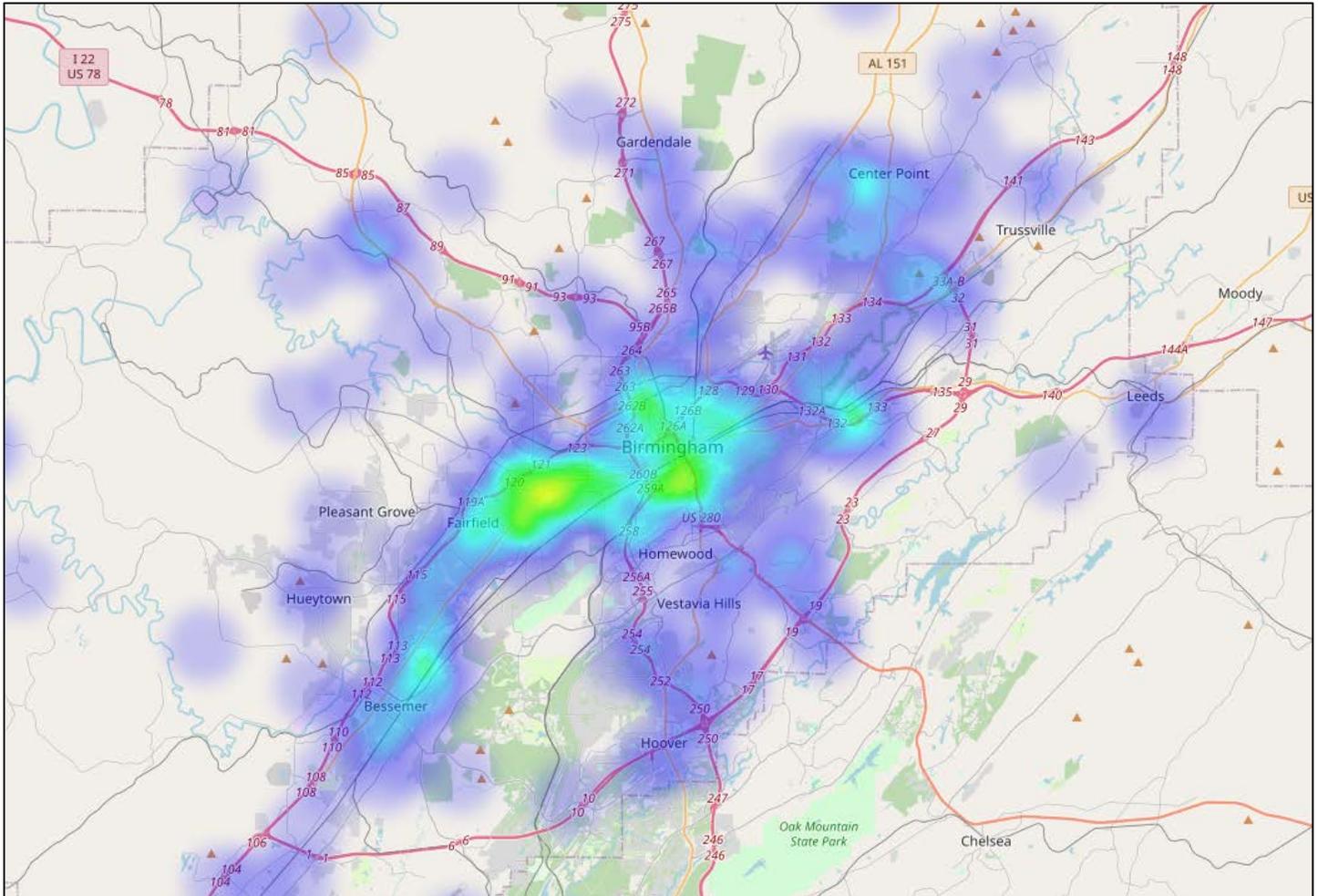
### Total Number of Natural Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 3.13: represents all natural deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



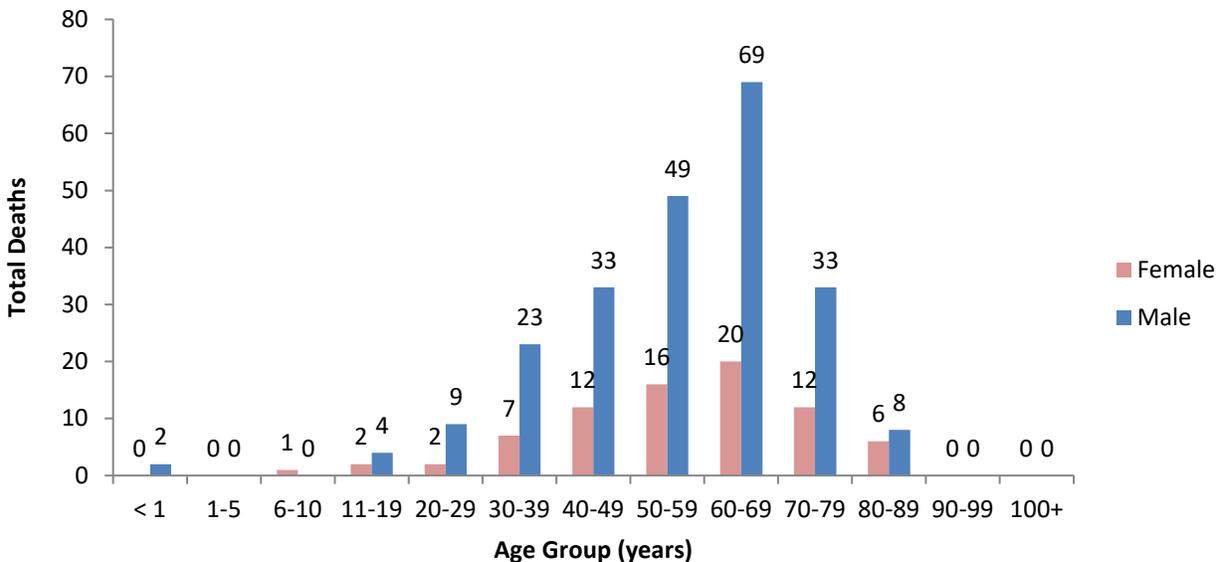
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Place of Death, 2021

Figure 3.14: N=308, represents all natural deaths by place of death.



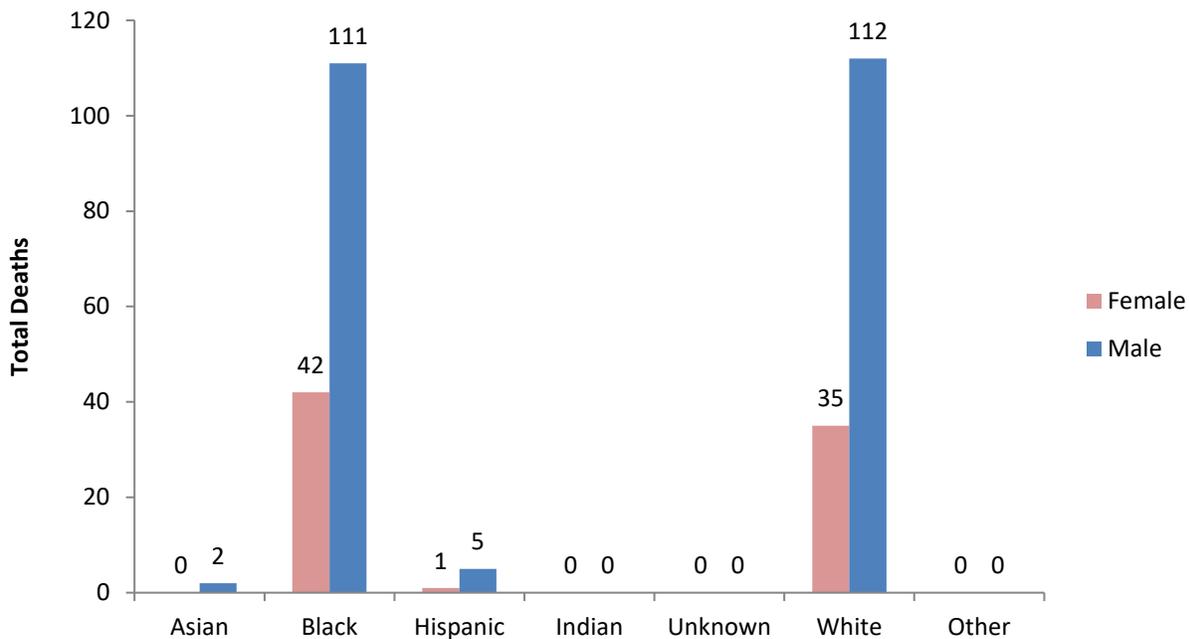
**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021**

Figure 3.15: N=308, represents all natural deaths by gender and age group.



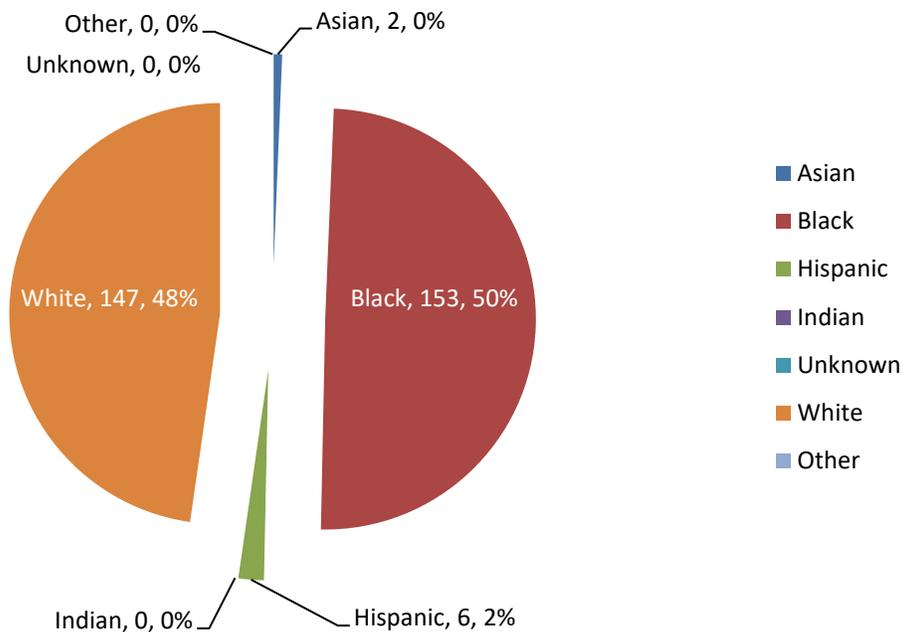
**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 3.16: N=308, represents all natural deaths by gender and race.



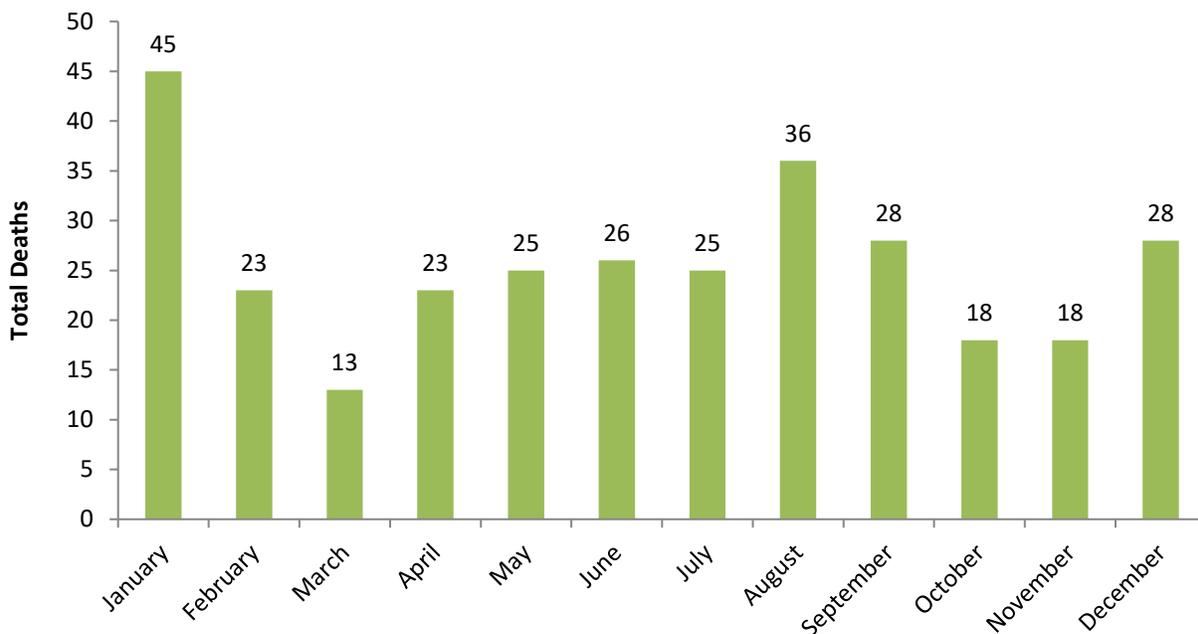
**Percentage of Natural Deaths by Race, 2021**

Figure 3.17: N=308, represents all natural deaths by race.



**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Month of Death, 2021**

Figure 3.18: N=308, represents all natural deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 3.3: N=308, represents all natural deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Heart:	
Coronary artery atherosclerosis	32
Hypertensive heart disease	70
Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease	50
Other heart disease	31
Lungs:	
Pneumonia	8
COPD / asthma	6
Pulmonary thromboembolism	11
Liver: Cirrhosis	0
Brain:	
Seizure disorder (epilepsy)	0
Meningitis	0
Nontraumatic intracranial hemorrhage	5
Malignancy NOS (includes all organ systems)	7
Chronic substance use (ethanol/drug)	36
Diabetes	12
Gastrointestinal bleeding	1
Other	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>

## Suicide

Suicide deaths accounted for 7.7% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021.

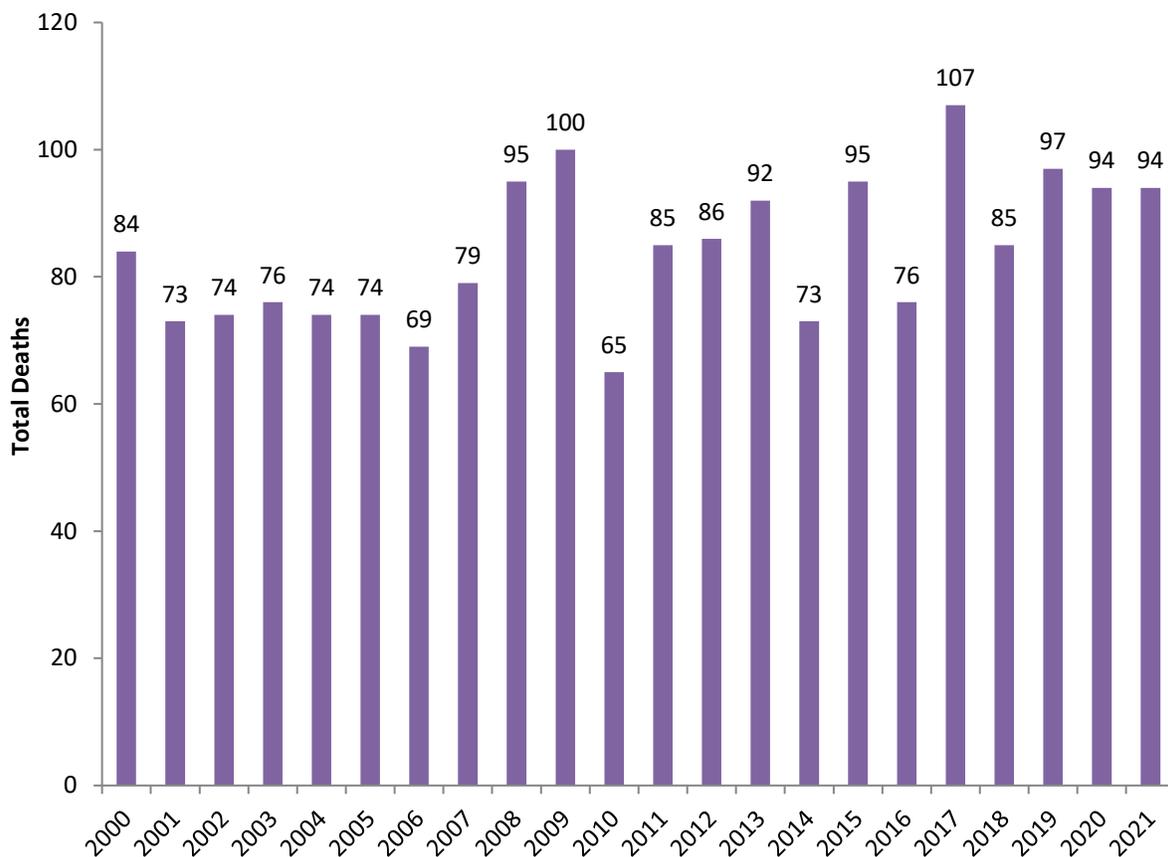
There was no change in the total number of suicide deaths, from 2020 to 2021.

Deaths due to gunshot wounds were the most common cause of suicide death in 2021 accounting for 72.3% of the deaths and, followed by deaths due to hanging accounting for 14.9% of the suicide deaths.

The most common race was white representing 67.0% of the suicide deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 84.0% of suicide deaths.

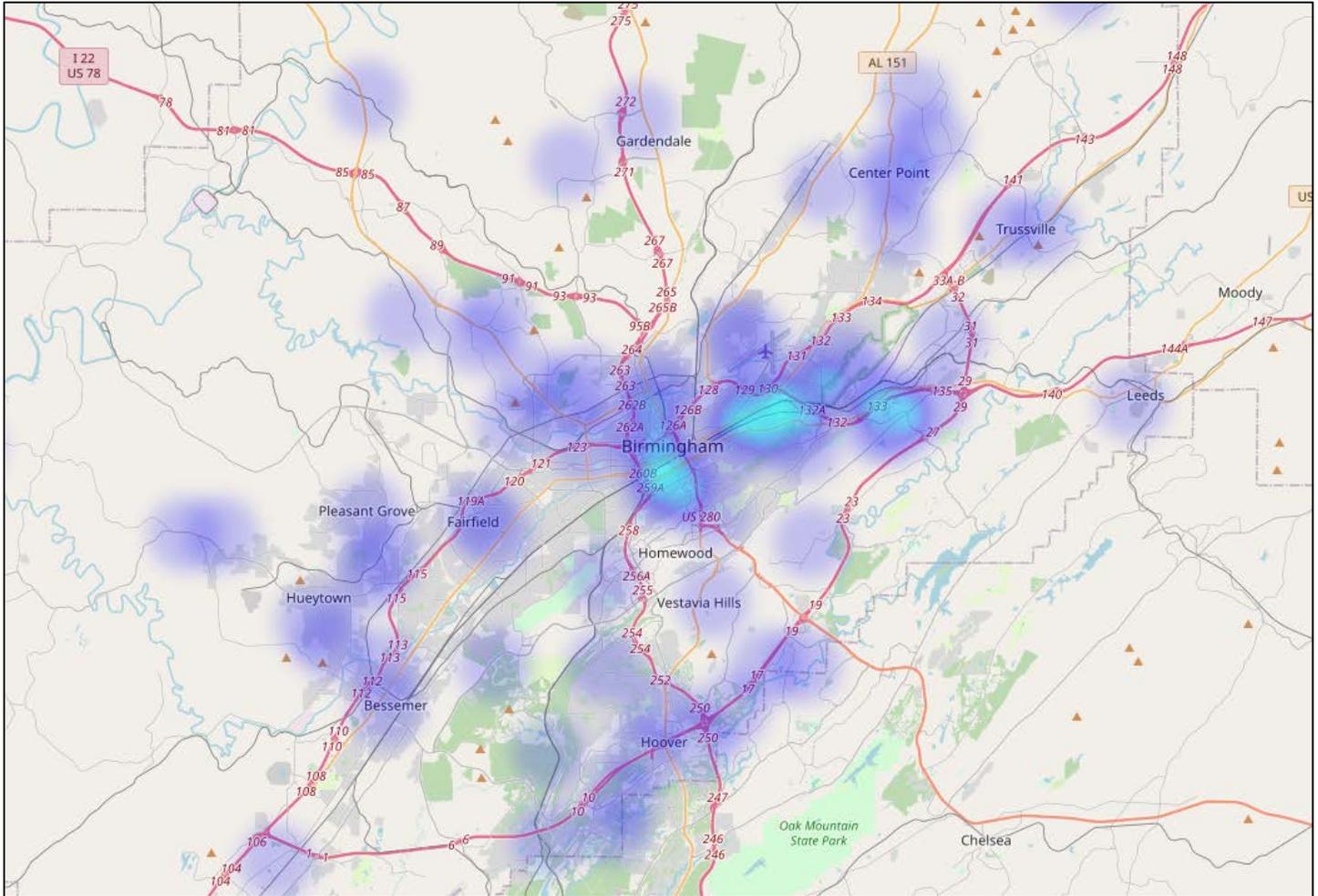
### Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 3.19: represents all suicide deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



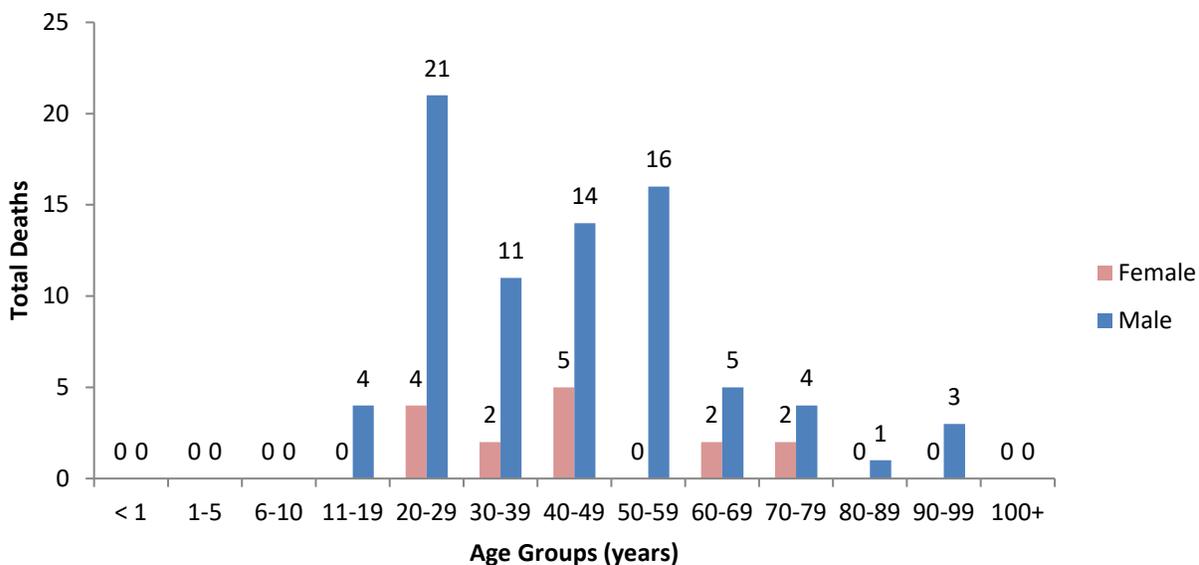
### Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Place of Injury, 2021

Figure 3.20: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by place of injury.



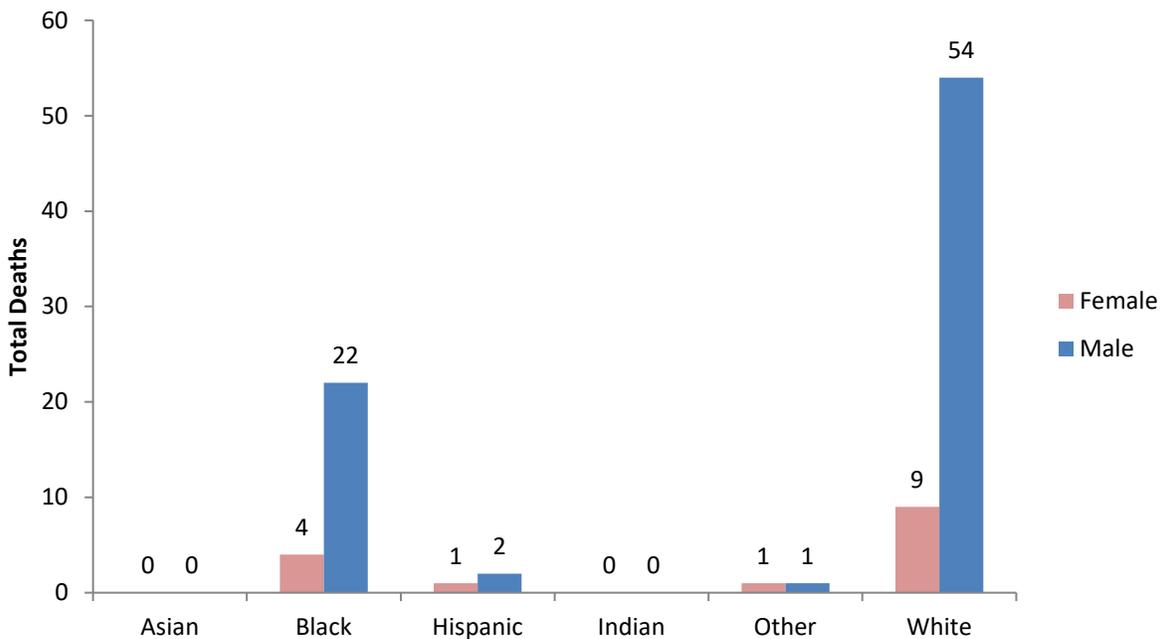
**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021**

Figure 3.21: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by gender and age group.



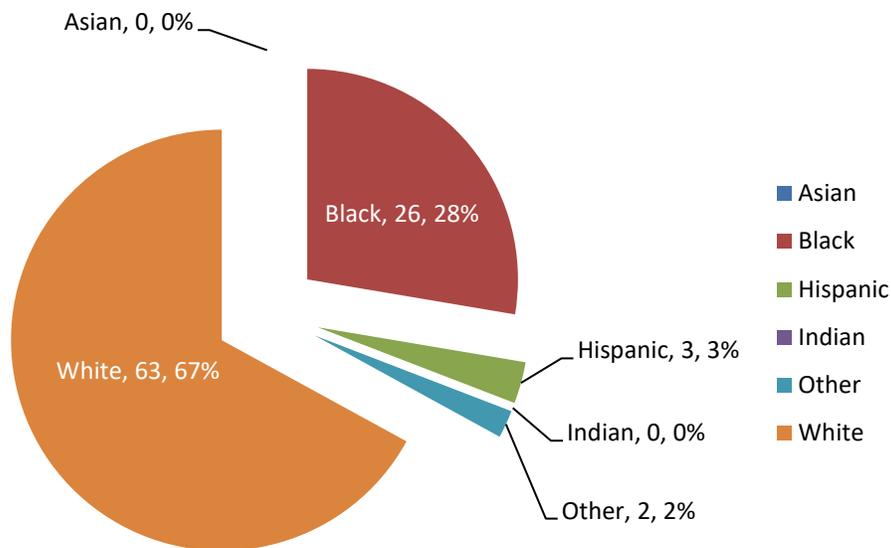
**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 3.22: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by gender and race.



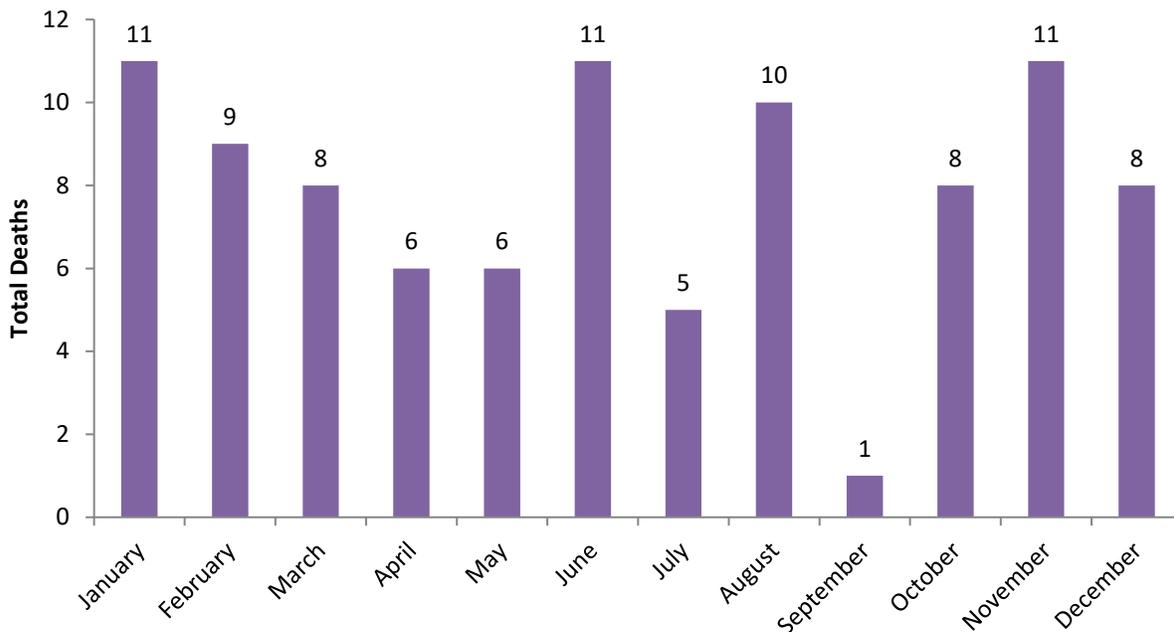
### Percentage of Suicide Deaths by Race, 2021

Figure 3.23: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by race.



### Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Month of Death, 2021

Figure 3.24: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 3.4: N=94, represents all suicide deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Gas	2
Rope	2
Carbon Monoxide: Charcoal grill	1
Drug	2
Fall:	
Bridge	1
Parking deck	2
Firearm:	
Handgun	55
Rifle	4
Shotgun	6
Unknown	3
Hanging:	
Belt	3
Bed sheet	2
Dog leash	1
Electrical cord	5
Rope	2
Shower curtain	1
Sharp: Knife	1
Train	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>

## Undetermined

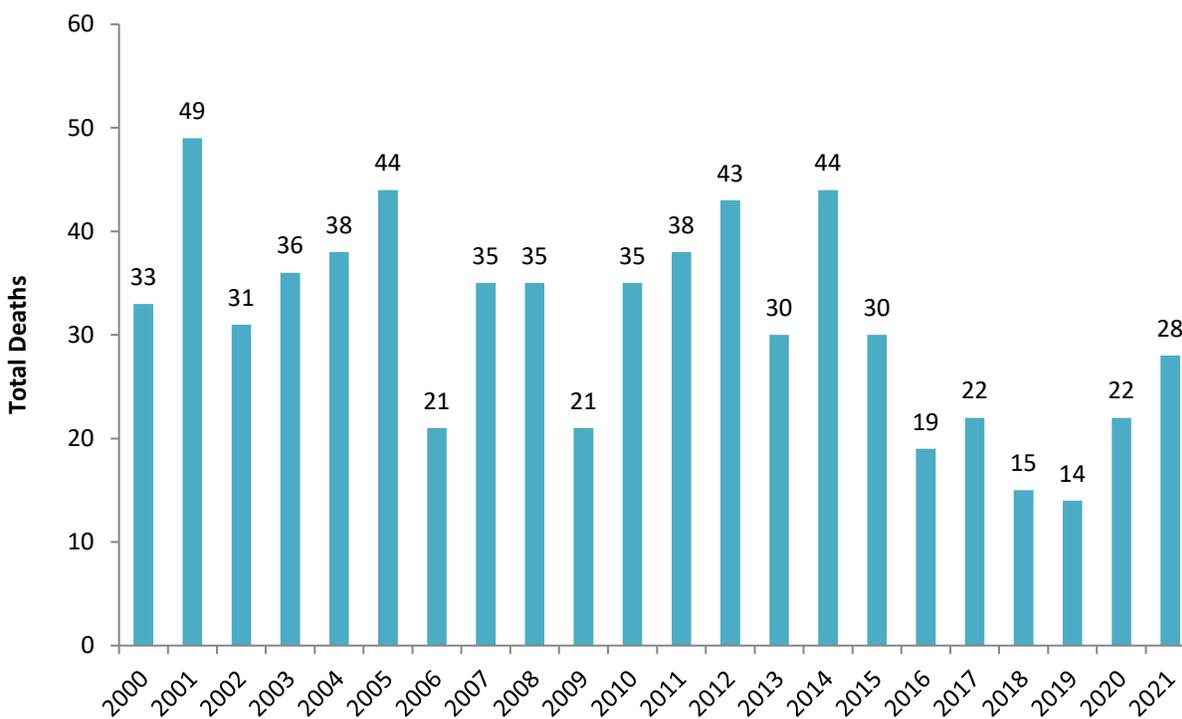
Undetermined deaths accounted for 2.2% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021.

There was a 27.3% increase in the total number of undetermined deaths, from 22 deaths in 2020 to 28 deaths in 2021.

Undetermined was the most common means of Undetermined death, accounting for 57.1% of the deaths.

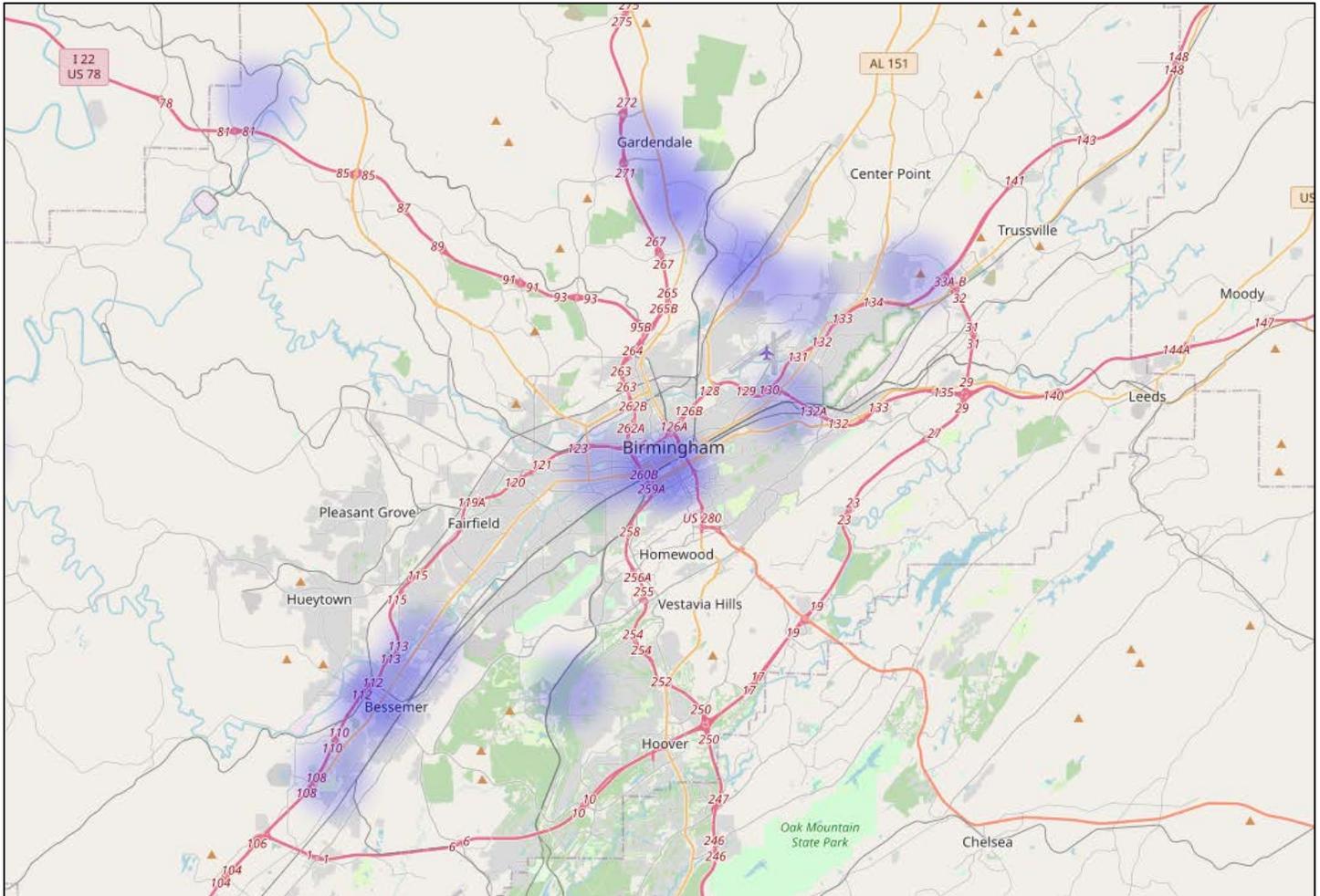
### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 3.25: represents all undetermined deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



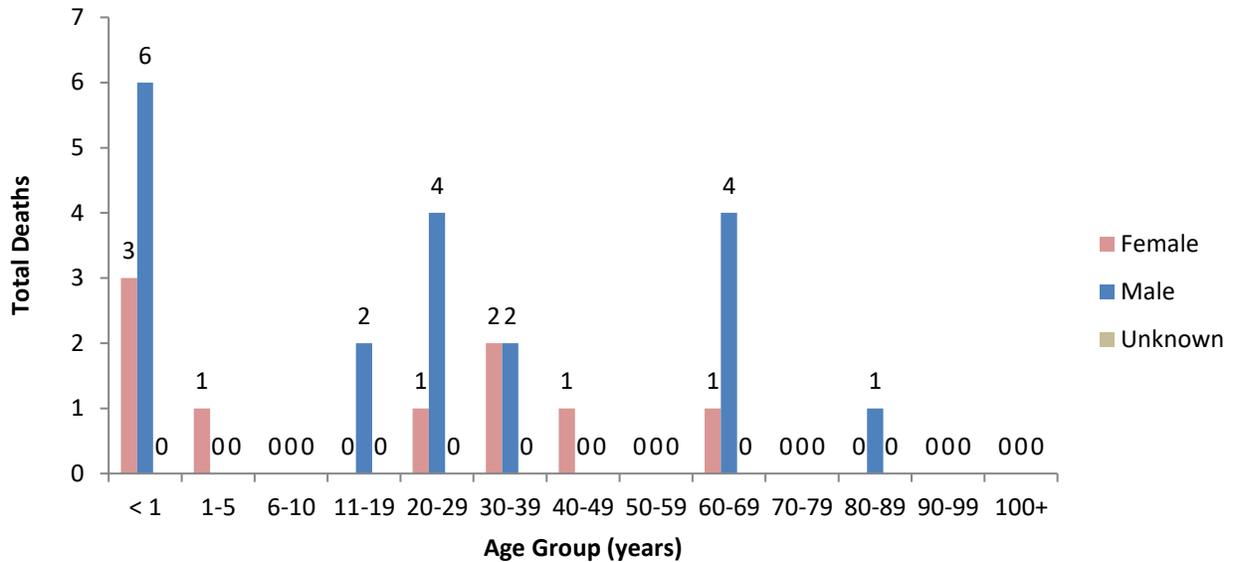
### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Place of Death, 2021

Figure 3.26: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by place of death.



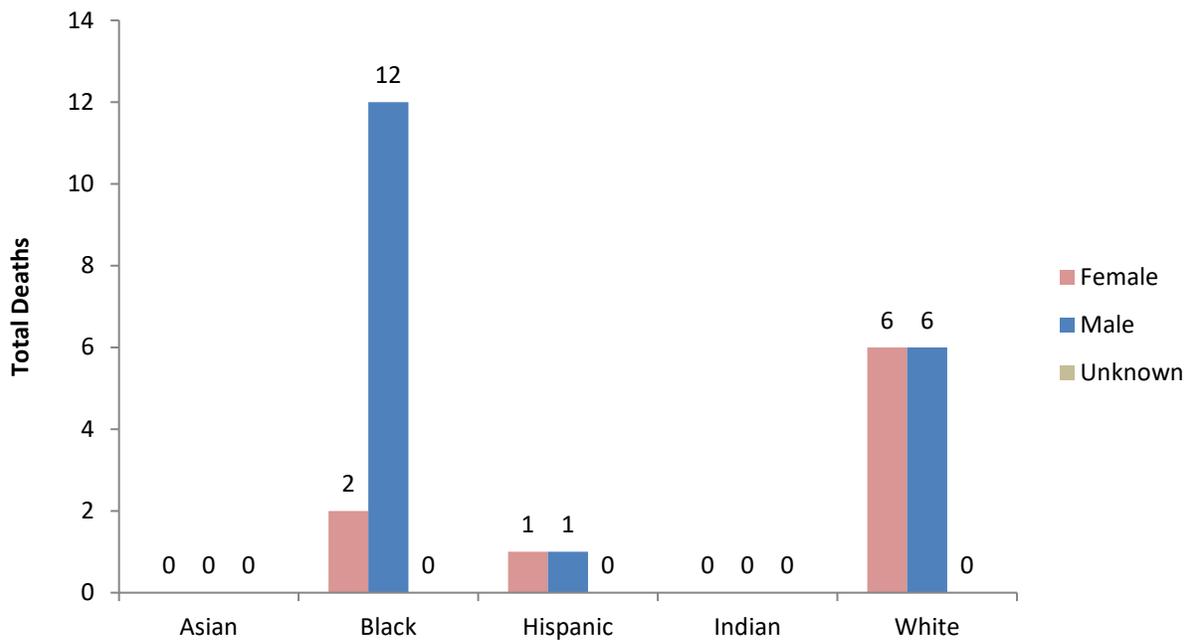
**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021**

Figure 3.27: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by gender and age group.



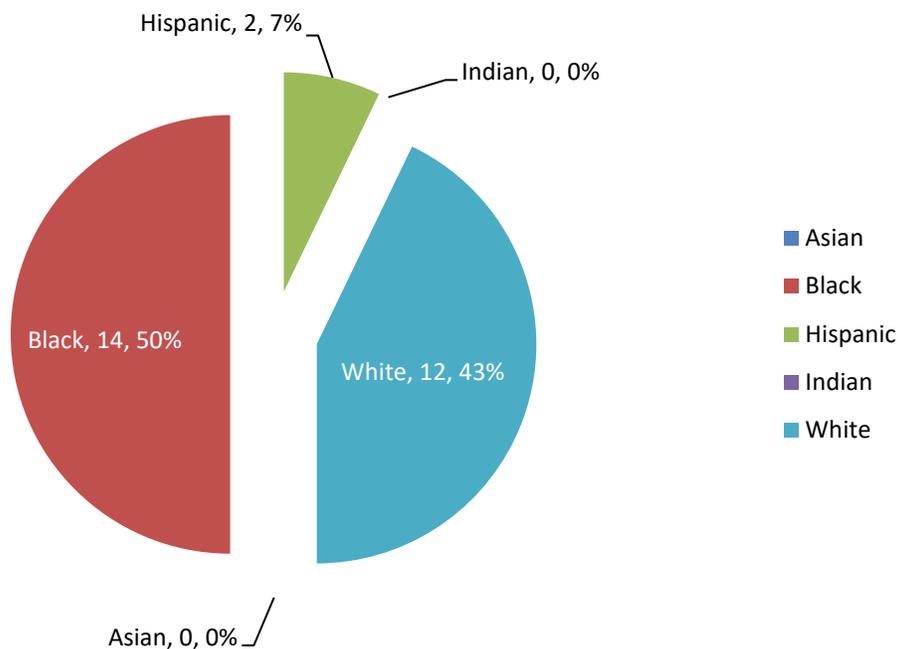
**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 3.28: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by gender and race.



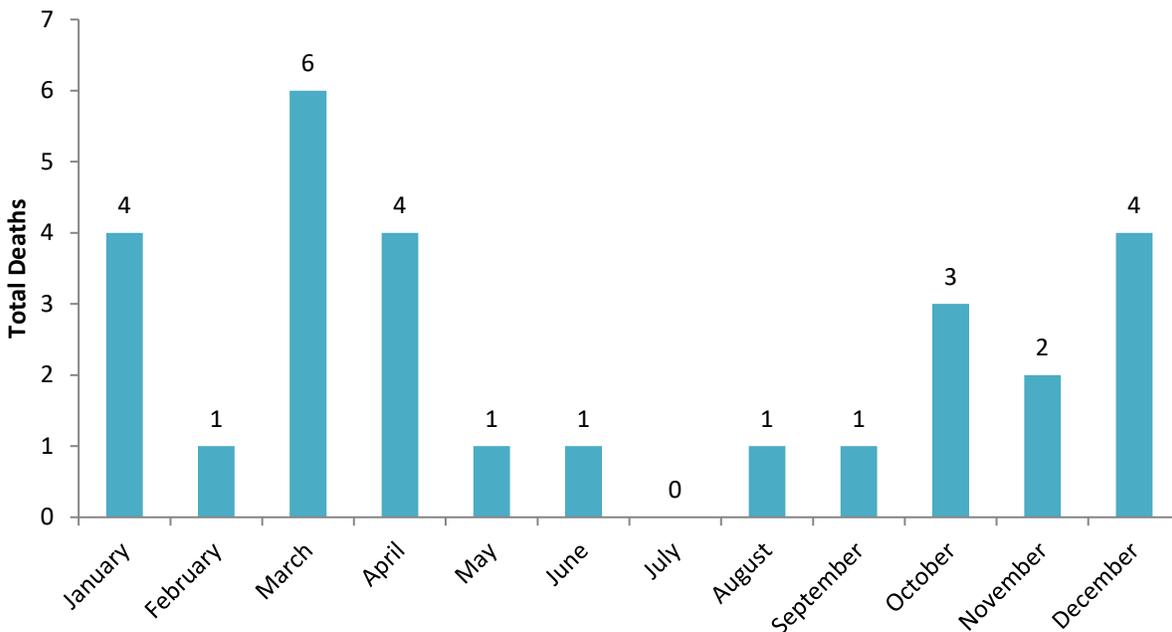
**Percentage of Undetermined Deaths by Race, 2021**

Figure 3.29: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by race.



**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Month of Death, 2021**

Figure 3.30: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 3.5: N=28, represents all undetermined deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Blunt: Unknown	2
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	5
Pillow	1
Drug:	
Drug-opioid	1
Gun:	
Handgun	1
Unknown	1
Motor vehicle: Pedestrian	1
Undetermined:	
Car seat	1
Crib	2
Undetermined	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

## Section 4: Infant/Juvenile Deaths

Infant/Juvenile deaths accounted for 3.7% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021. There was a 19.6% decrease in the total number of infant/juvenile deaths, from 56 deaths in 2020 to 45 deaths in 2021. Infant deaths increased 11.1%, from 18 deaths in 2020 to 20 deaths in 2021 while, juvenile deaths decreased 34.2%, from 38 deaths in 2020 to 25 deaths in 2021.

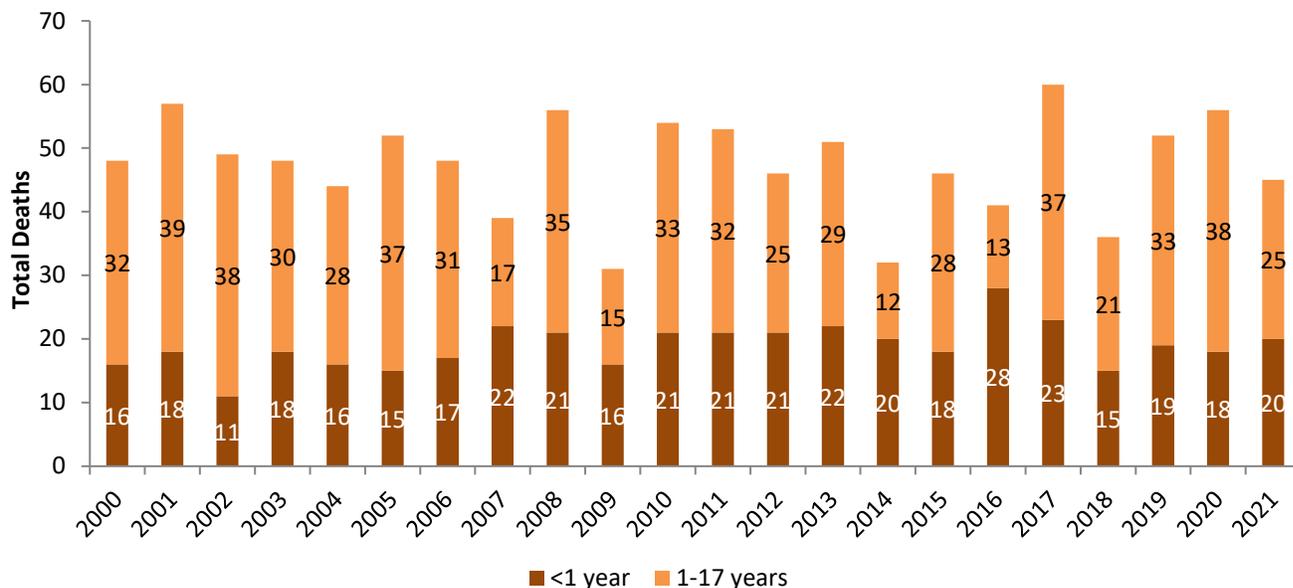
Infants (<1 year of age): Deaths due to co-sleeping was the most common means of infant death in 2021, accounting for 9 of the 20 or 45% of the infant deaths. Accidental death was the most common manner of infant death, accounting for 45% of the deaths. The most common race was Black representing 65% of the infant deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 65% of the infant deaths.

Juveniles (1–17 years of age): Deaths due to firearms were the most common means of juvenile death in 2021, accounting for 56% of the deaths. Homicide was the most common manner of death, accounting for 36% of the deaths. The most common race was Black representing 76% of the juvenile deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 80% of the juvenile deaths.

### Historical Summary

#### Total Number of Infant and Juvenile Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

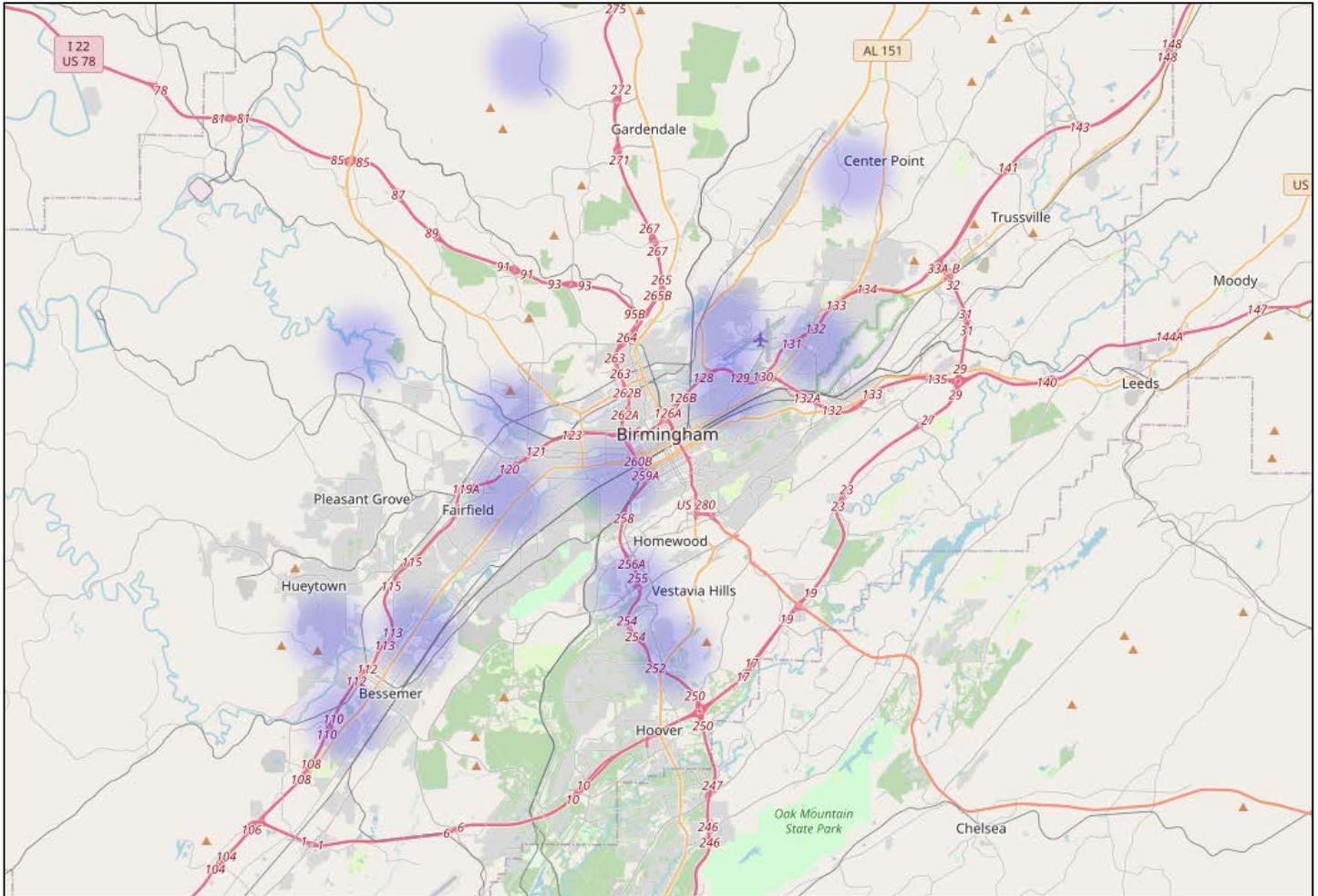
Figure 4.1: represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) and juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) investigated by the JCCMEO.



## Infant Deaths

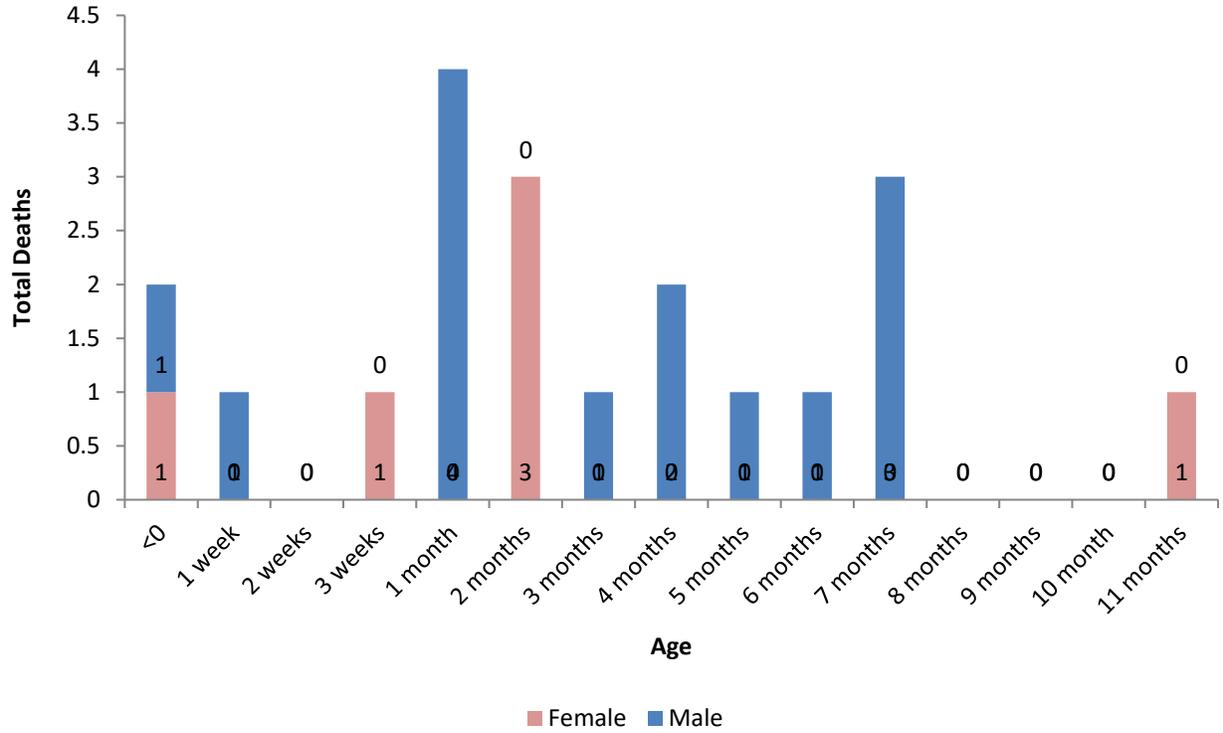
### Total Number of Infant Deaths by Place of Injury, 2021

Figure 4.2: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by place of injury.



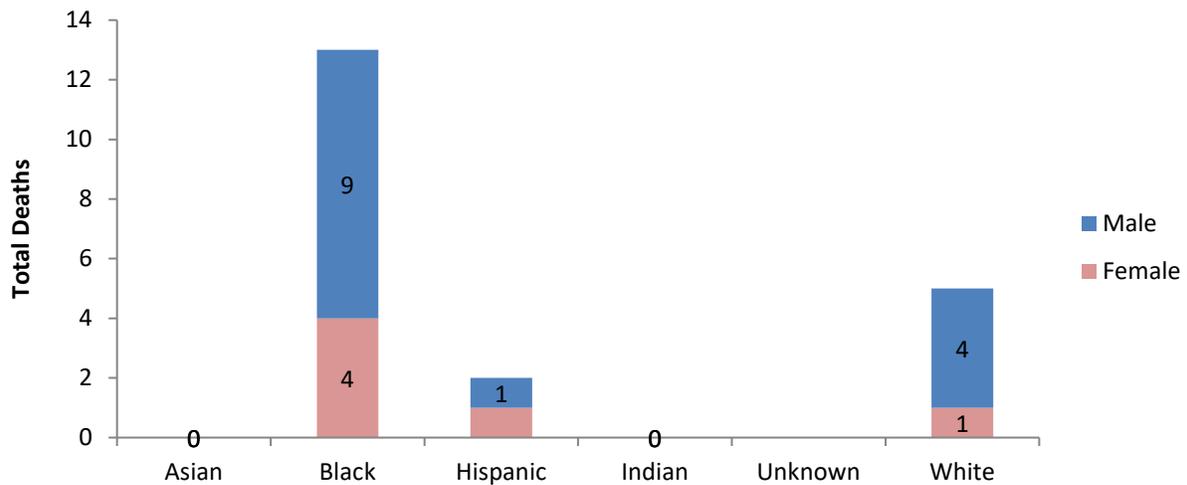
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Gender and Age, 2021**

Figure 4.3: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by gender and age.



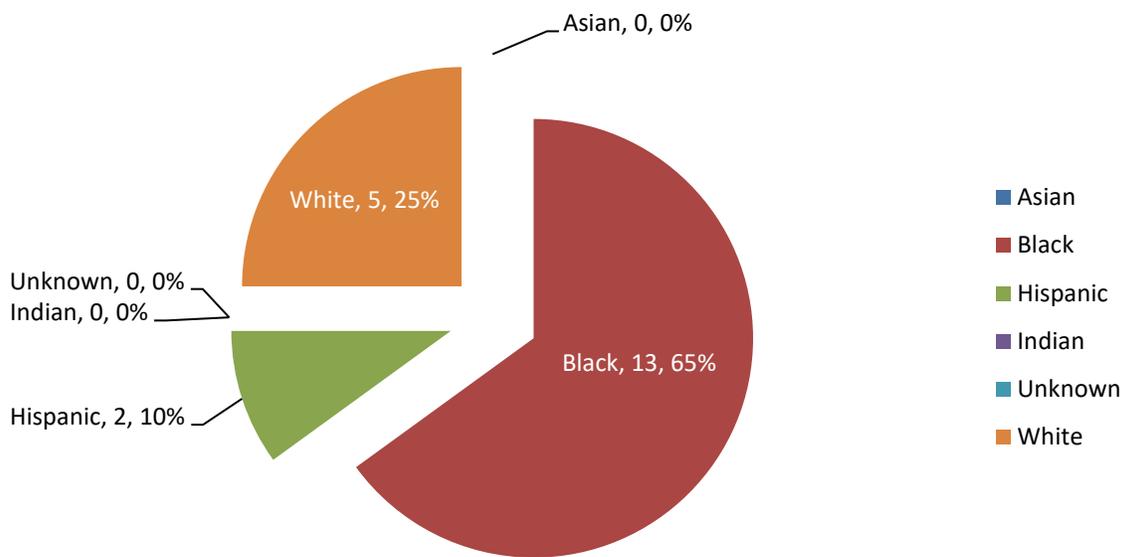
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 4.4: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by gender and race.



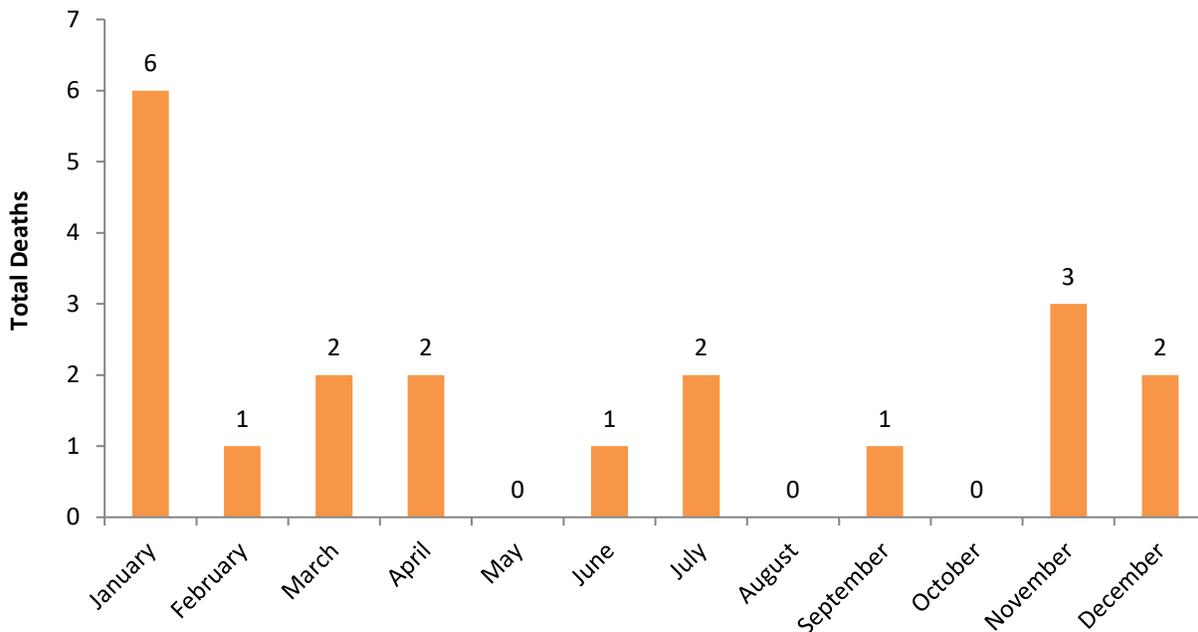
**Percentage of Infant Deaths by Race, 2021**

Figure 4.5: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by race.



**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Month of Death, 2021**

Figure 4.6: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by month of death.



**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 4.1: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Blunt:	
Crib	1
Hands	1
Unknown	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	7
Couch	1
Pillow	1
Drug: Opioid	1
Gun: Handgun	1
Natural:	
Other heart disease	1
Other natural	1
Undetermined:	
Bed	2
Crib	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

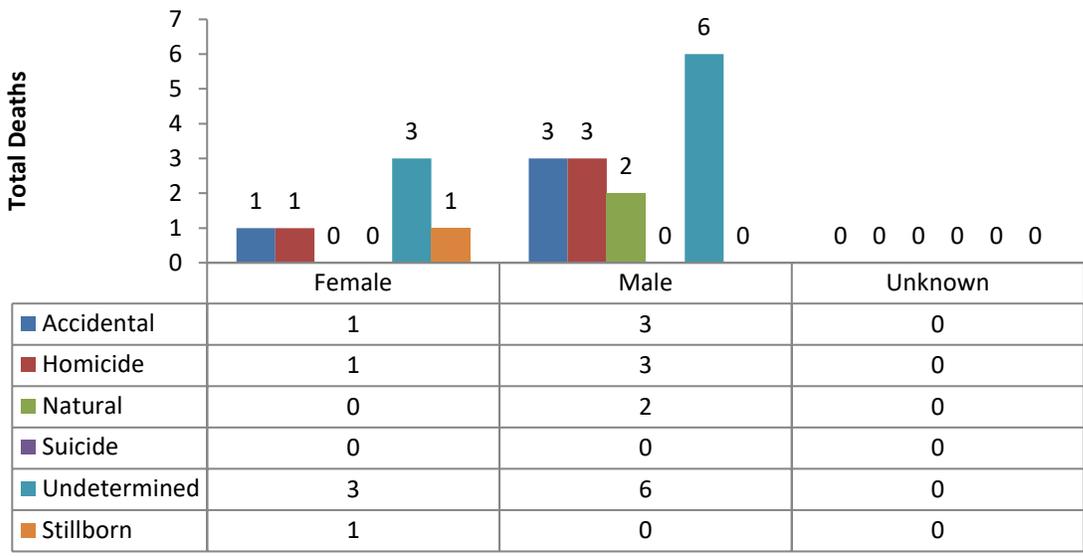
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2021**

Table 4.2: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by manner of death and race.<sup>1</sup>

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	Total
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	1	4	2	0	5	1	13
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>

**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Gender, 2021**

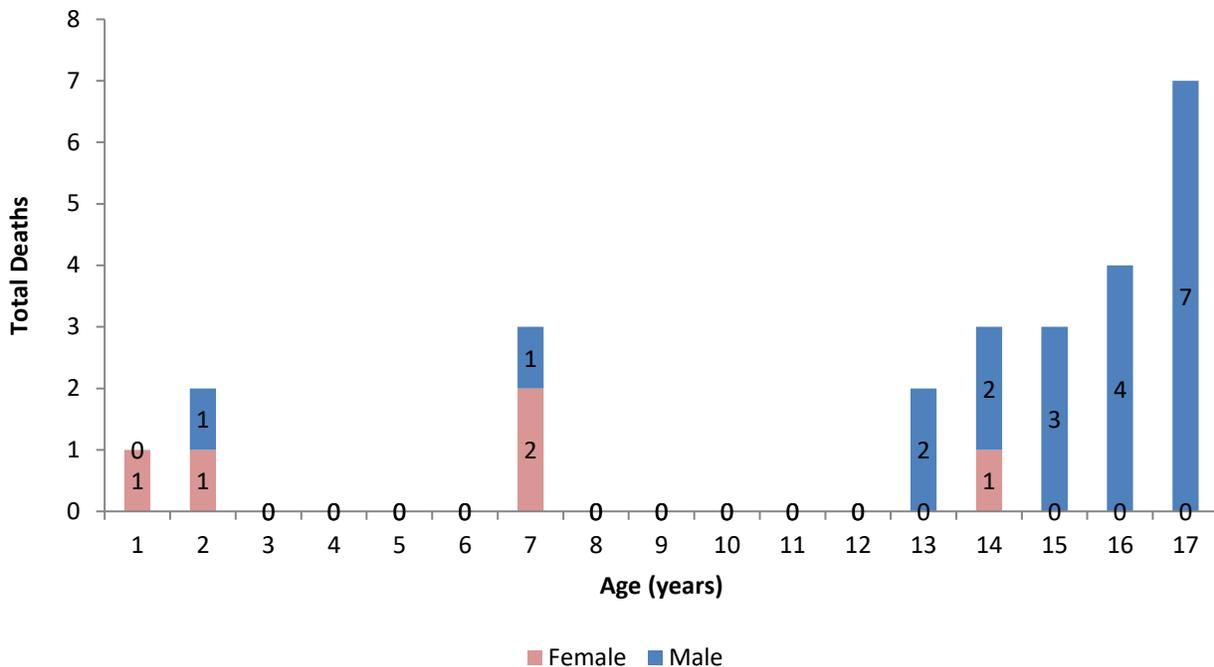
Figure 4.7: N=20, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by manner of death and gender.<sup>1</sup>





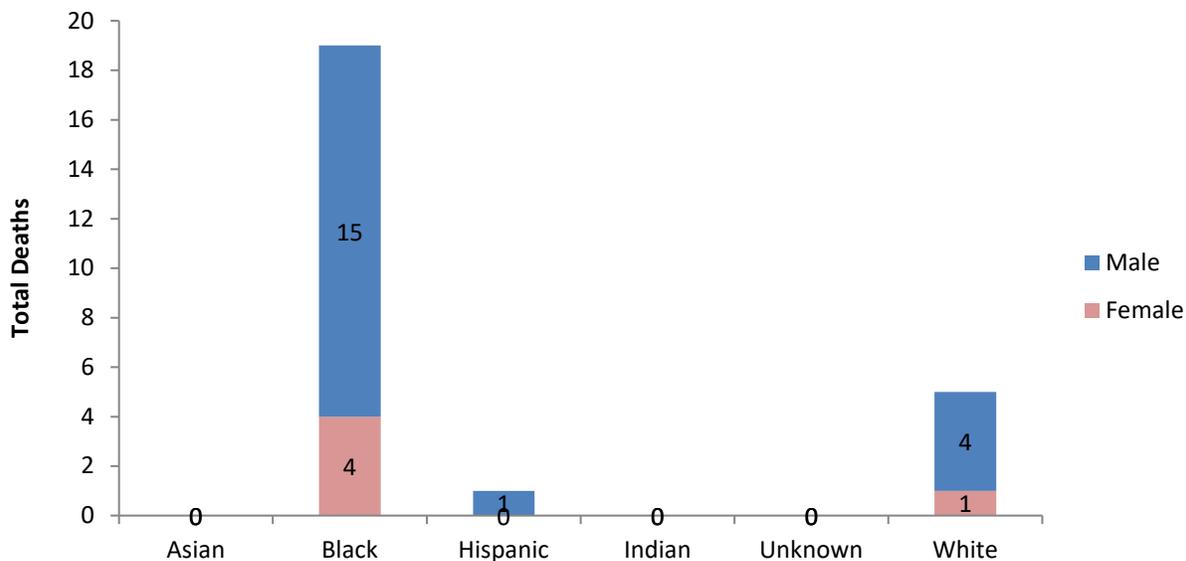
**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Gender and Age, 2021**

Figure 4.9: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by gender and age.



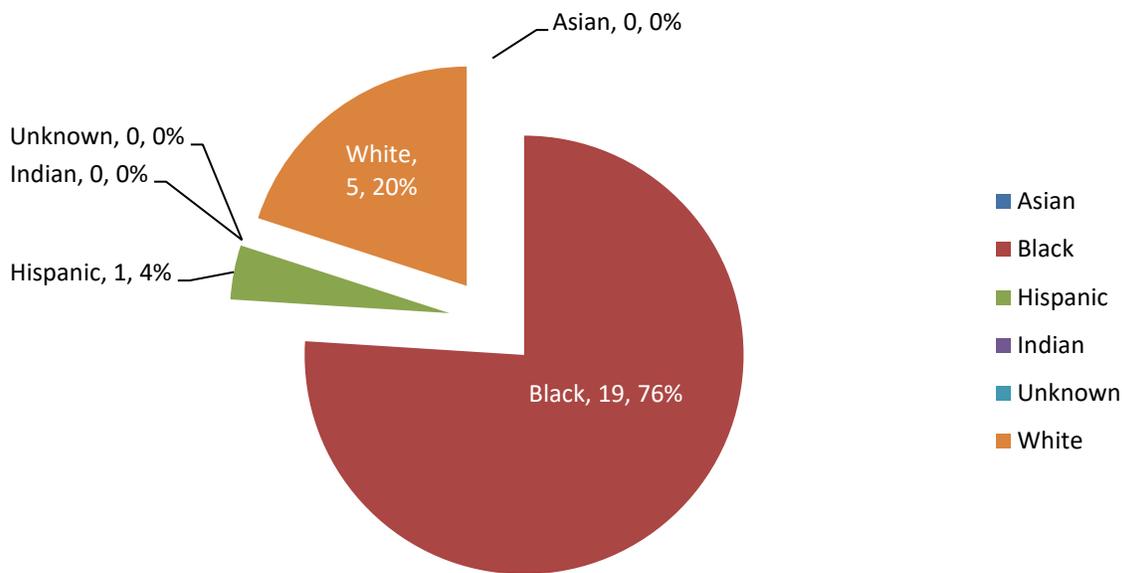
**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021**

Figure 4.10: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by gender and race.



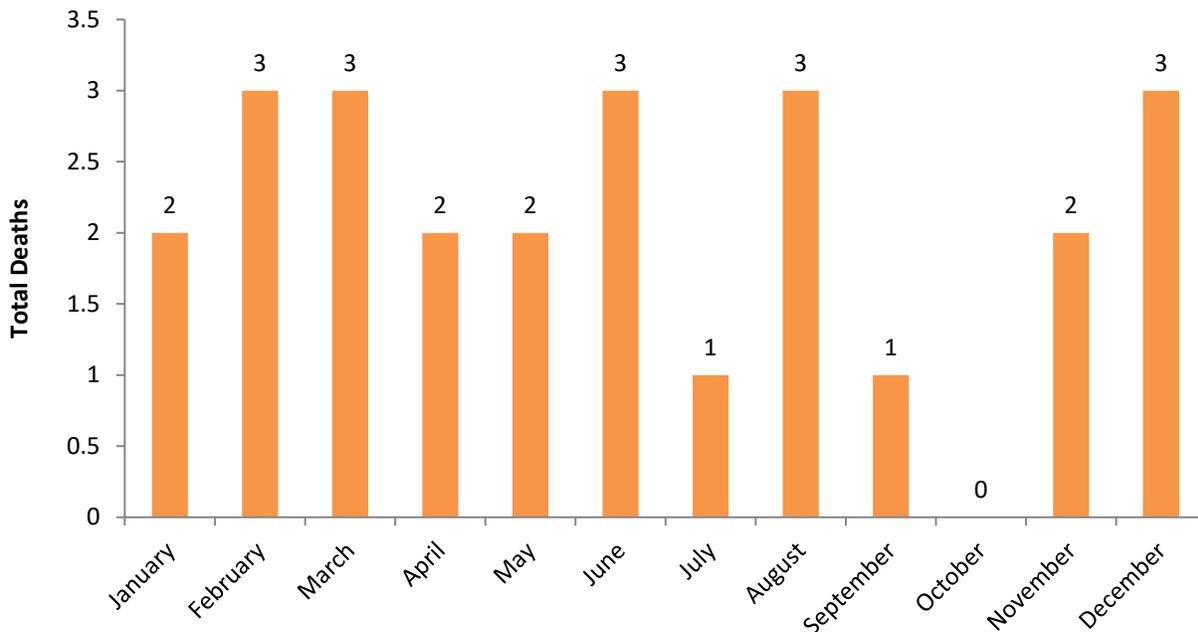
### Percentage of Juvenile Deaths by Race, 2021

Figure 4.11: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by race.



### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Month of Death, 2021

Figure 4.12: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by month of death.



**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Means of Death, 2021**

Table 4.3: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia: Collapsed floor	1
COPD/asthma	1
Drowning: Pool	1
Drug: Opioid	2
Fire: House	2
Gun:	
Handgun	9
Handgun/rifle	1
Rifle	1
Unknown	3
Motor vehicle: Multiple vehicles	2
Natural:	
Heart disease	1
Other natural	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

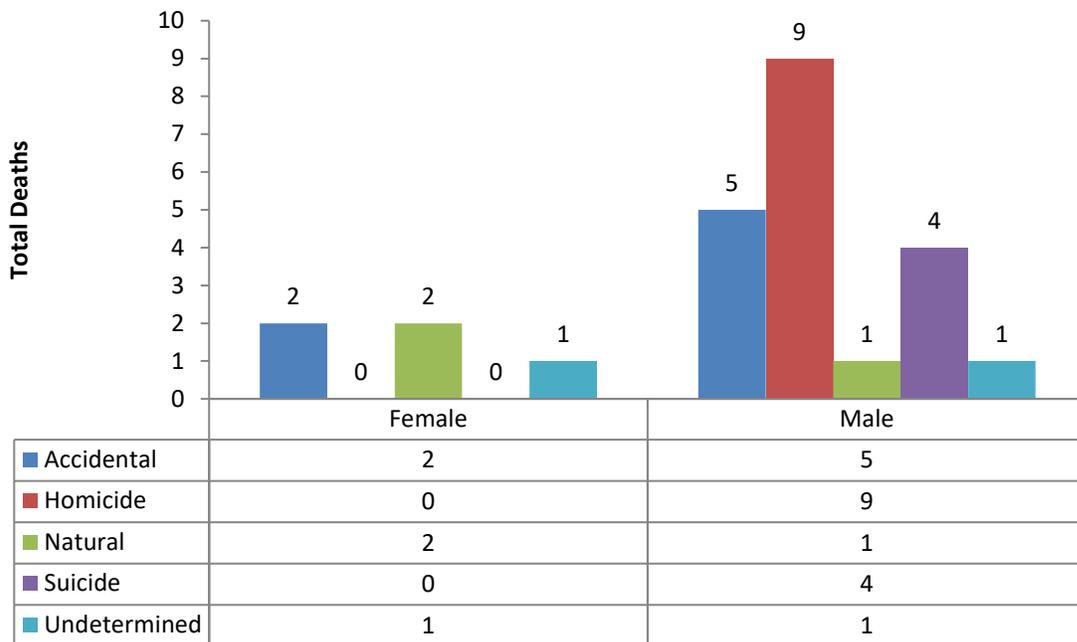
**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2021**

Table 4.4: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by manner of death and race.

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Total
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	3	9	3	2	2	19
Hispanic	1	0	0	0	0	1
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	3	0	0	2	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>

**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Gender, 2021**

Figure 4.13: N=25, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by manner of death and gender.



## Section 5: Motor Vehicle Deaths

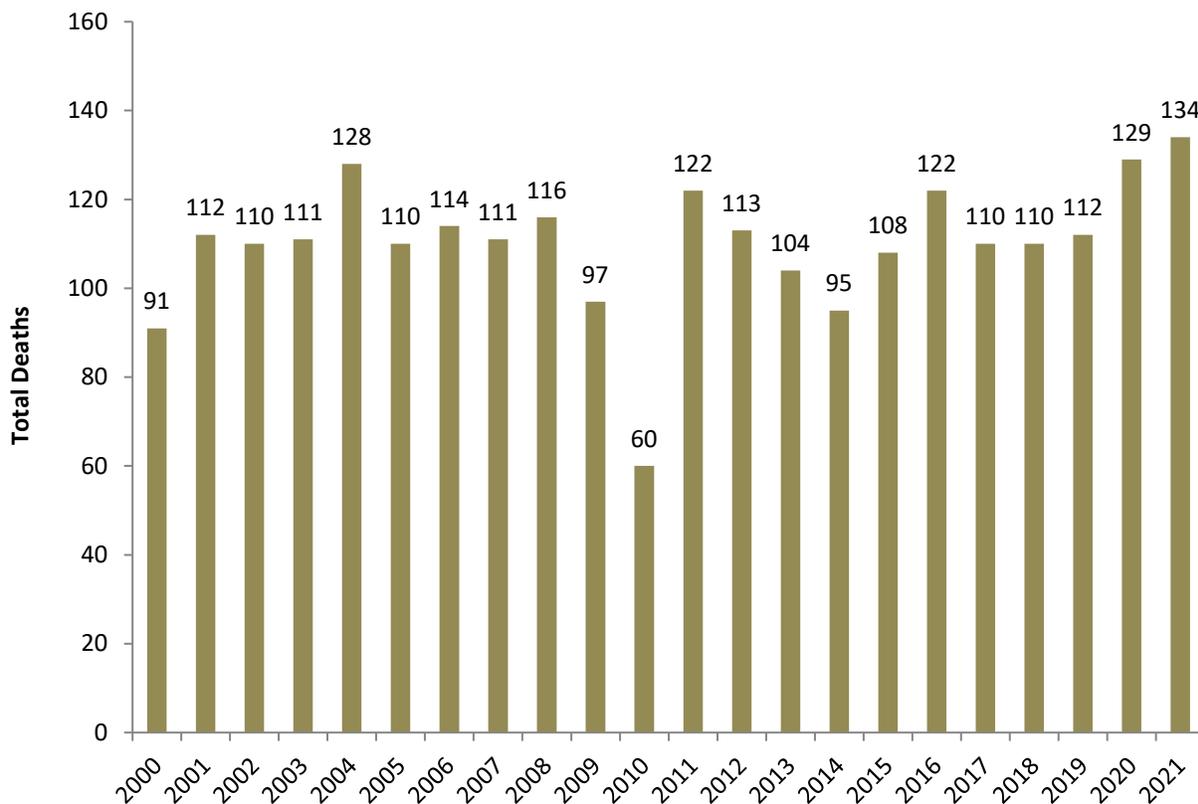
For the purpose of this report motor vehicle deaths include airplane, all-terrain vehicle, automobile, motorcycle, train, and pedestrian deaths.

Motor vehicle deaths accounted for 10.9% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2021. There was a 3.9 % increase in the total number of motor vehicle deaths, from 129 deaths in 2020 to 134 deaths in 2021 and is the highest year in the last 20 years.

Single-vehicle collisions was the most common means of motor vehicle death accounting for 35.8% of the deaths, followed by multi-vehicle collisions accounting for 31.3% of the deaths and motor vehicle-pedestrian collisions accounting for 22.4% of the deaths.

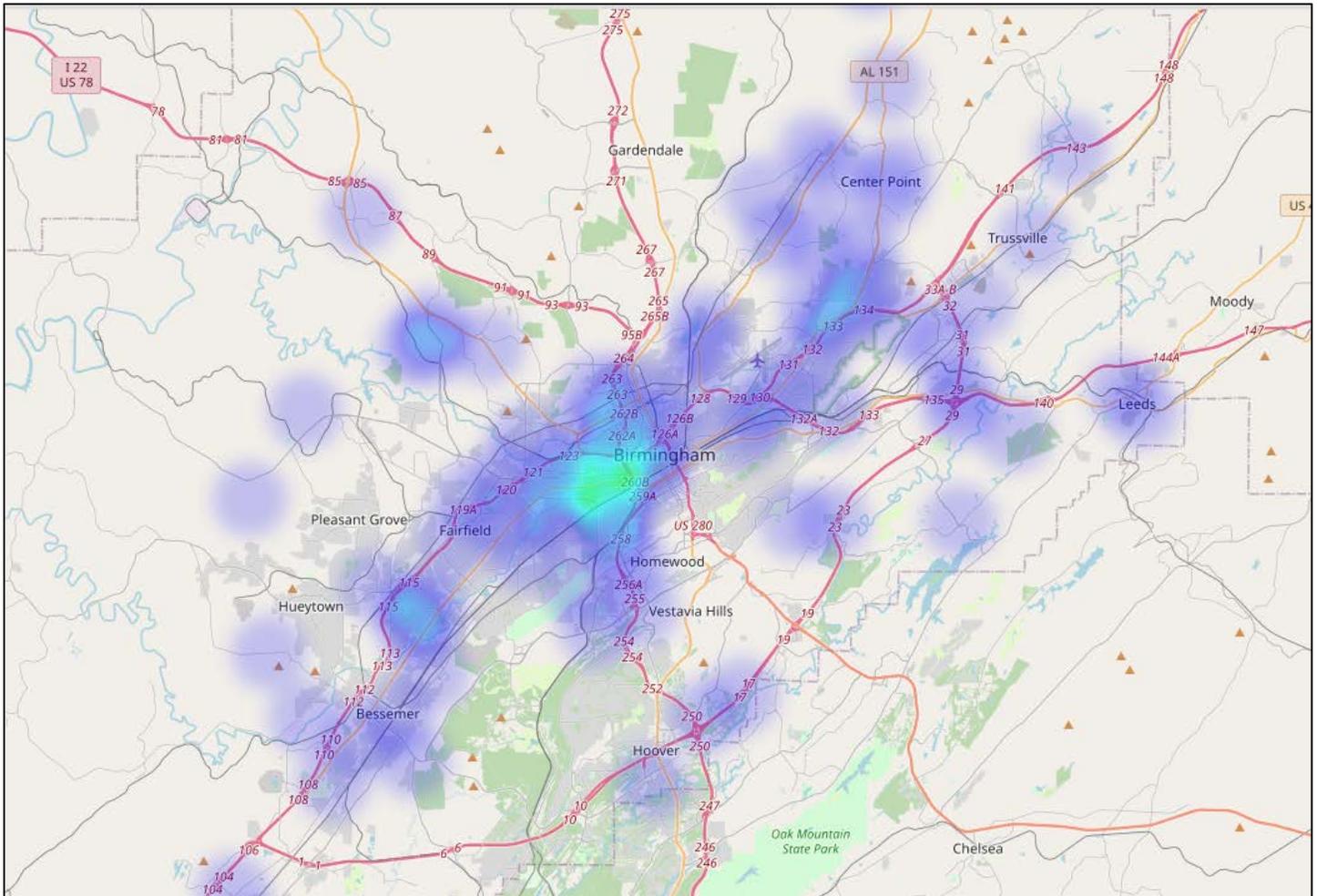
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 5.1: represents all motor vehicle deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



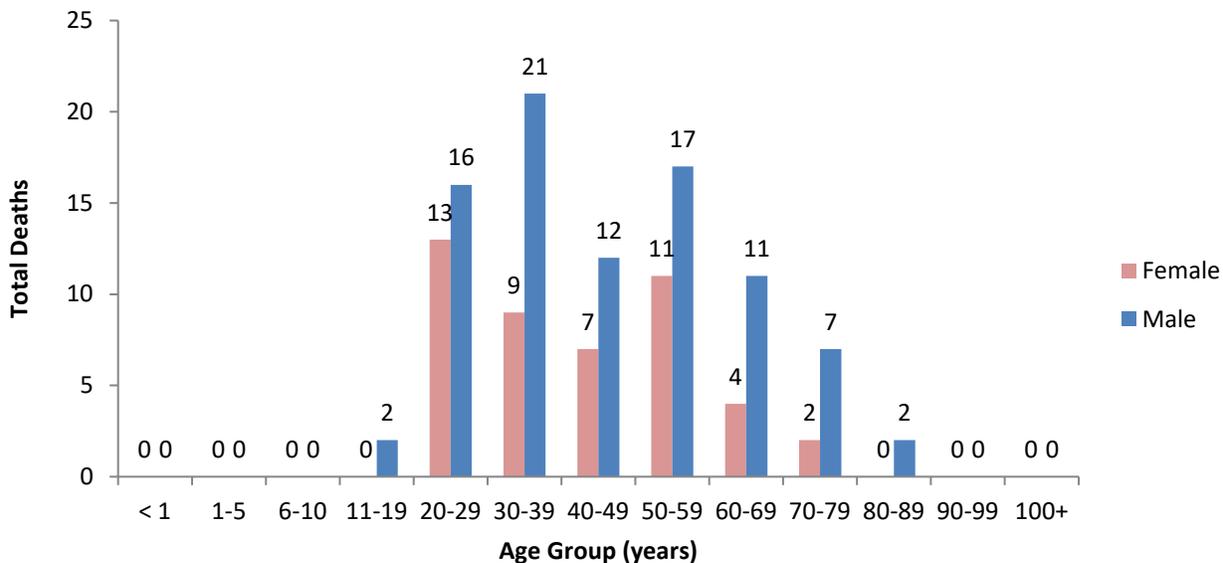
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Place of Injury, 2021

Figure 5.2: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by place of injury.



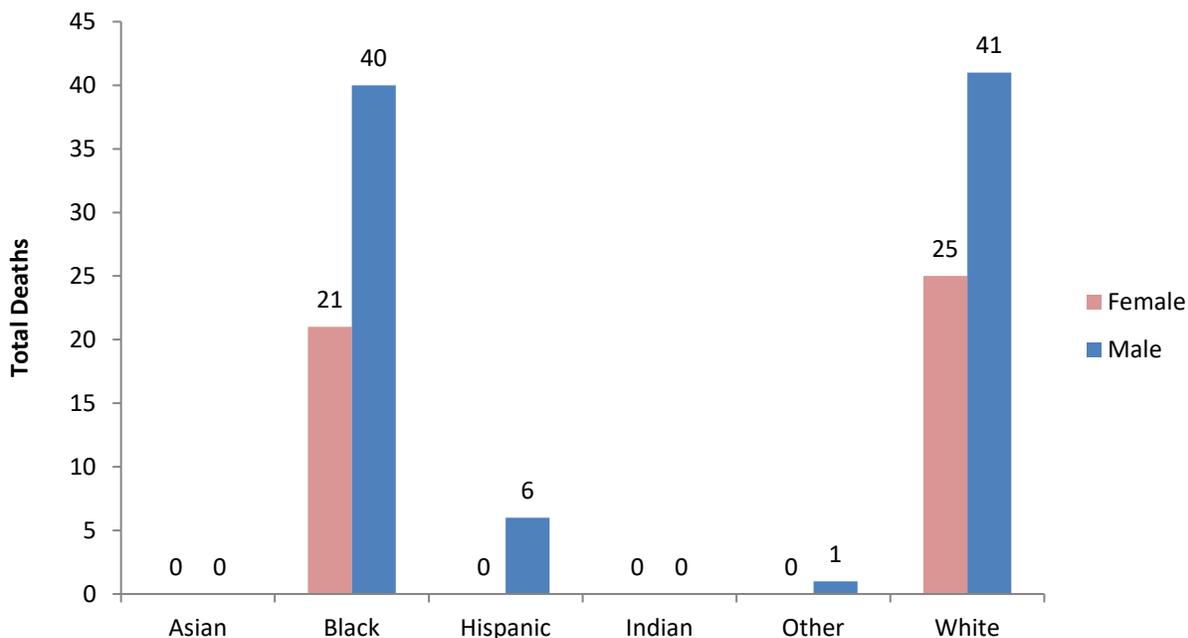
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021

Figure 5.3: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by gender and age group.



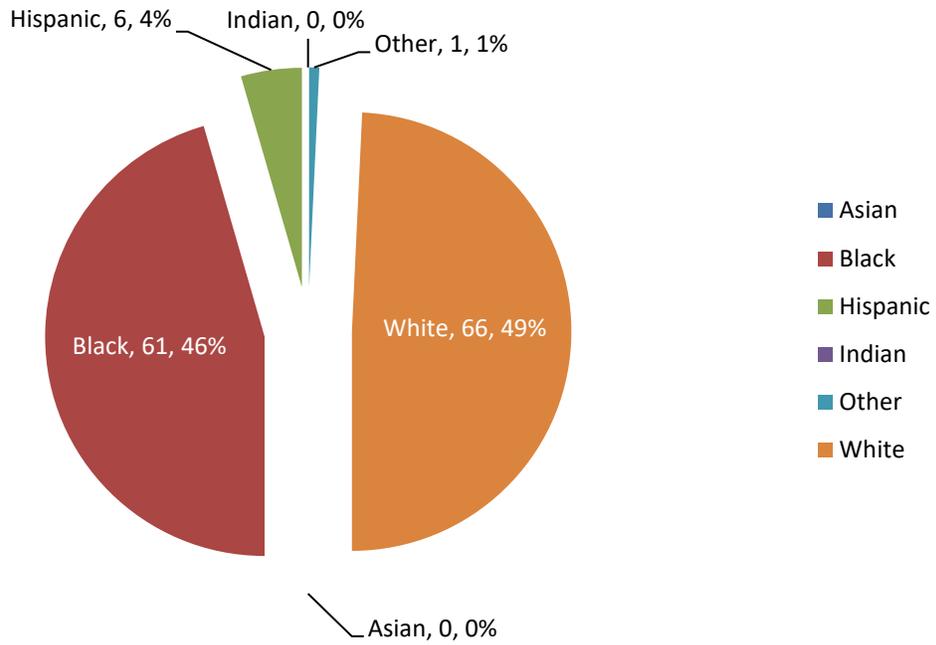
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021

Figure 5.4: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by gender and race.



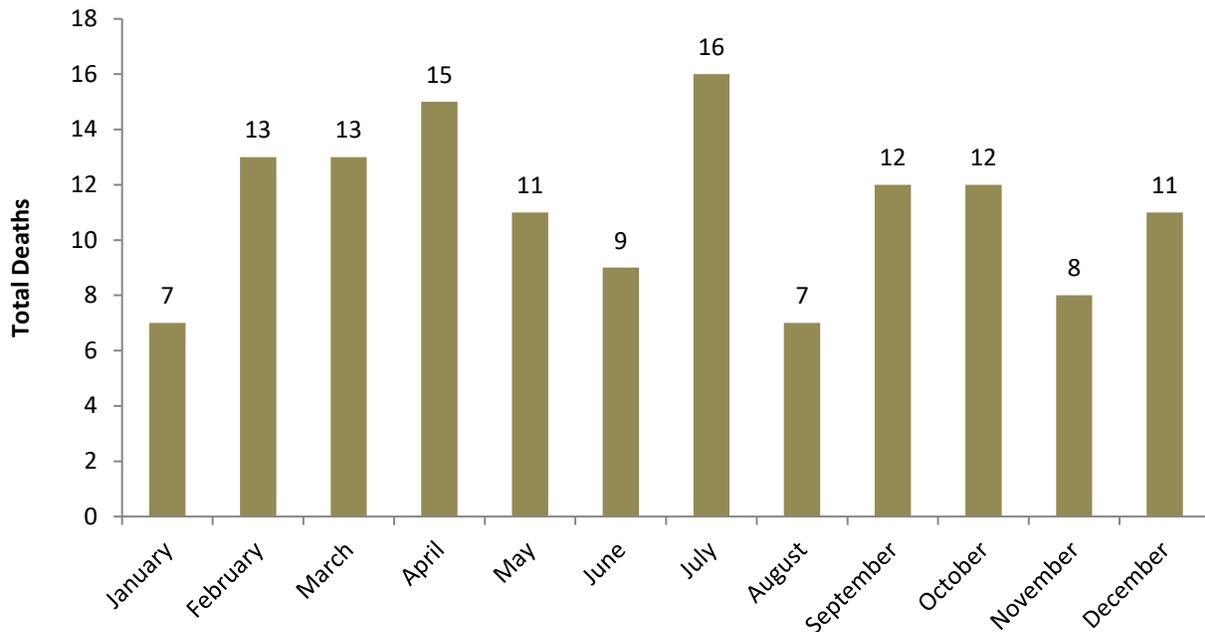
### Percentage of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Race, 2021

Figure 5.5: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by race.



### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Month of Death, 2021

Figure 5.6: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by month of death.



### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Means of Death, 2021

Table 5.1: N=134, represents all motor vehicle deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Motor-vehicle:	
Bicycle	2
Single vehicle	48
Multiple vehicles	42
Train	3
Pedestrian:	
Motor vehicle	30
Train	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>

## Section 6: Overdose Deaths

### Overview

The data in this section represent all overdose deaths investigated by the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office in the 2021 calendar year where the direct cause of death was due to an overdose/toxic level of illicit drug(s), prescription medication(s), ethanol (alcohol), or other poison(s).

This section does not reflect data on other types of deaths where drugs or ethanol contributed to the death but was not the direct cause of death. An example of a death that would not be included in this section would be a motor vehicle fatality where the decedent/driver of the vehicle was intoxicated, but the immediate cause of death was trauma due to the collision.

For the purpose of this report overdoses have been categorized into the following three Means of Death:

- Drug - refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to illicit drug(s) or, the direct cause of death was due to prescription medication(s) in combination with illicit drug(s). This category of overdoses does not include illicit or prescription opioids. For the purpose of this report "illicit drugs" refers to illegal street type drugs (i.e., cocaine, methamphetamine, etc.).
- Drug-Opioid – refers to all overdose deaths where the direct cause of death included either illicit opioid(s) (i.e., heroin, non-pharmaceutical fentanyl, etc.) and/or prescription opioid(s).
- Ethanol (alcohol) – refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to a toxic level of ethanol (alcohol).

Often drug overdoses are found to be a combination of illicit drugs, prescription medications, ethanol (alcohol), and/or other poisons; therefore, a single death might be represented multiple times in this section. Because of this it is important to recognize that in the following graphs and tables the totals for each of the drugs represents the number of occurrences that particular drug was found to be either the single cause of death or a component in conjunction with other drug(s) that combined was the cause of death.

## General Statistics and Notable Trends

There was a 32.8% increase in the total overdose deaths this past year, from 302 deaths in 2020 to 401 deaths in 2021.

There was a 44.7% increase in opioid deaths, from 237 deaths in 2020 to 343 deaths in 2021.

There was a 66.3% increase in fentanyl deaths, from 190 deaths in 2020 to 316 deaths in 2021.

There was a 67.1% increase in cocaine deaths, from 70 deaths in 2020 to 117 deaths in 2021.

There was an 8.1% decrease in heroin deaths, from 74 deaths in 2020 to 68 deaths in 2021.

Methamphetamine deaths have continued to rise for the sixth straight year, from 82 deaths in 2020 to 134 deaths in 2021.

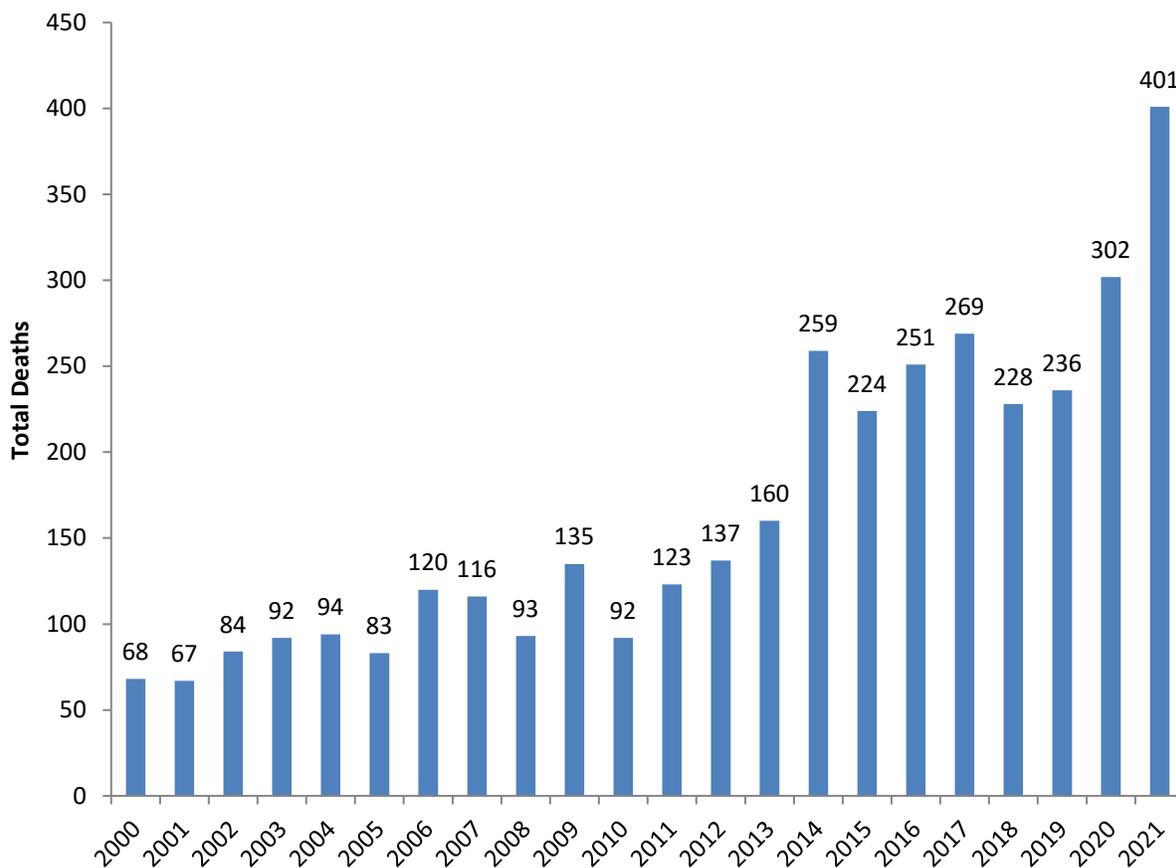
Overdose deaths increased 52.7%, from 112 deaths in 2020 to 171 deaths in 2021, in individuals who identified as Black.

Overdose deaths of females who identified as Black increased 88.9%, from 27 deaths in 2020 to 51 deaths in 2021.

## Historical Summary

### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2021

Figure 6.1: represents all overdose deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.

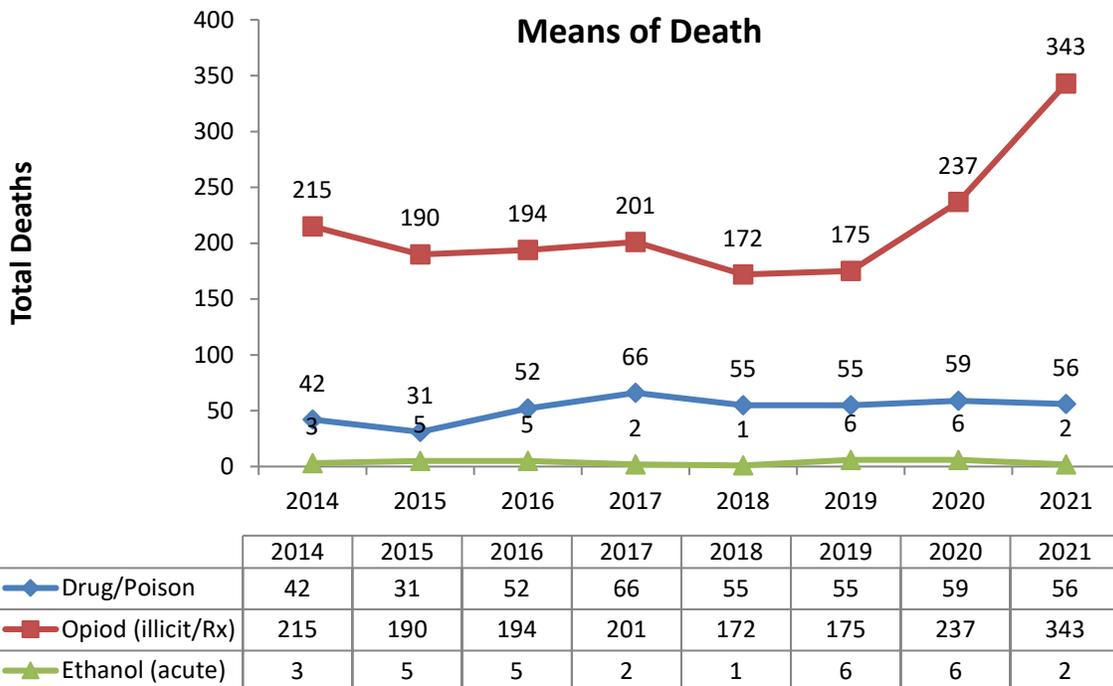


**Historical Summary: Means of Death, 2014-2021**

Table 6.1: represents all overdoses by means of death, 2014-2021.

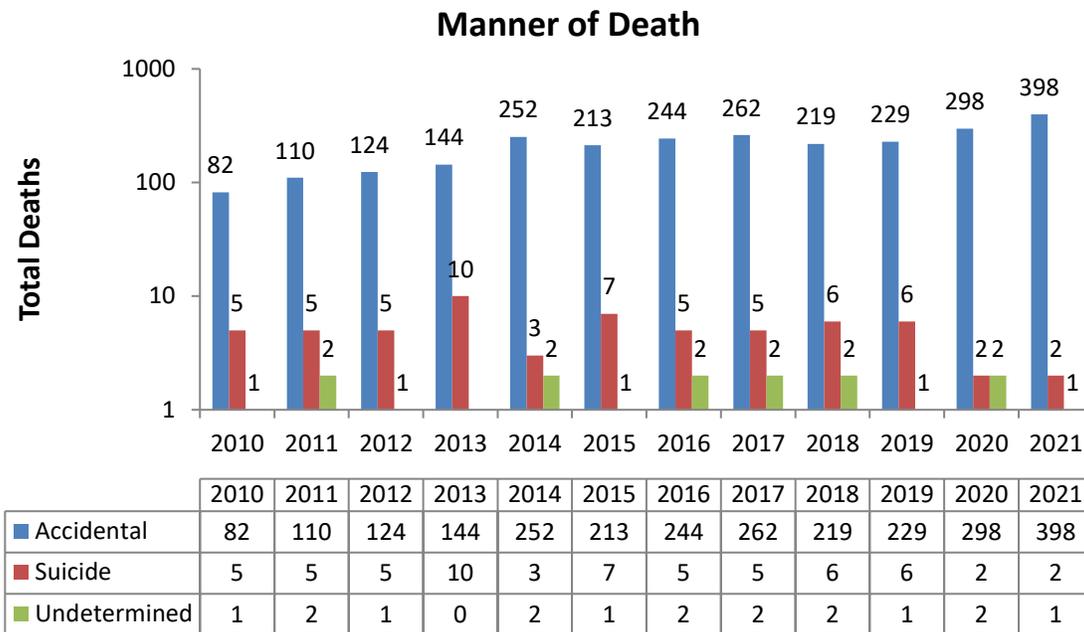
Year	Drug/ Poison	Opioid (illicit/Rx)	Ethanol (acute)	=	Total Overdose Deaths
2014	42	215	2	=	259
2015	31	190	3	=	224
2016	52	194	5	=	251
2017	66	201	2	=	269
2018	55	172	1	=	228
2019	55	175	6	=	236
2020	59	237	6	=	302
2021	56	343	2	=	401

Figure 6.2: represent all overdoses by means of death, 2014-2021.



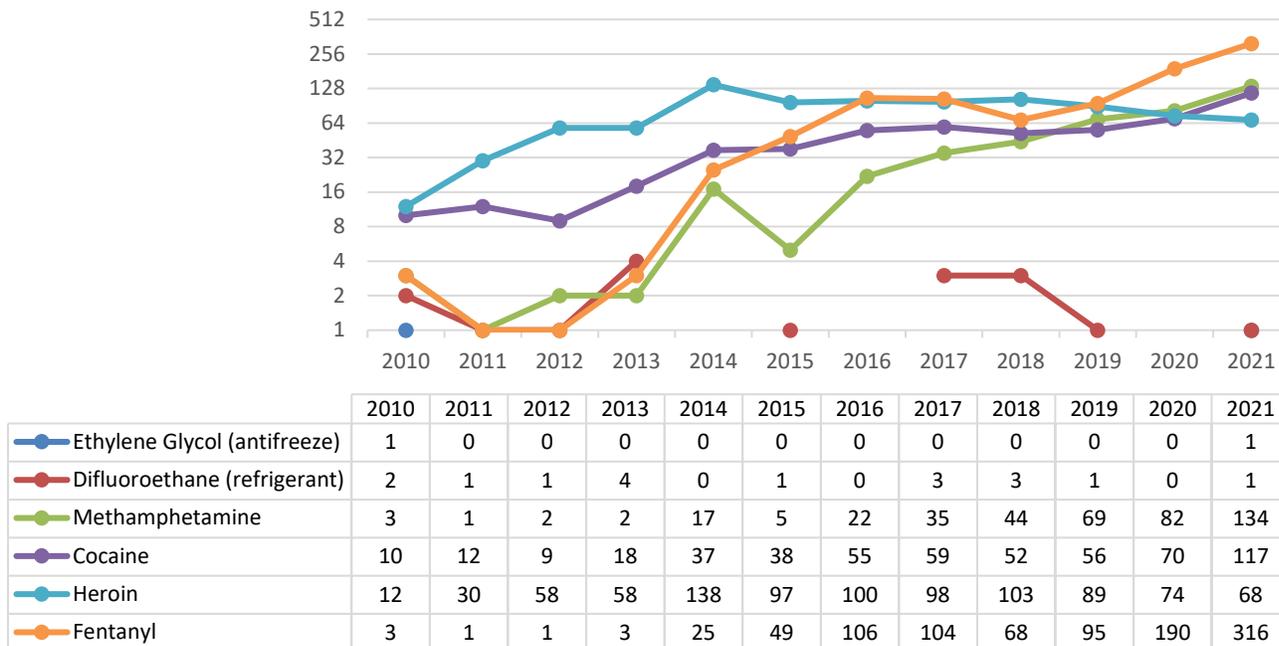
**Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2010-2021**

Figure 6.3: represents all overdoses by manner of death.



**Historical Summary: Illicit Drugs/Poisons, 2010-2021**

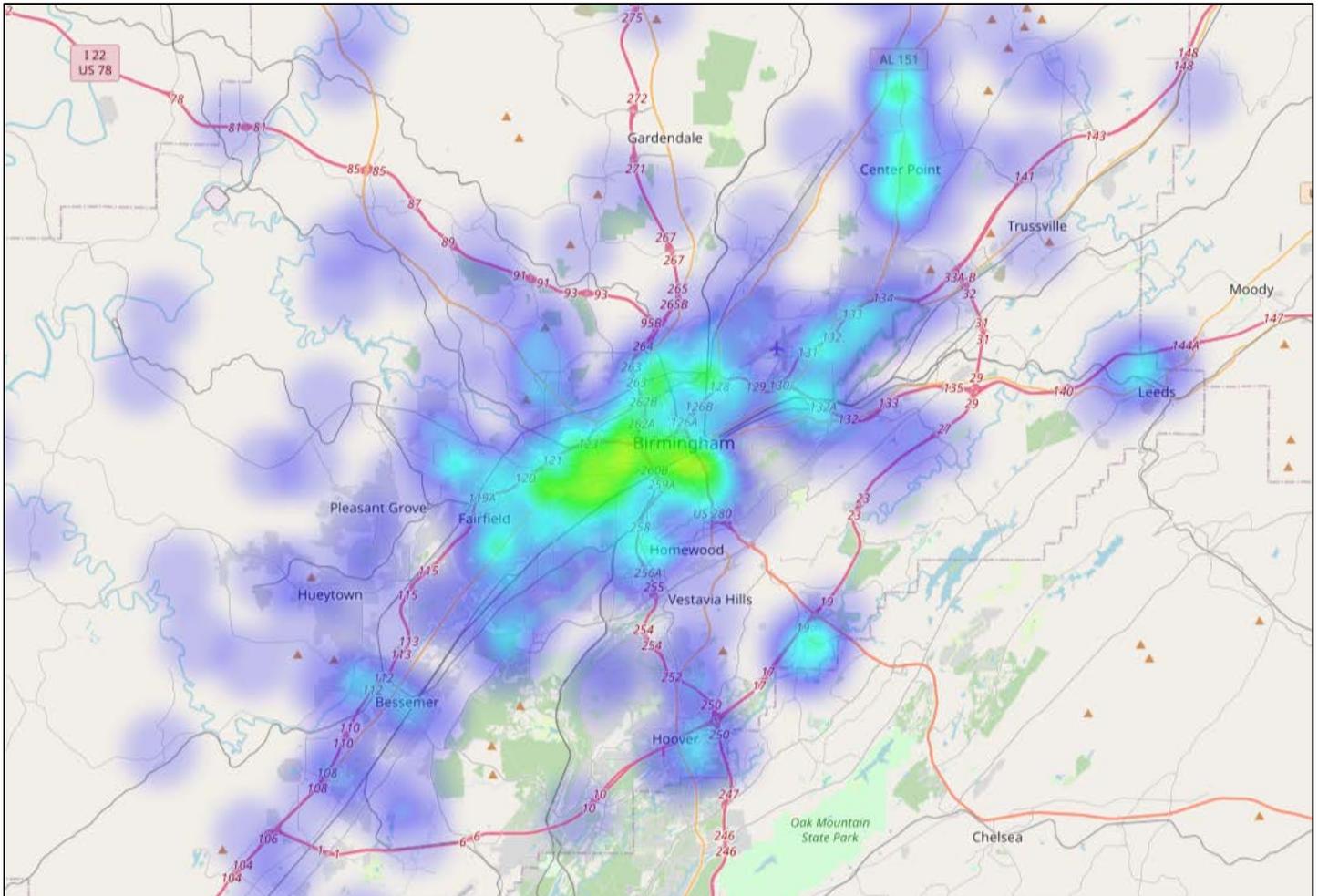
Figure 6.4: represents illicit drugs and poisons.



## 2021 Overdose Deaths

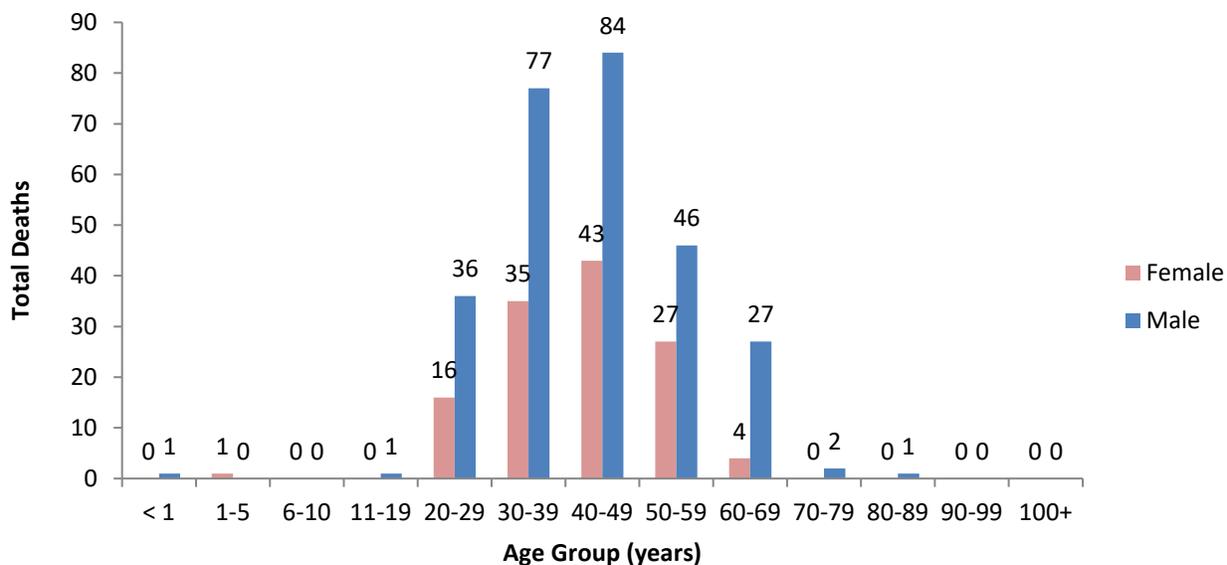
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Place of Injury, 2021

Figure 6.5: N=401, represents all overdose deaths by place of injury.



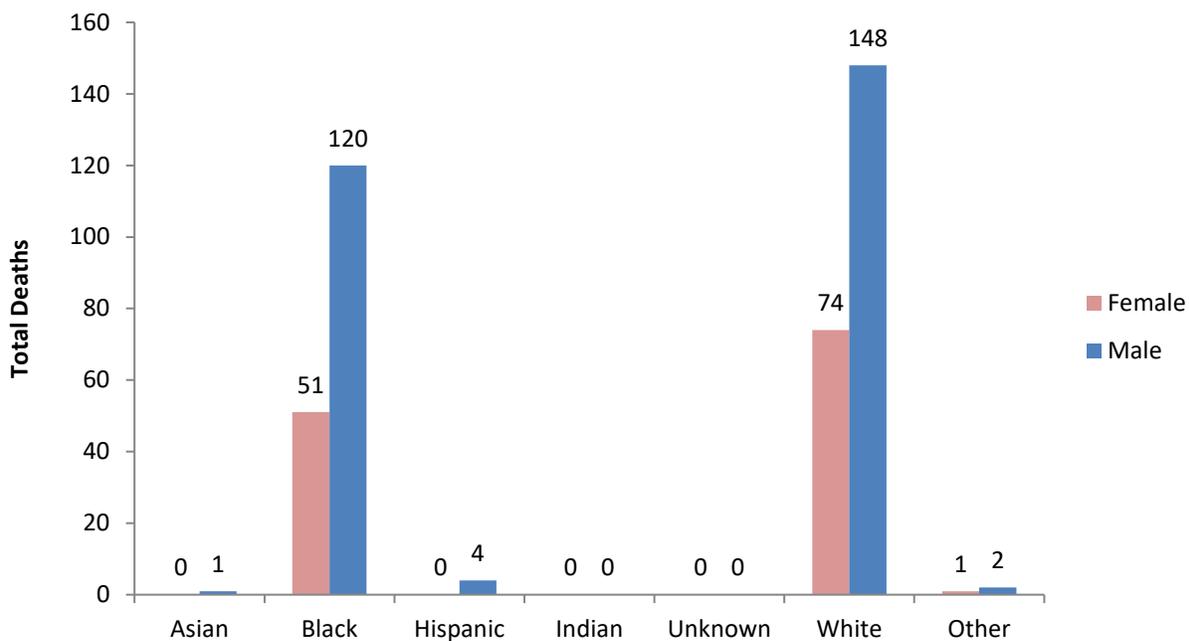
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2021

Figure 6.6: N=401, represents all overdose deaths by gender and age group.



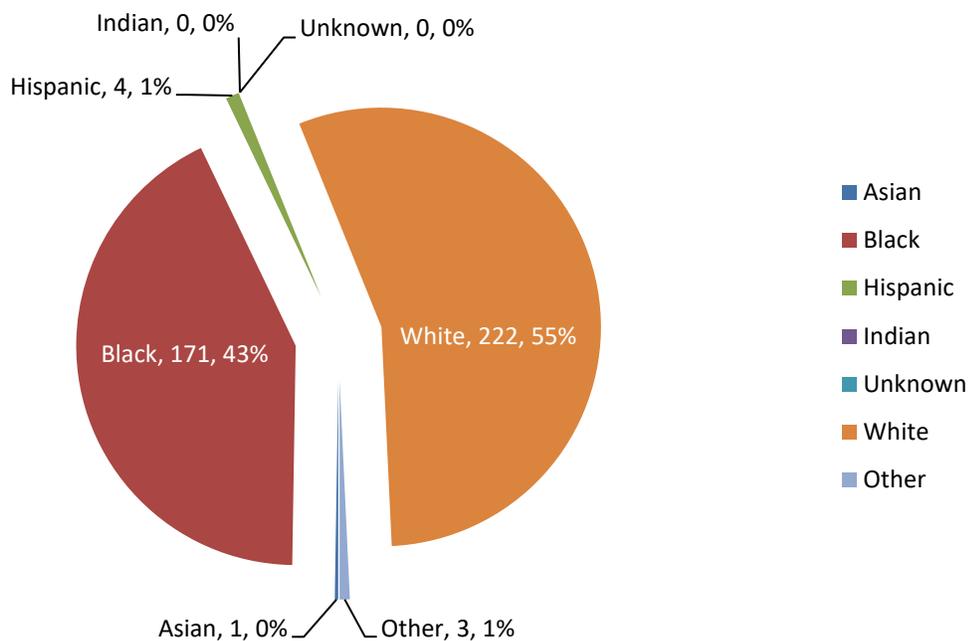
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Gender and Race, 2021

Figure 6.7: N=401, represents all overdose deaths by gender and race.



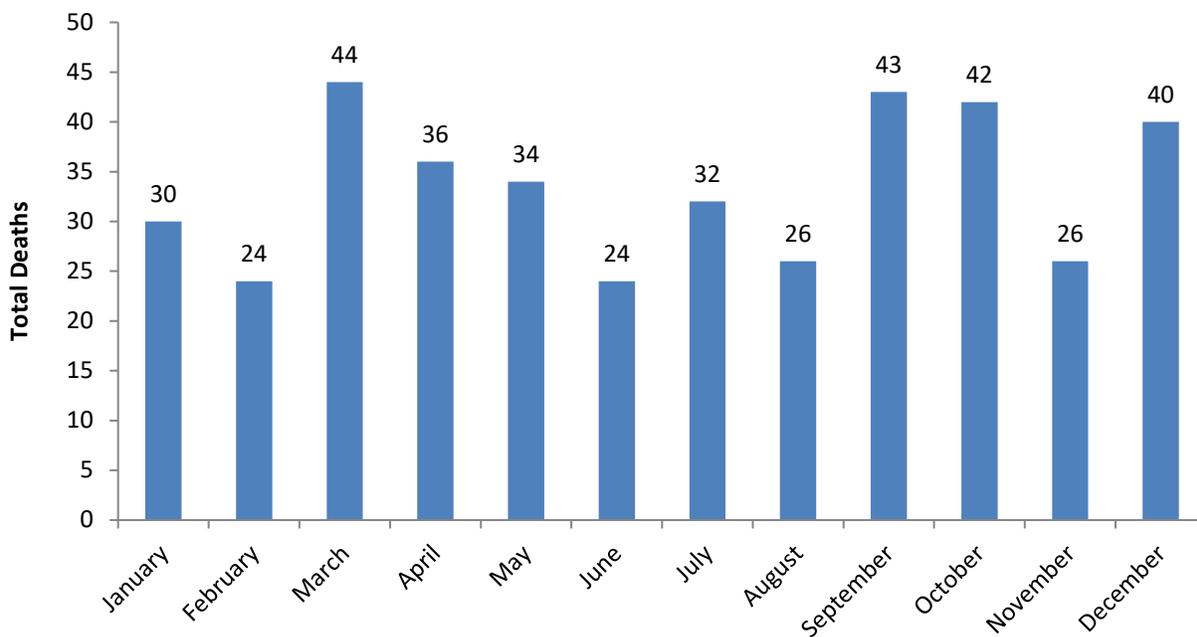
### Percentage of Overdose Deaths by Race, 2021

Figure 6.8: N=401, represents all overdose deaths by race.



### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Month of Death, 2021

Figure 6.9: N=401, represents all overdose deaths by month of death.



### Most Common Drugs Causing Death: 2010-2021

Table 6.2: A single death might contain multiple drugs; therefore, a single death might be represented multiple times in this table. The total for each drug represents the number of occurrences for that calendar year where that specific drug was found to be either the single cause of death or a component in conjunction with other drug(s) that combined was the cause of death. Also, the deaths represented in this table might be a result of a combination of prescription drug(s) and illicit drug(s). Often drug overdoses are found to be a combination of both prescription and illicit drugs.

Drug	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Opioids:</b>												
Hydrocodone	8	7	8	12	28	11	13	15	12	11	11	13
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	1
Fentanyl	3	1	1	3	25	49	106	104	68	95	190	316
Methadone	22	13	11	21	21	17	16	7	9	8	5	8
Morphine	10	17	12	5	7	3	5	3	0	2	8	2
Oxycodone	4	8	4	13	21	11	12	11	8	13	12	13
Tramadol	2	0	1	6	5	3	3	9	5	5	3	5
<b>Benzodiazepines:</b>												
Alprazolam (Xanax)	5	3	7	12	32	8	31	28	15	16	19	22
Clonazepam (Klonopin)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Diazepam (Valium)	3	1	2	7	11	5	3	6	4	2	4	3
<b>Barbiturates:</b>												
Butalbital	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Phenobarbital	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Antidepressants:</b>												
Citalopram (Celexa)	4	2	1	1	2	0	1	5	1	2	2	0
Nortriptyline (Pamelor)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Velafaxine (Effexor)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other:</b>												
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amphetamine	3	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	2	1	6	4
Carisoprodol (Soma)	1	3	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fluoxetine (Prozac)	3	2	1	1	1	4	1	3	0	1	0	1

Drug	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gabapentin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Promethazine (Phenergan)	0	0	1	3	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	0
Quetiapine (Seroquel)	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	7	1	0
Sertraline (Zoloft)	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Trazodone (Oleptro)	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1
Gamma- Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Ethanol (alcohol)	0	13	26	16	33	30	24	38	37	40	45	52

### End Notes

1. Pursuant to State of Alabama Vital Records rules, stillborn deaths are not assigned a manner of death.
2. Tissue of no forensic value.
3. The City of Fairfield no longer has a police department, with law enforcement services provided by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

**End of Report**