

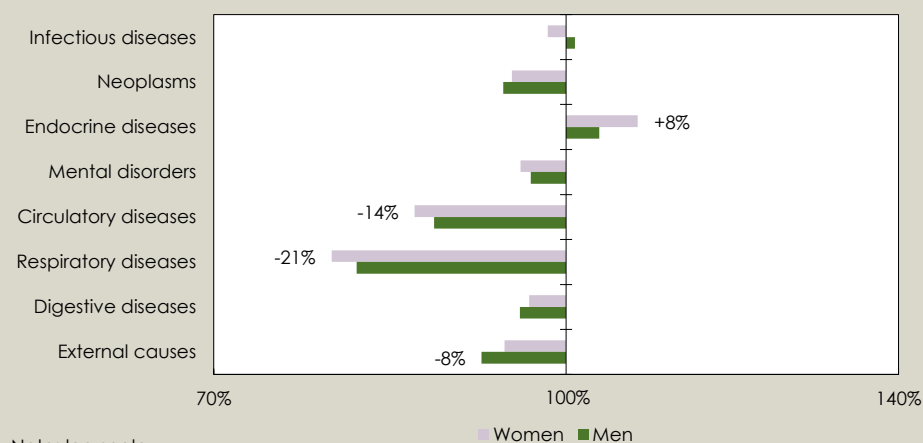
Statistics on Causes of Death 2020

In 2020, 98,229 people died in Sweden, consisting of 48,775 women and 49,454 men. The leading cause of death was in the broad group of circulatory diseases, followed by cancer diseases and covid-19. The pattern in cause of death shows no unexpected changes from previous years, except for covid-19, being a new disease. The association of covid-19 with level of education shows similarities to other causes of death. However, covid-19 shows an unequal distribution across country of birth.

Changes to previous years

In 2020, 98,229 people died in Sweden, which was more than in previous years. The average number of deaths between 2015–2019 was 91,070. A large part of the increase is due to mortality in covid-19. Covid-19 (9,441 deaths) was the third leading cause of death after circulatory diseases (27,973) and cancer diseases (23,485). Figure 1 shows the age-standardized mortality for some other major causes of death in 2020 as a percentage of the 2015–2019 average. An unusually large reduction (21 percent) was seen for deaths due to respiratory diseases, which are dominated by pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Other changes are as expected with regard to long-term trends, within circulatory diseases, cancers, and endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases, or are within such random variations that are normal from one year to another.

Figure 1. Age-standardised mortality in 2020 by cause of death, compared to 2015–2019 average, percent

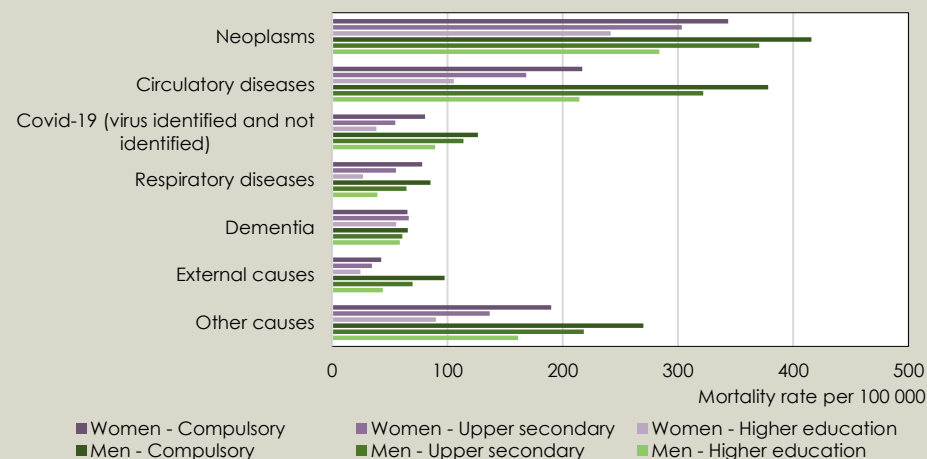


Cause of death by level of education

Figure 2 shows some of the major causes of death in Sweden by level of education. Mortality differs markedly between higher and lower levels of education in

all the major causes of death. The differences, in relative terms, are least for dementia and tumor diseases. They are greatest for respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and external causes of death. The relationship between education level and age-adjusted mortality is generally somewhat stronger among women. Mortality in covid-19 follows the same pattern as other causes of death.

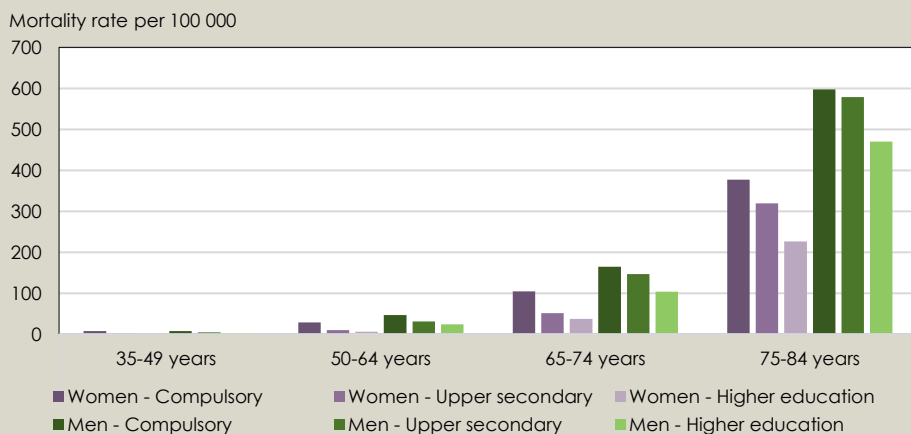
Figure 2. Age-standardised mortality in 2020 by level of education, sex, cause of death, 35–84 years



Source: cause of death register, The National Board of Health and Welfare and the register on participation in education, Statistics Sweden

Figure 3 shows covid-19 mortality by age and level of education. Two general patterns are that the association with level of education is stronger in younger age groups and that the effect of level of education is greater for women than for men regardless of age.

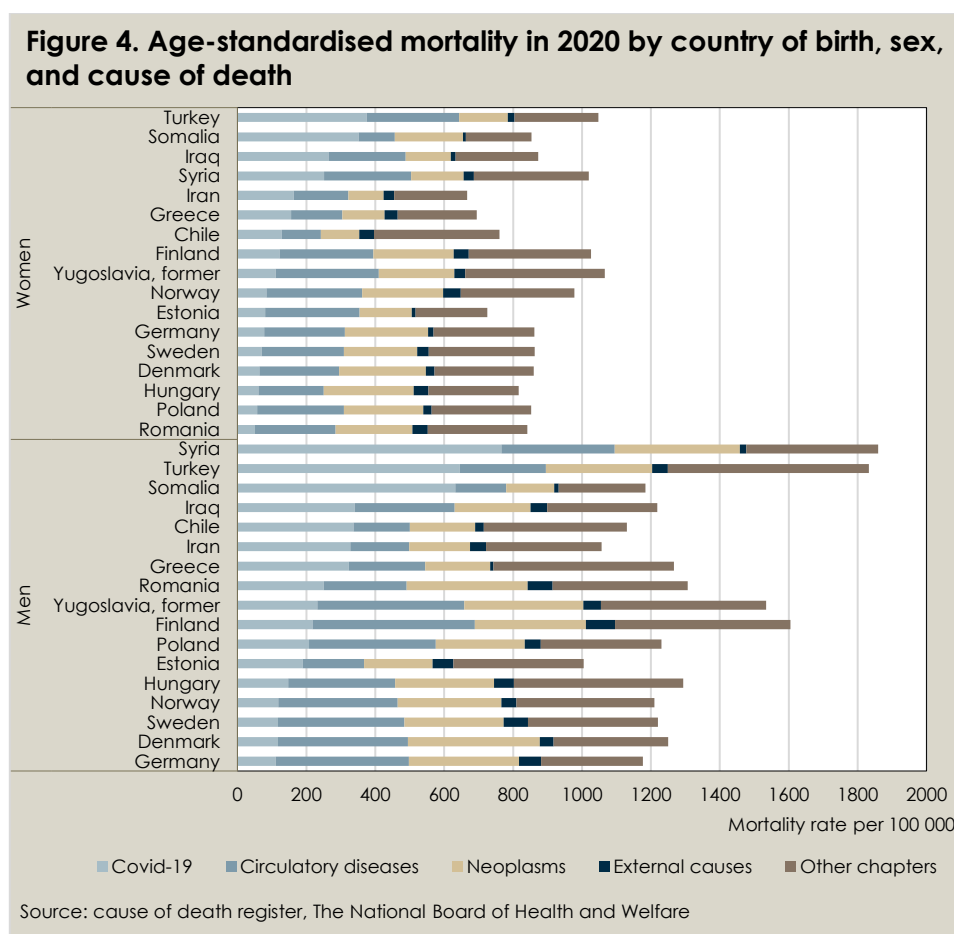
Figure 3. Age-standardised mortality for covid-19 in 2020 by level of education, sex, and age group



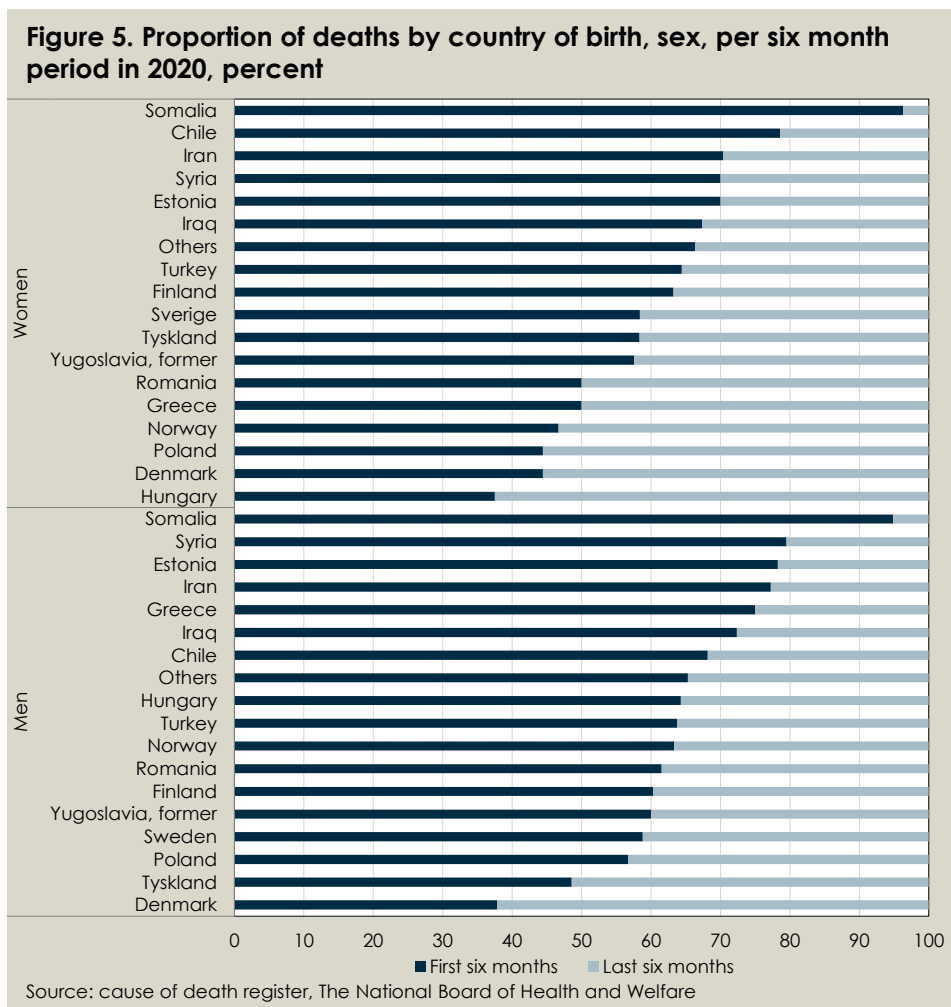
Source: cause of death register, The National Board of Health and Welfare

Mortality by country of birth

Figure 4 shows the age-standardized mortality in some large cause-of-death groups by country of birth and sex. Country of birth is included in the figure if at least 150 registered deaths had said country of birth in 2020. The whole bar shows the total mortality by country of birth. Among people born in Somalia, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, among others, a very large proportion of deaths in 2020 were caused by covid-19 as the underlying cause of death.



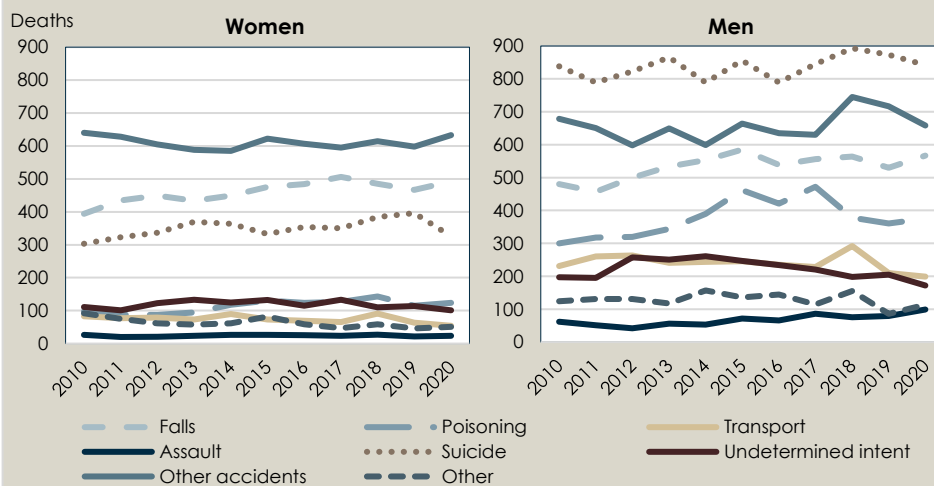
Covid-19 came in two clear waves under 2020. The first wave began in March, the second wave began in October and the second wave continued after the turn of the year 2020/21. The first wave caused more deaths than the second wave in 2020. The part of the second wave that continued after the turn of the year is not included in the statistics. In total, the deaths in covid-19 were distributed with approximately 60 per cent in the first half of the year and 40 per cent in the second half of the year. Figure 5 shows the proportion of deaths per six months by country of birth. Groups with high mortality in covid-19 showed a larger proportion of deaths during the first wave. Among people born in Somalia, for example, almost all deaths occurred during the first half of the year.



External causes

Figur 6 shows external causes of mortality for the years 2010–2020. Among men, suicide is the leading external cause of death. Among women, the categories “other accidents” and fall accidents were the leading external cause of death. Whereas, for men, these were second and third most common. The group “other accidents” largely consists of fractures with an unspecified cause and is likely comprised of fall accidents. The number of deaths in this category has increased for women, and decreased for men, compared to 2019. Furthermore, and compared with 2019, there is an increase in fall accidents and a decrease in suicide for both women and men. An increase in deaths due to assault is seen among men, and to a lesser extent also for women.

Figure 6. Deaths from external causes by sex, cause, years 2010–2020



Source: cause of death register, The National Board of Health and Welfare

More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information here:

www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/

If you want to use our statistical database:

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