



2D.

PATTERNS OF PREMATURE MORTALITY

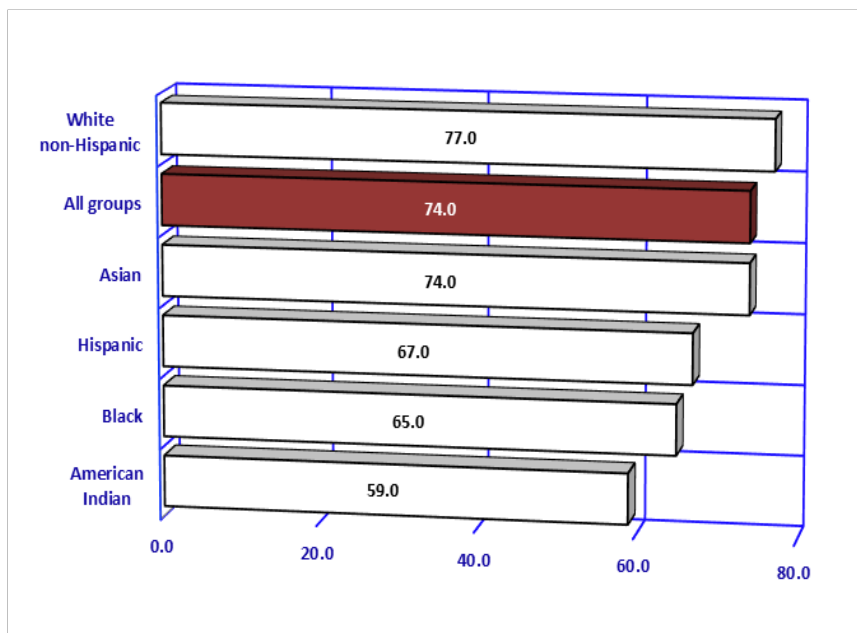
In 2021, among the race/ethnic minority groups (Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander), people younger than 25 years represented 41.4 percent of the group total (n= 3,281,312), while among White non-Hispanics the same age demographic accounted for 23.6 percent of the group total (n= 4,004,058). In contrast, people aged 65 years and older accounted for 26.7 percent of White non-Hispanics, but only 8.5 percent of all ethnic minority groups combined (percentages based on race-and-age-specific population denominators in **Table 10C-1**).

Arizona's population distribution by age and race/ethnicity is related to patterns of mortality among these subgroups. In 2021, of all deaths among the elderly (65 years and older), 78.6 percent were White non-Hispanics, 13.2 percent were Hispanic or Latino, with the remaining three racial/ethnic groups comprising only 7.7 percent of all deaths in this age group (**Table 2C-26**). Looking at younger ages, Native American children comprised only 4.9 percent of Arizona's population age 1-14, but accounted for 12.4 percent of all childhood deaths. Native American adolescents (ages 15-19) represented only 4.8 percent of all adolescents, but accounted for 10.4 percent of all adolescent deaths. Finally, Native American young adults (ages 20-44) represented 4.5 percent of all young adults but comprised 17.5 percent of all young adult deaths. In summary, Arizona's racial/ethnic minority groups tend to experience mortality earlier in life than Arizona's White non-Hispanics.

Beginning with the 2005 edition of the report, information about the arithmetic mean age at death was supplemented with information about the median age, or the age in the center of the distribution when sorted by age (see **Table 2D-1**). The median age is higher than the arithmetic mean age in negatively skewed distributions.

2D. PATTERNS OF PREMATURE MORTALITY

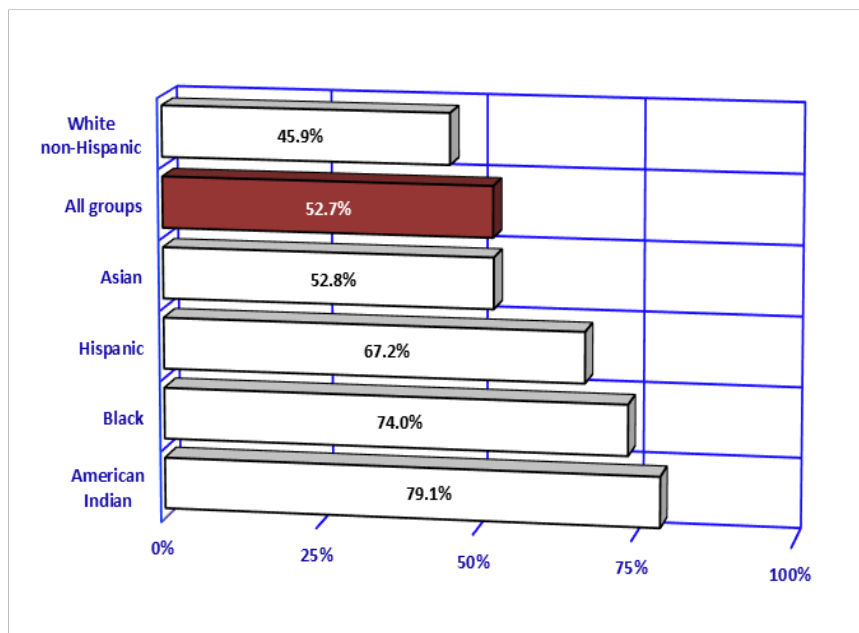
Figure 2D-1
Median Age at Death by Race/Ethnicity, Arizona, 2021



The median age at death reflected a change from 76 years in 2014 to 2020, to 74 years in 2021 (**Table 2D-1**). In other words, one of every two Arizonans who died in 2021 was older than 74 years of age. Among Arizona females, the median age at death was 77 years old when they died in 2021. Among males, the median age at death was 72 years in 2021. **Table 2D-1** shows both the median age at death by race/ethnicity and gender from 2011-2021.

In 2021, compared to White non-Hispanics, on average Asians were 3 years younger at time of death, Hispanics were 10 years younger, Blacks were 12 years younger, and American Indian residents of Arizona were 18 years younger (based on the median age at death).

Figure 2D-2
Percent of Deaths before Expected^a Years of Life Reached by Race/Ethnicity, Arizona, 2021



In 2021, the percent of deaths before expected years of life reached (a premature death ratio) was 52.7 percent, a level that changed from prior years (52.2 in 2020, 55.6 in 2019, and 55.1 for both 2018 and 2017 (**Figure 2D-2**).

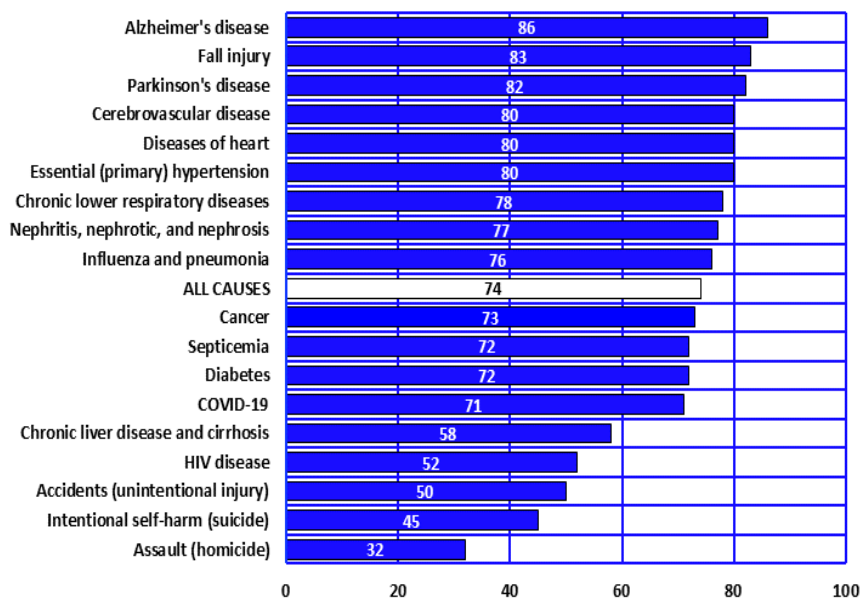
As expected, based on the findings for average and median age at death, White non-Hispanics were the only group with less than 50 percent of all deaths (45.9 percent) occurring before the expected years of life were reached (**Figure 2D-2**).

Among American Indians, nearly eight out of ten deaths (79.1 percent) were premature (**Table 2D-2**).

Note: ^a Expected years of life at birth for all U.S. residents (76.1 years).

2D. PATTERNS OF PREMATURE MORTALITY

Figure 2D-3
Median Age at Death for Selected Leading Causes of Death,
Arizona, 2021

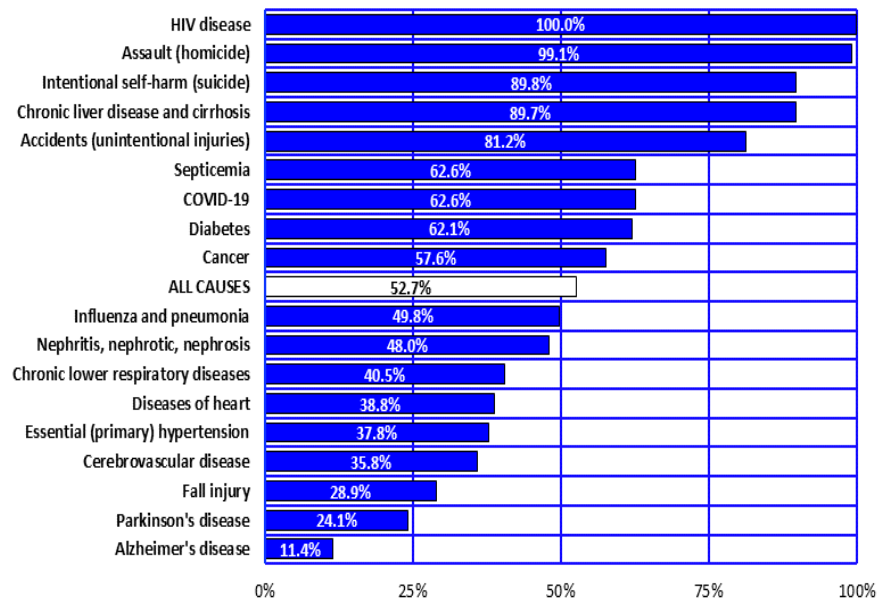


In 2021, *Alzheimer's disease* had the highest median age of death at 86 years (**Figure 2D-3**), exceeding by 12 years the median age at death for all causes (**Figure 2D-3, Table 2D-3**).

Among the leading causes of death, *homicide* had the lowest median age at death of 32 years.

From 2010-2015, *cancer* replaced *diseases of the heart* as the leading cause of death (based on the number of deaths). This epidemiologic transition in mortality risks is likely to have long lasting implications for the life expectancy of Arizonans, because the median age at death from *cancer* (73 years) is substantially lower than the median age at death from *diseases of the heart* (80 years).

Figure 2D-4
Percent of Deaths before Expected Years of Life^a Reached for
Selected Leading Causes of Death, Arizona, 2021



Only 11.4 percent of deaths from *Alzheimer's disease* occurred before the age of 76.1 years, i.e., before the expected years of life were reached. In contrast, almost all deaths from *homicide* were premature (99.1 percent; **Figure 2D-4, Table 2D-4**). The median age at death from *homicide* was 32 years in 2021, showing a decrease from 34 years recorded in 2020 (**Figure 2D-3, Table 2D-3**).

A minority of deaths from *diseases of heart* were premature (38.8 percent). In contrast 57.6 percent of deaths from *cancer* occurred before the expected years of life were reached.

Notes: ^a Expected years of life at birth for all U.S. residents (76.1 years);