

Annual  
Report

2023

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Jefferson County  
Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office



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## Introduction

In 2023, the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) was notified of approximately 88% 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).



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.

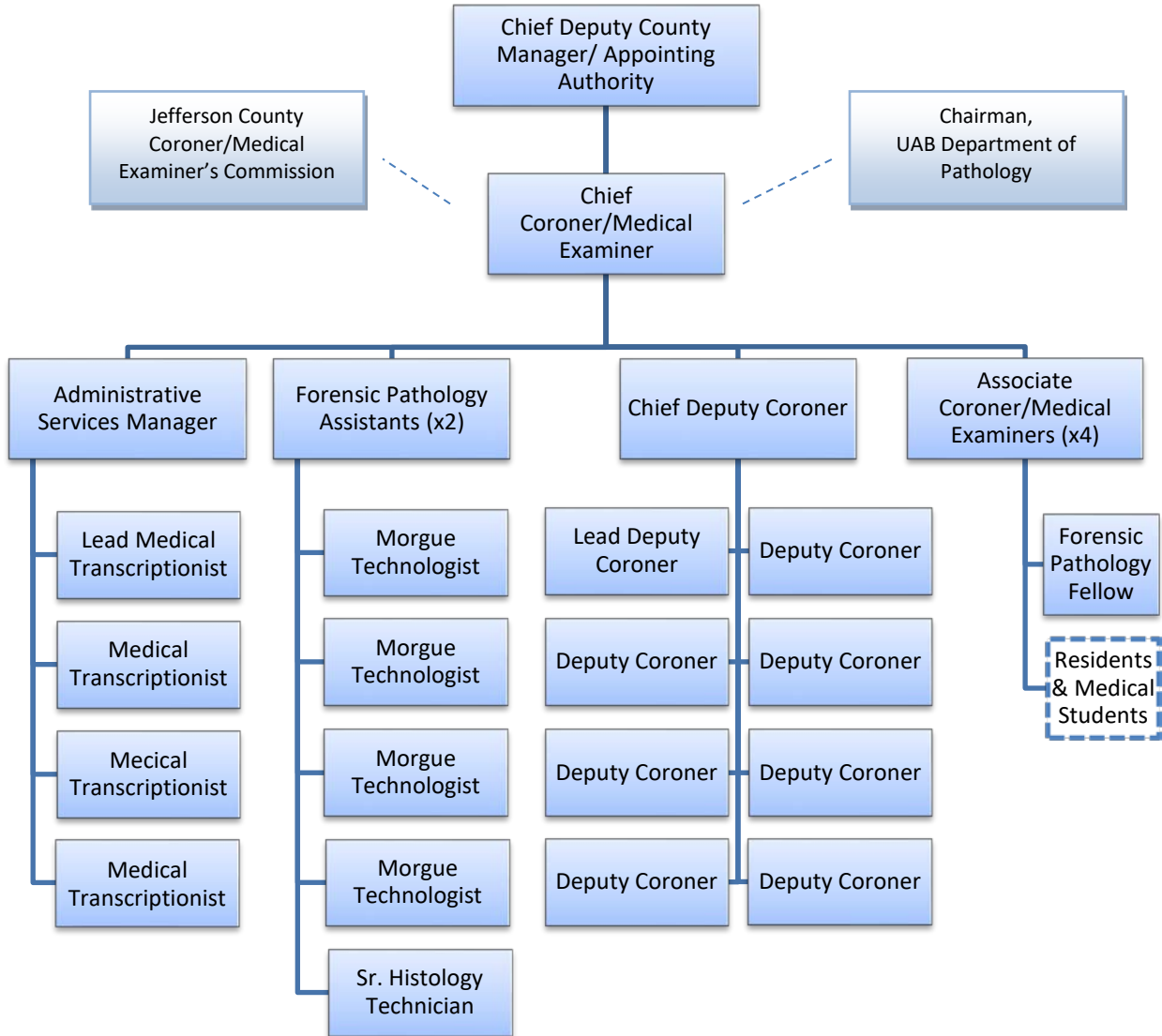
Declined Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction is declined if investigators (i.e., law enforcement, paramedics, and/or medical staff, and the deputy coroner) find no signs of foul play, injury, and/or evidence of current substance abuse associated with the death and if the decedent has a documented significant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

### 2022-2023 Comparison

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

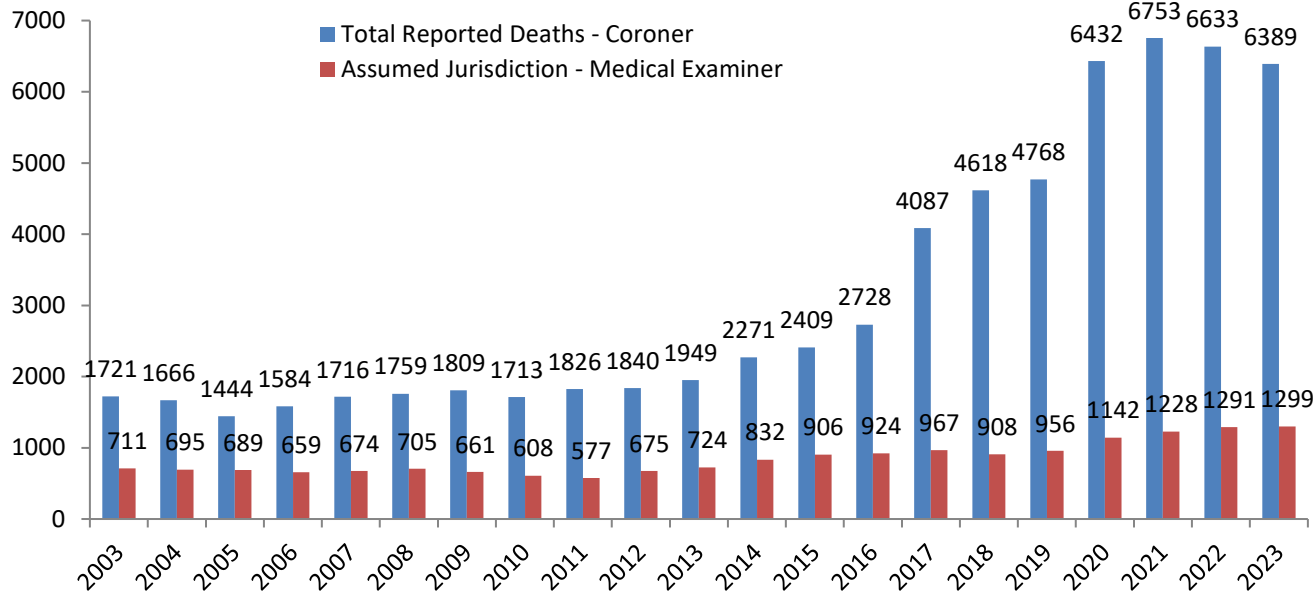
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Total deaths reported to the JCCMEO:	6,633	6,389	-3.68
Jurisdiction Assumed:	1,291	1,299	+0.62
Accident	615	682	+10.89
Homicide	204	197	-3.43
Natural	328	296	-9.76
Suicide	100	77	-23.00
Undetermined	42	46	+9.52
Pending	0	0	0
Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	2	1	-50.00
Human tissue <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0
Jurisdiction Declined:	5,342	5,081	-4.89
Natural Causes	3,660	3,734	+2.02
Hospice	1,391	1,060	-23.80
Safekeeping	281	287	+2.14
Non-human	10	9	-10.00
Cremation Permits	3,867	4,284	+10.78
Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases:	271	222	17.71
Total bodies transported by JCCMEO:	1,572	1,586	+0.90
Examination	1,291	1,299	+0.62
Safekeeping	281	287	+2.14
Total Examinations:	1,291	1,299	+0.62
Autopsies	856	871	+1.75
External Examination	435	428	-1.61
No examination performed	0	0	0
Organ/Tissue Approvals:			
Organ/Tissue	82	54	-34.15
Cornea	110	120	9.10
Toxicology performed:			
Yes	1,221	1,202	-1.56
No	70	97	+38.57
Total scenes visited by investigators:	772	728	-5.70
Total County Burials (Indigent and Unclaimed):	106	147	+36.11
Unidentified remains (cumulative total):	54	53	-1.85

<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.

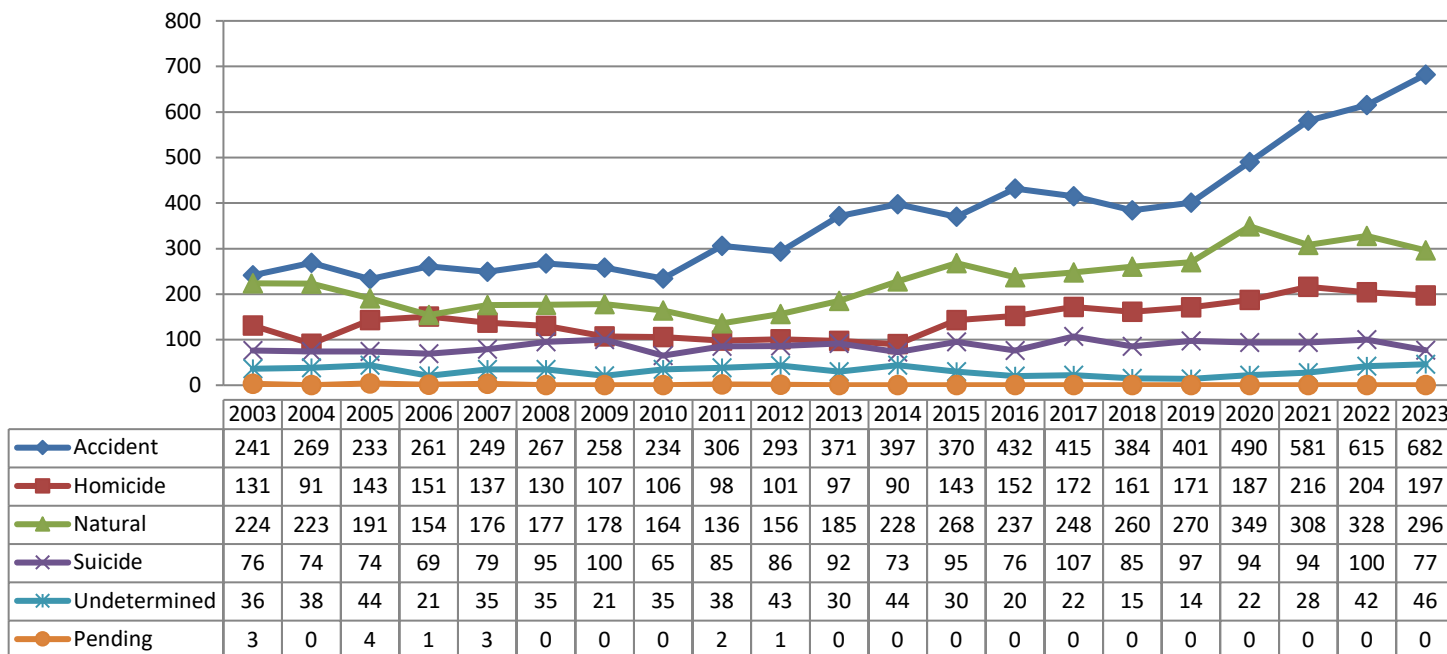
### Historical Summary: Reported Deaths / Assumed Jurisdiction, 2003-2023

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



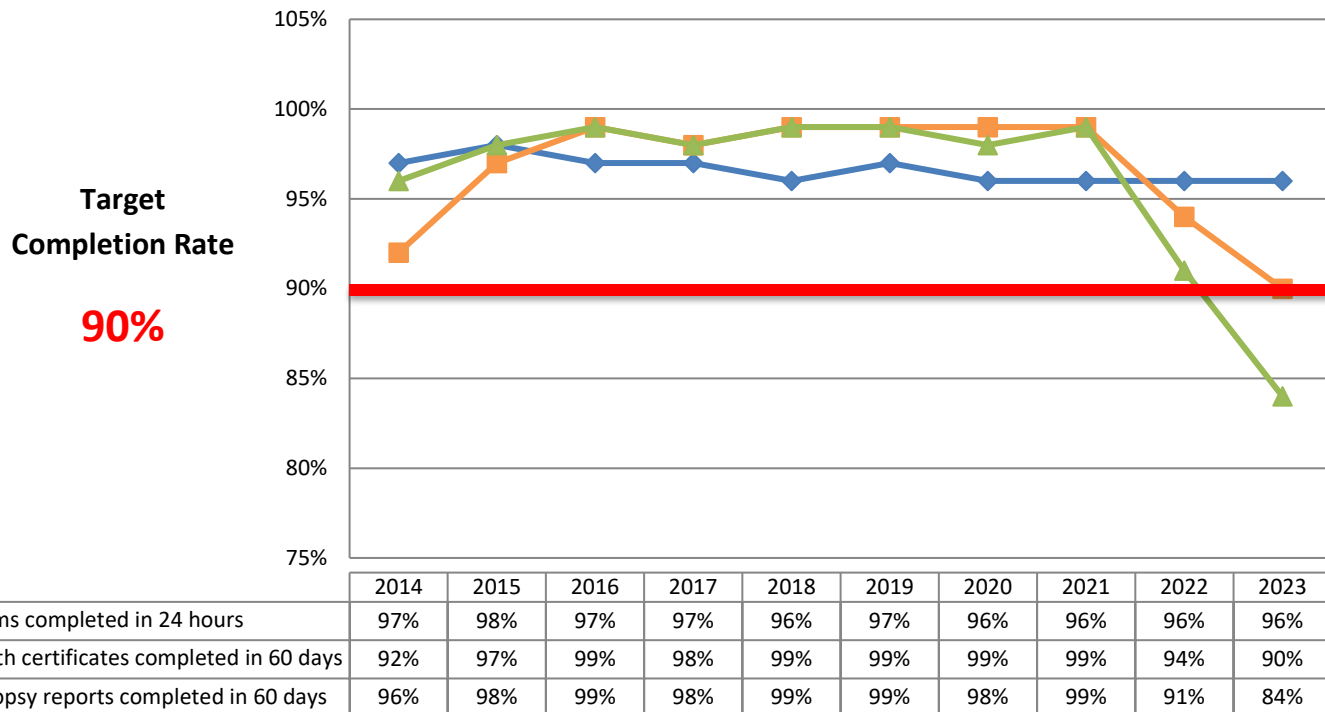
### Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2003-2023

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



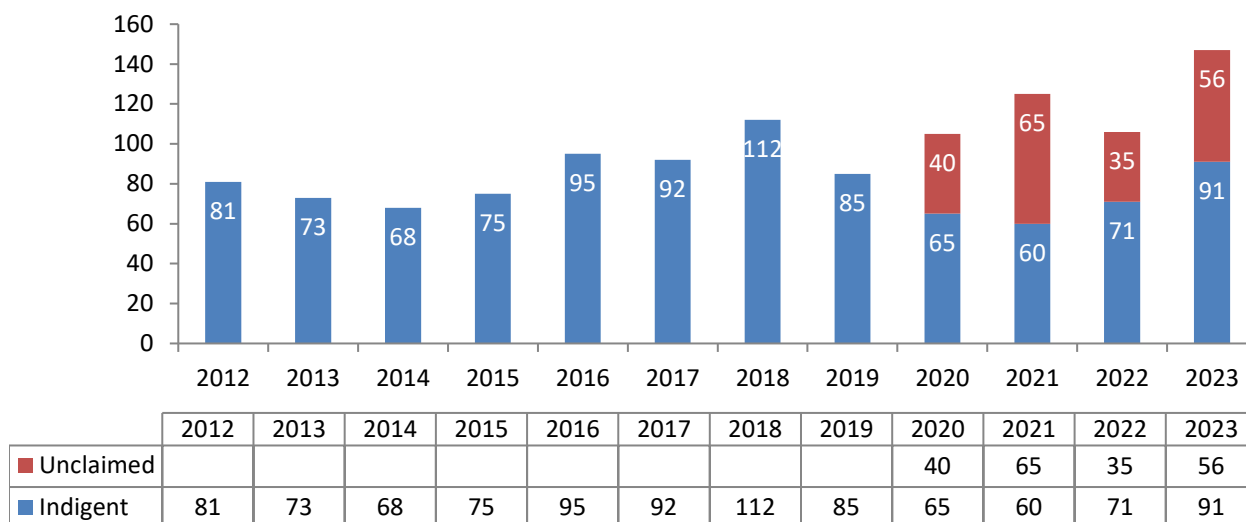
### Historical Summary: Turnaround Time Percentages, 2014-2023

Figure 1.3: represents turnaround time percentages for examinations completed within 24 hours and, death certificates and autopsy reports completed within 60 days. Target completion rate is 90%.



### Historical Summary: County Burials, 2012-2023

Figure 1.4: represents the total number of county burials by year of burial.



*Indigent / Unclaimed metric was not recorded prior to 2020.*

## Section 2: 2023 Total Case Data

### General Statistics and Notable Trends

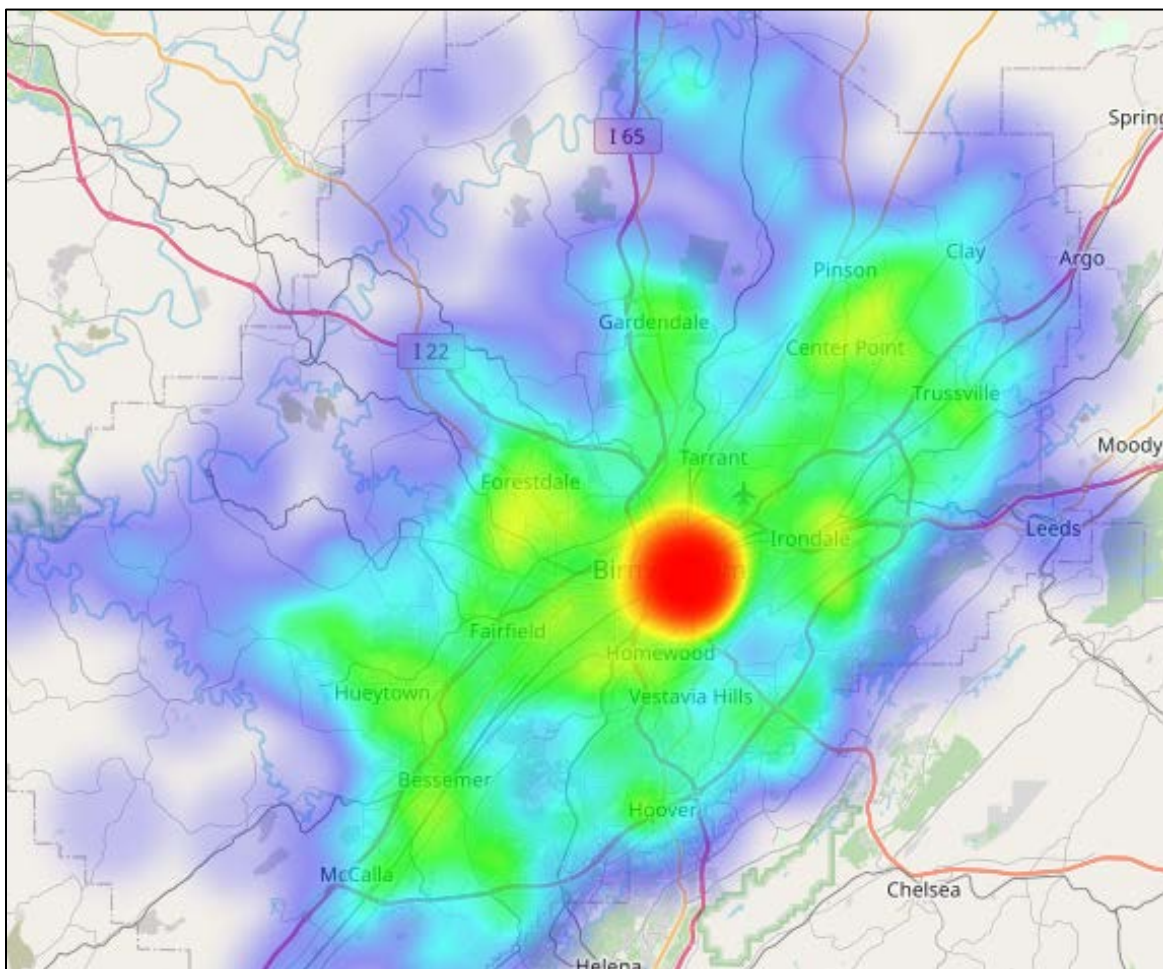
There was a 3.68% decrease in the total number of deaths reported to the JCCMEO this past year, from 6,633 deaths in 2022 to 6,389 deaths in 2023.

There was a 0.62% increase in the total number of deaths where jurisdiction was assumed, from 1,291 cases in 2022 to 1,299 cases in 2023.

The total number of accident and undetermined deaths examined by the JCCMEO increased in 2023 compared to 2022; while homicide, natural, and suicide deaths decreased.

### Total Assumed Cases by Place of Death, 2023

Figure 2.1: N=1,299, represents total Assumed cases reported by place of death.



### Total Deaths Reported by Law Enforcement Agency and Jurisdiction, 2023

Table 2.1: N=2,330, 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	2	0	0	0	2
ALEA – State Troopers	19	0	0	0	19
Alabama Department of Corrections - LES	30	0	0	0	30
Adamsville Police Department	0	4	1	0	5
Argo Police Department	1	0	0	0	1
Bessemer Police Department	74	58	16	0	148
Birmingham Police Department	655	322	118	4	1099
Brighton Police Department	3	1	0	0	4
Brookside Police Department	3	1	0	0	4
Fairfield Police Department <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
Fultondale Police Department	18	8	1	1	28
Gardendale Police Department	19	20	6	0	45
Graysville Police Department	6	1	0	0	7
Helena Police Department	3	1	0	0	4
Homewood Police Department	26	20	6	0	52
Hoover Police Department	40	21	15	0	76
Hueytown Police Department	19	21	0	0	40
Irondale Police Department	20	8	5	0	33
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	268	212	43	3	526
Kimberly Police Department	3	2	0	0	5
Lake View Police Department	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds Police Department	8	6	2	0	16
Lipscomb Police Department	1	2	0	0	3
Midfield Police Department	9	5	2	0	16
Morris Police Department	0	2	0	0	2
Mountain Brook Police Department	6	5	0	1	12
Pleasant Grove Police Department	5	9	5	0	19
Tarrant Police Department	15	7	4	0	26
Trafford Police Department	1	0	0	0	1
Trussville Police Department	20	15	2	0	37
UAB Police Department	3	0	1	0	4
Vestavia Hills Police Department	18	27	13	0	58
Warrior Police Department	4	4	0	0	8
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2330</b>

<sup>3</sup> The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office provides death investigation services for the City of Fairfield.

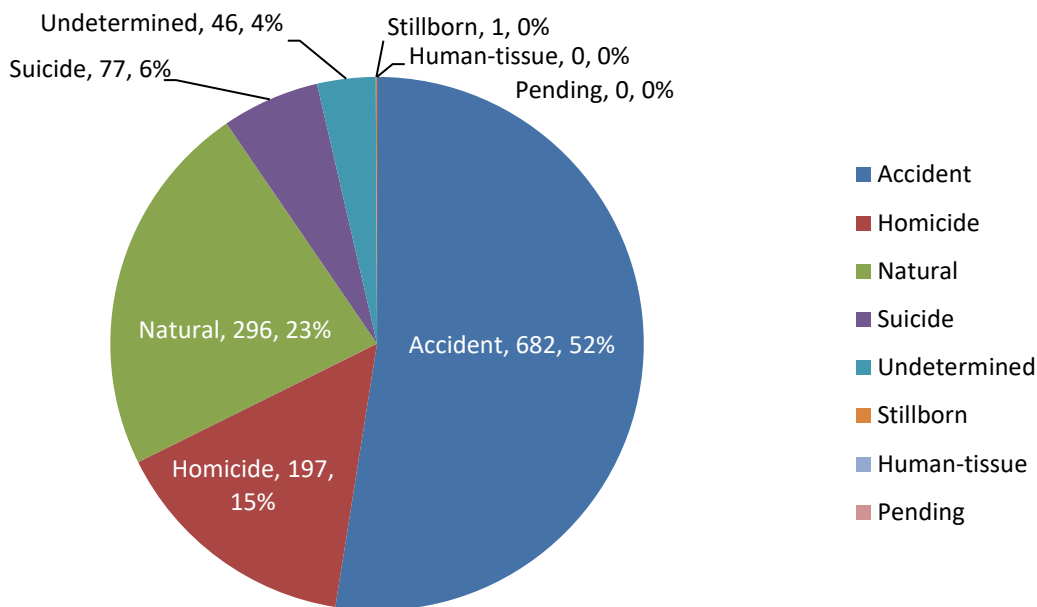
### Total Assumed Cases by Law Enforcement Agency and Manner of Death, 2023

Table 2.2: N=1,299, 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	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
ALEA – State Troopers	17	0	0	1	1	0	0	19
Alabama Dept. of Corrections - LES	12	1	12	3	2	0	0	30
Adamsville Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Argo Police Department	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bessemer Police Department	42	11	15	5	0	0	0	74
Birmingham Police Department	348	135	124	21	26	1	0	655
Brighton Police Department	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Brookside Police Department	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Fairfield Police Department <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fultondale Police Department	12	3	2	0	1	0	0	18
Gardendale Police Department	8	1	6	3	1	0	0	19
Graysville Police Department	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	6
Helena Police Department	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Homewood Police Department	12	1	10	2	1	0	0	26
Hoover Police Department	23	0	12	5	0	0	0	40
Hueytown Police Department	10	3	2	3	1	0	0	19
Irondale Police Department	10	1	5	4	0	0	0	20
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	137	30	75	19	8	0	0	268
Kimberly Police Department	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
Lake View Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds Police Department	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	8
Lipscomb Police Department	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Midfield Police Department	3	4	1	1	0	0	0	9
Morris Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Brook Police Department	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
Pleasant Grove Police Department	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	5
Tarrant Police Department	11	0	2	0	2	0	0	15
Trafford Police Department	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Trussville Police Department	12	0	7	1	0	0	0	20
UAB Police Department	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Vestavia Hills Police Department	5	0	8	5	0	0	0	18
Warrior Police Department	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	4
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1299</b>

### Percentage of Assumed Cases by Manner of Death, 2023

Figure 2.2: N=1,299, 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, 2023

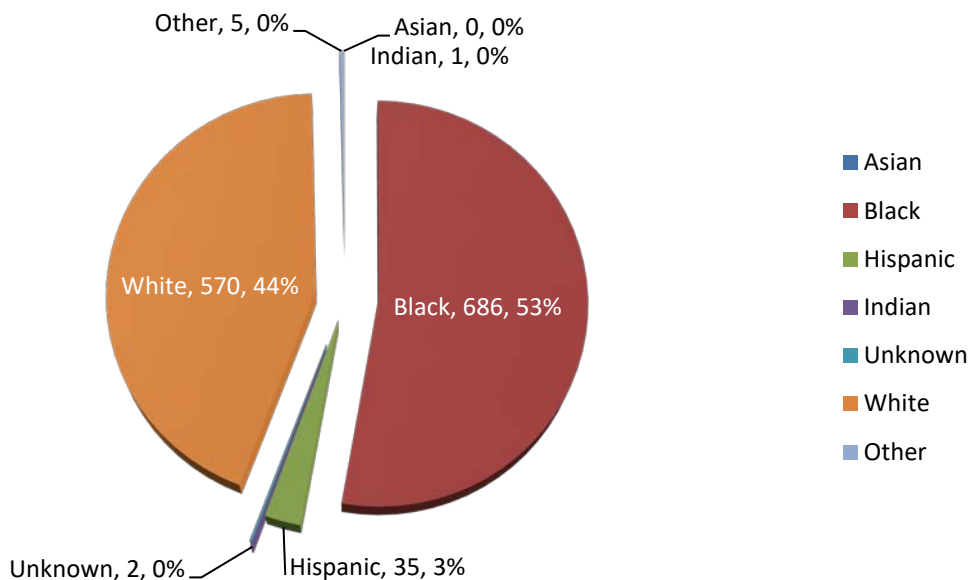
Table 2.3: N=1,299, represents all Assumed cases by manner of death and type of examination performed.

Examination	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn <sup>1</sup>	Human-tissue <sup>2</sup>	Total
Autopsy	487 / 71%	197 / 100%	137 / 46%	11 / 14%	38 / 83%	1 / 100%	0 / 0%	<b>871</b>
External	195 / 29%	0 / 0%	159 / 54%	66 / 86%	8 / 17%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	<b>428</b>
No Exam	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1299</b>



### Total Assumed Cases by Race, 2023

Figure 2.3: N=1,299, represents all Assumed cases by race, with totals and percentages.



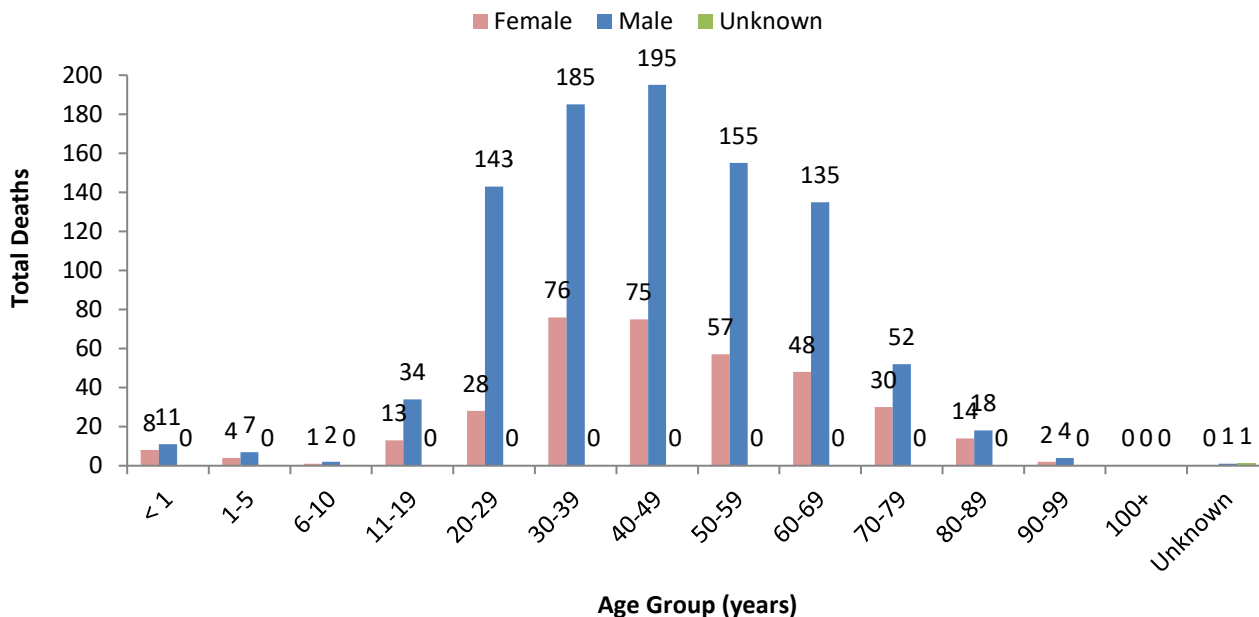
### Total Assumed Cases by Race and Manner of Death, 2023

Table 2.4: N=1,299, 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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	333	179	125	21	27	1	0	686
Hispanic	21	6	6	1	1	0	0	35
Indian	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Unknown	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
White	323	11	164	55	17	0	0	570
<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1299</b>

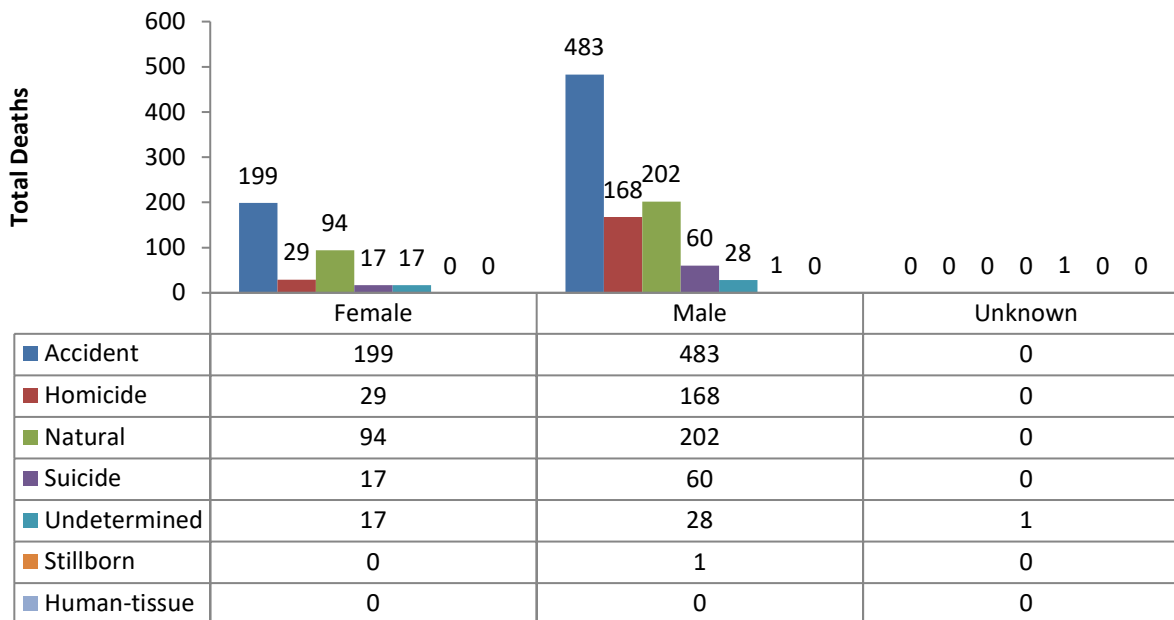
### Total Assumed Cases by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 2.4: N=1,299, represents all Assumed cases by sex and age group.



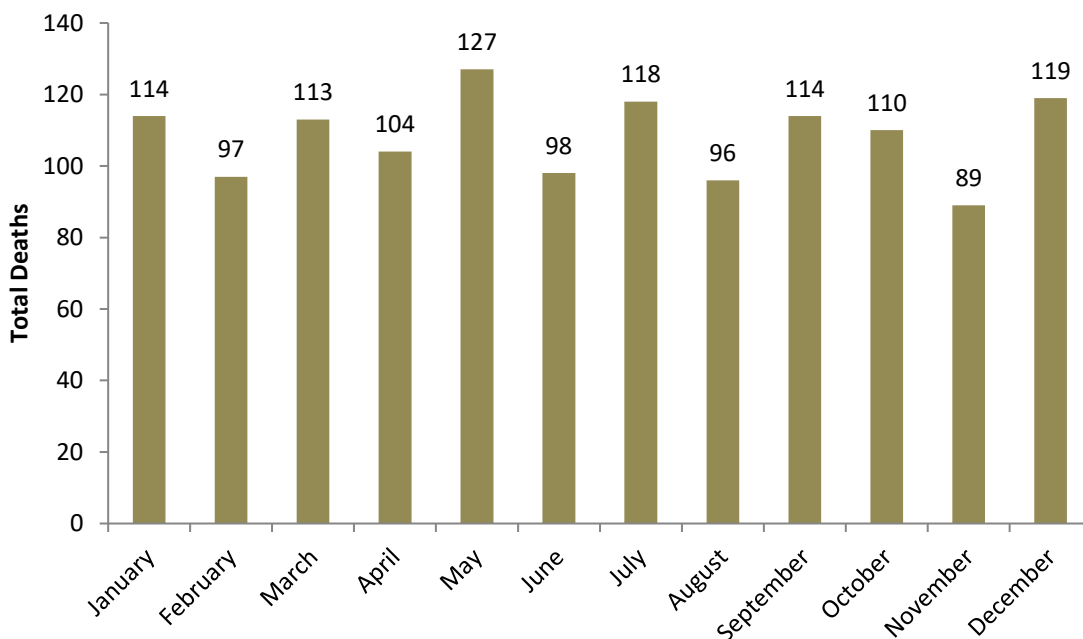
### Total Assumed Cases by Sex and Manner of Death, 2023

Figure 2.5: N=1,299, represents all Assumed cases by sex and manner of death.<sup>1,2</sup>



### Total Assumed Cases by Month of Death, 2023

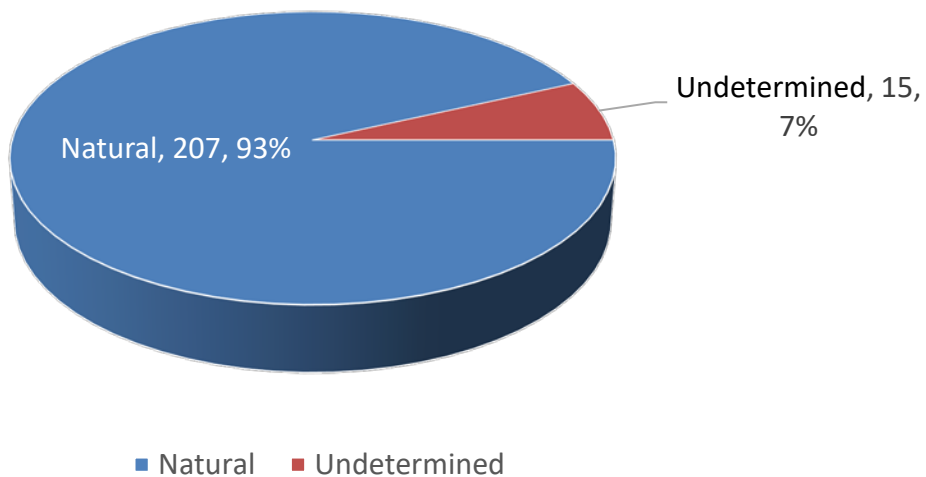
Figure 2.6: N=1,299, represents all Assumed cases by month of death.



### Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases, 2023

Figure 2.7: N=222, 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 53% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023 and represents the largest percentage of all manners of death.

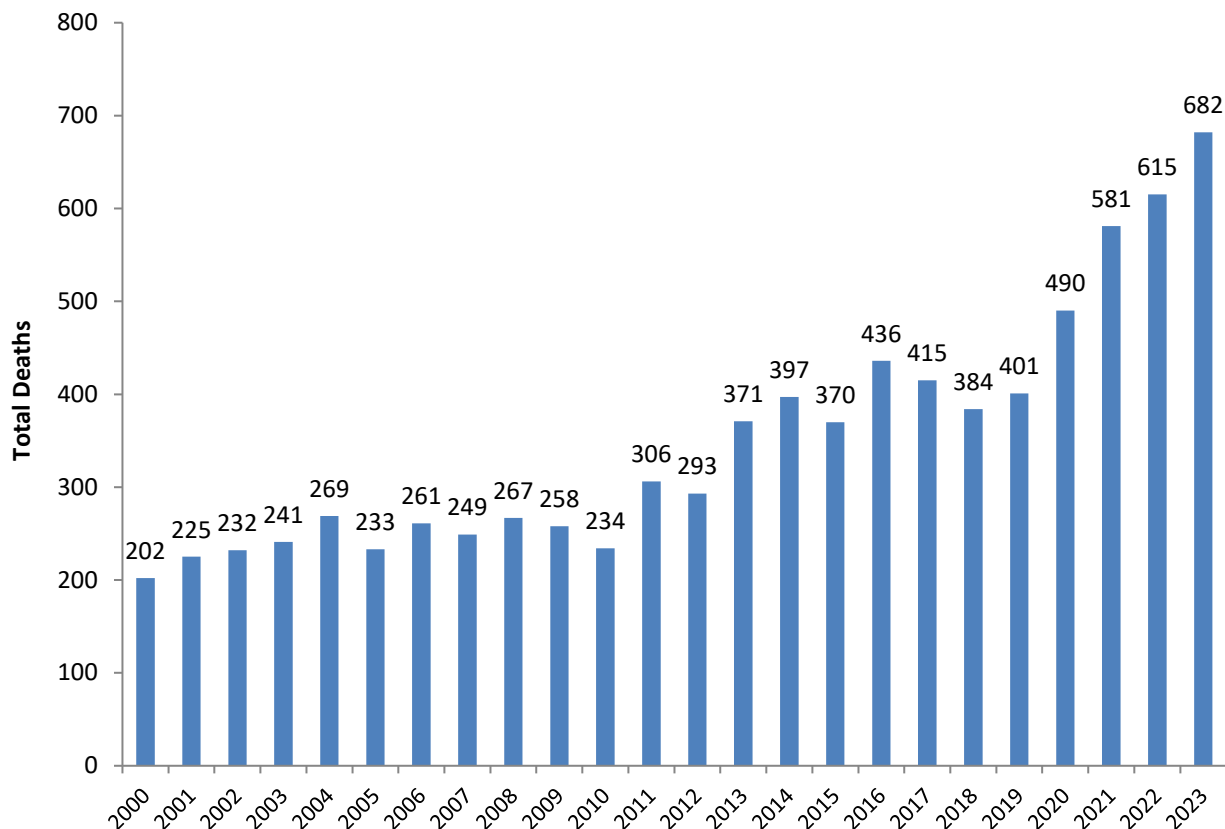
There was a 10% increase in the total number of accidental deaths, from 615 deaths in 2022 to 682 deaths in 2023.

Drug deaths were the most common cause of accidental death in 2023 accounting for 72% of the deaths, followed by motor vehicle deaths at 21% of the deaths.

The most common race was black representing 49% of the accidental deaths, while male was the most common sex representing 68% of the accidental deaths.

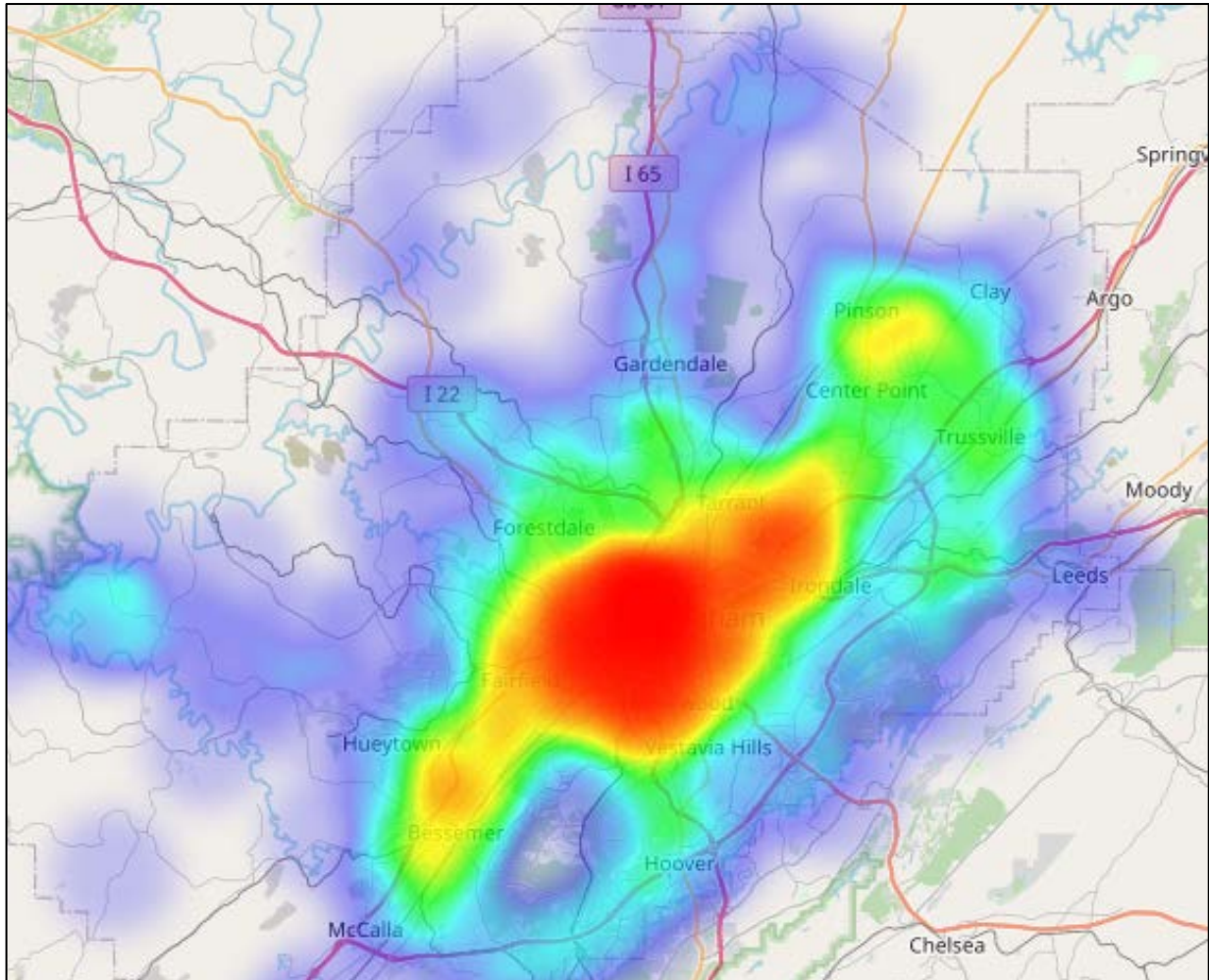
#### Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

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



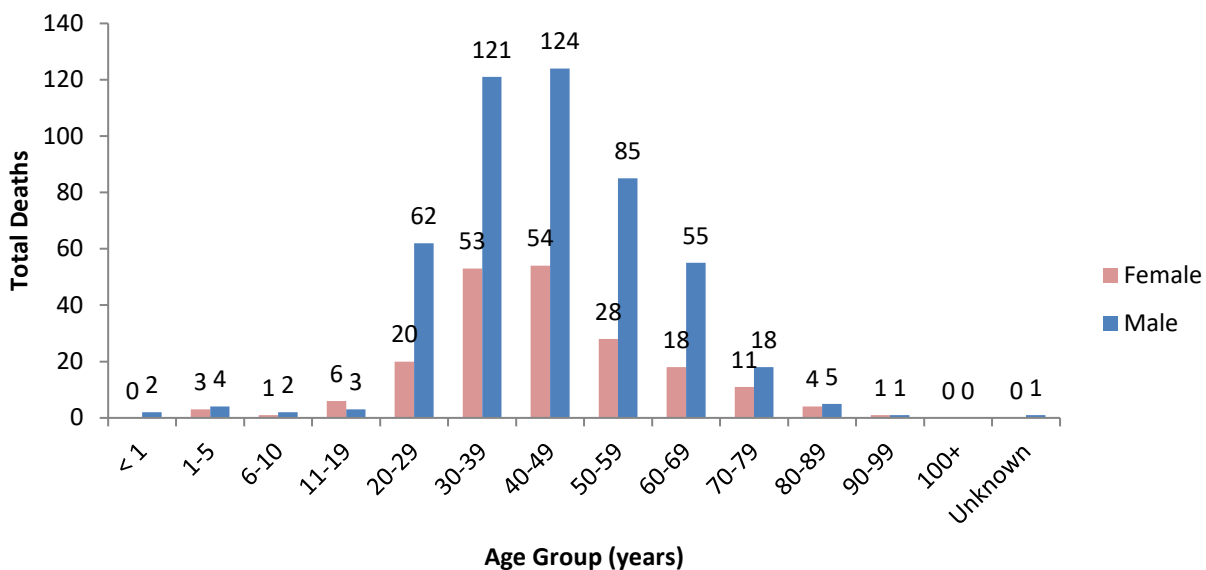
### Total Number of Accidental Deaths Place of Injury, 2023

Figure 3.2: N=682, represents all accidental deaths by place of injury.



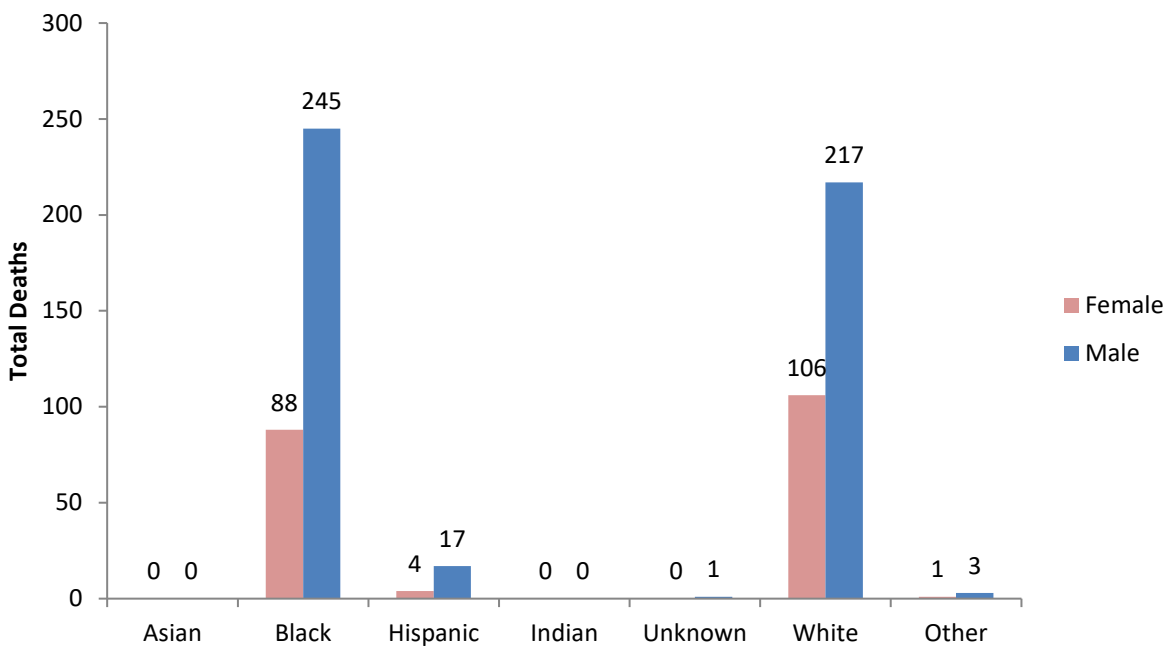
### Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 3.3: N=682, represents all accidental deaths by sex and age group.



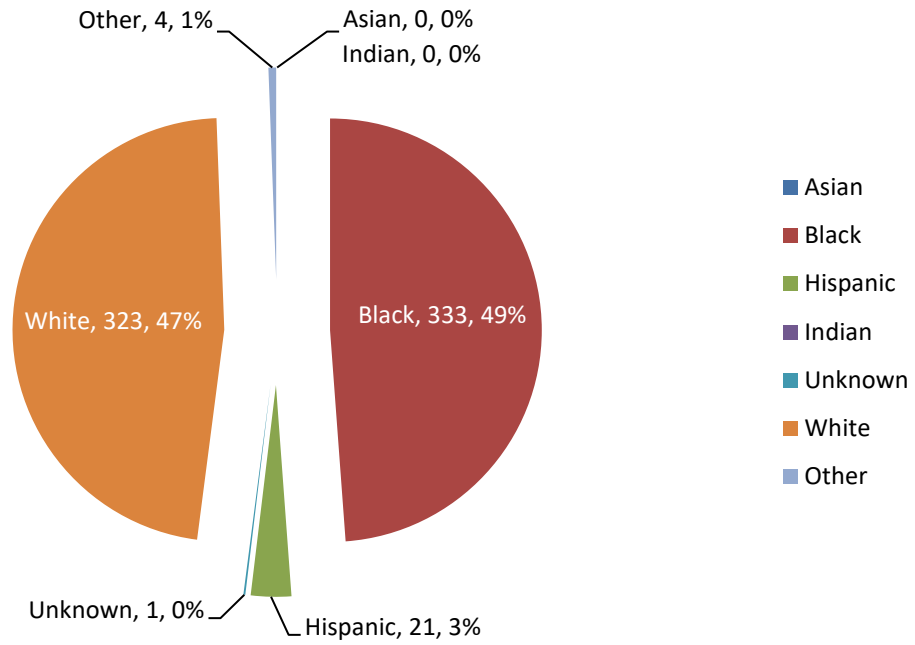
### Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 3.4: N=682, represents all accidental deaths by sex and race.



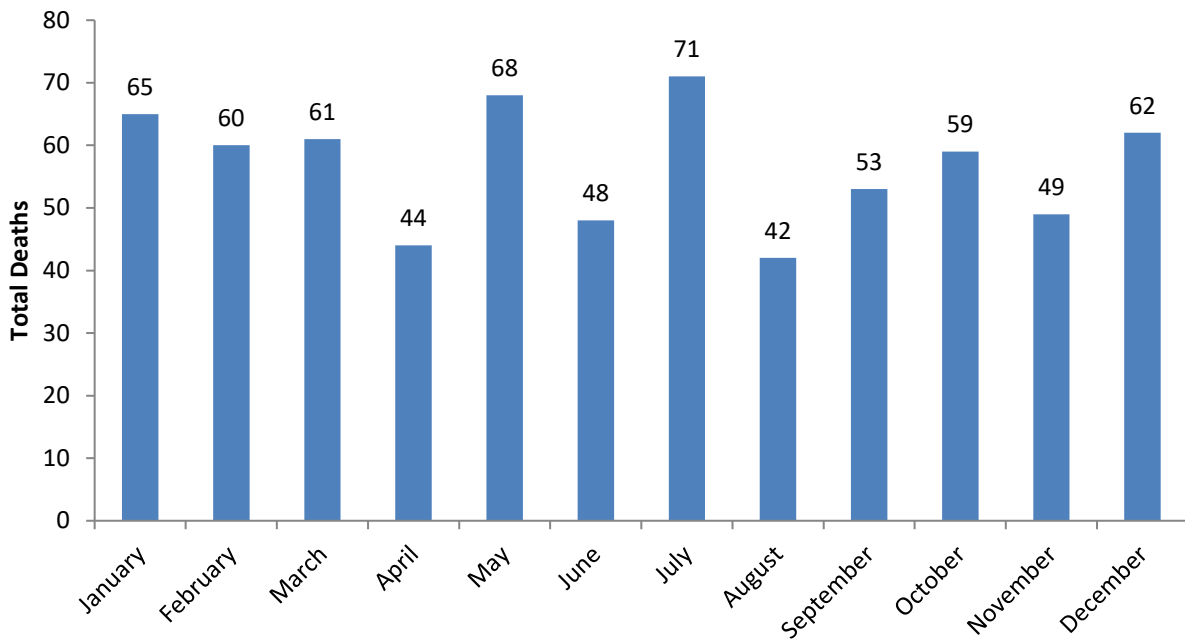
**Percentage of Accidental Deaths by Race, 2023**

Figure 3.5: N=682, represents all accidental deaths by race.



**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Month of Death, 2023**

Figure 3.6: N=682, represents all Accidental deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 3.1: N=682, represents all Accidental deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total	Means of Death	Total
Animal: dog	2	Motor vehicle:	
Asphyxia:		Bicycle	1
Bassinet	1	Motorcycle	10
Bathtub	1	Pedestrian	33
Bed	1	Multiple vehicles	40
Chlorine gas	1	Single vehicle	60
Laundry hamper	1	Train: motor vehicle	1
Motor vehicle	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>
Wheelchair	1		
Blunt/Sharp: machinery	1		
Carbon monoxide: charcoal grill	1		
Drowning:			
Lake	1		
Pool	3		
River	1		
Drug:			
Opioid	411		
Other drugs – Rx and illicit drugs	82		
Ethanol (alcohol) – acute toxicity	1		
Environmental Exposure: Hypothermia	5		
Fall:			
Bathtub	1		
Floor	2		
Ground	2		
Ladder	2		
Parking lot	1		
Stairs	1		
Unknown	1		
Fire:			
Apartment	1		
House	11		
Mobile home trailer	1		
Other:			
Home health oxygen	1		
Unknown	1		
Foreign body: food	1		
Firearm: handgun	4		
Hanging:			
Robe belt	1		
Rope	1		



## Homicide

Homicides accounted for 15% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023.

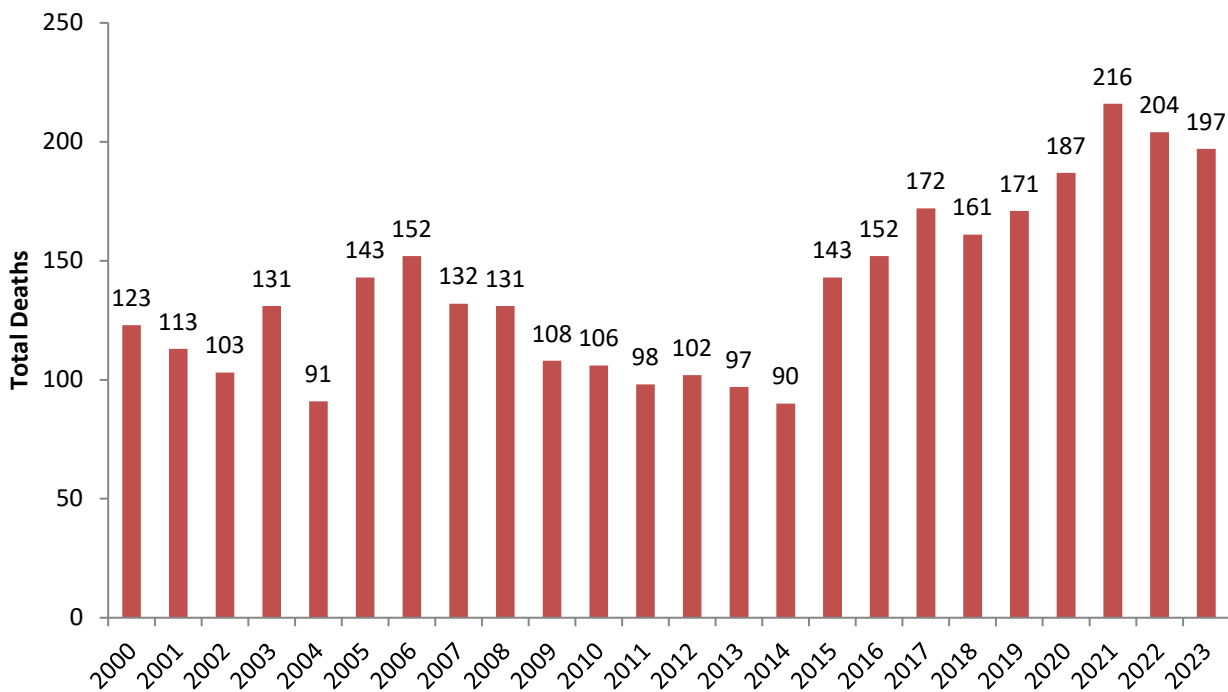
There was a 3% decrease in the total number of homicides, from 204 deaths in 2022 to 197 deaths in 2023. This is the third consecutive year homicides have decreased but, 2023 still represents the third highest year since the year 2000.

Death due to firearms was the most common cause of homicide in 2023 accounting for 96% of the deaths.

The most common race was Black representing 91% of the homicides, while males were the most common sex representing 85% of homicide deaths.

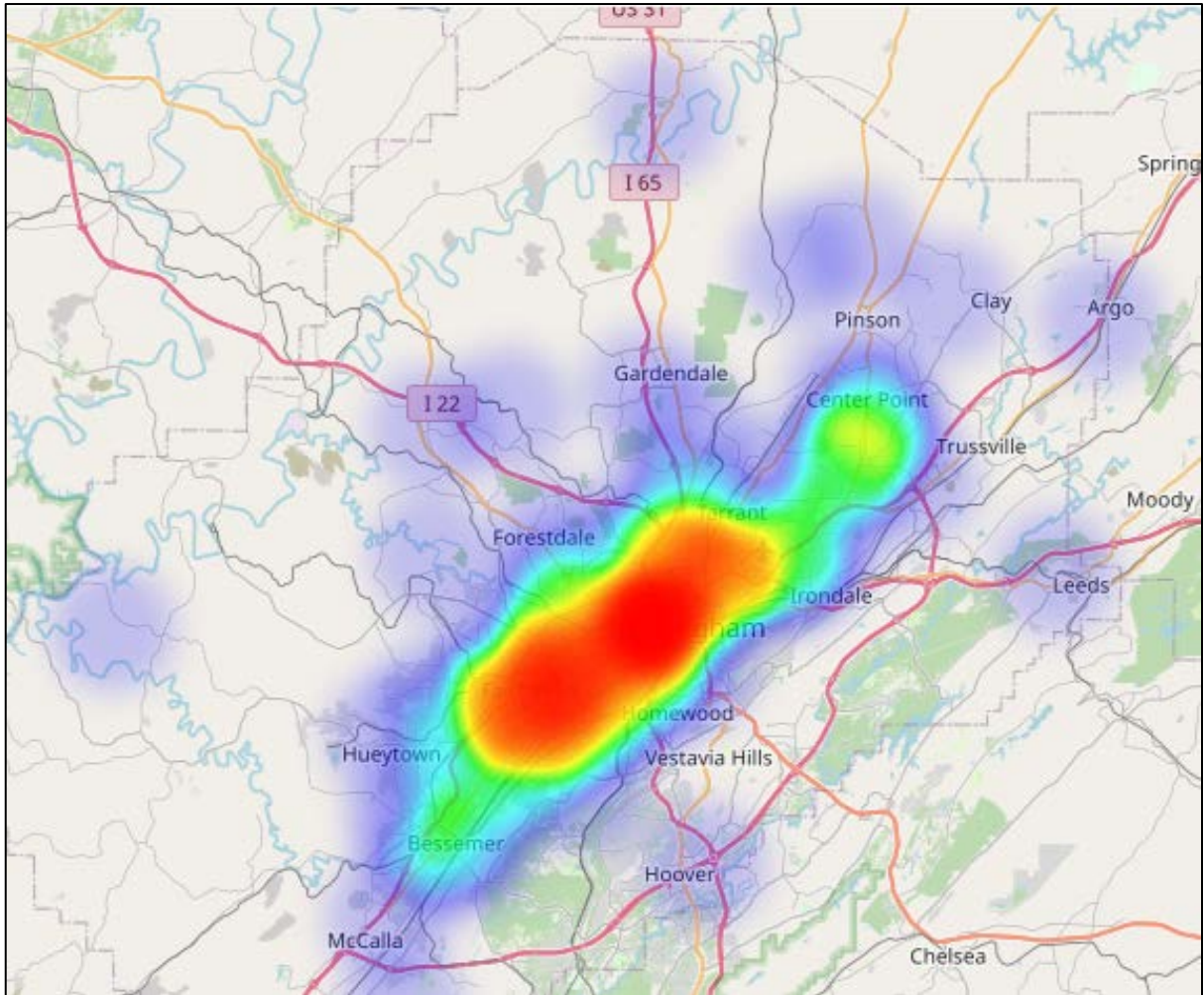
### Total Number of Homicides by Year of Death 2000-2023

Figure 3.7: represents all homicides investigated by the JCCMEO.



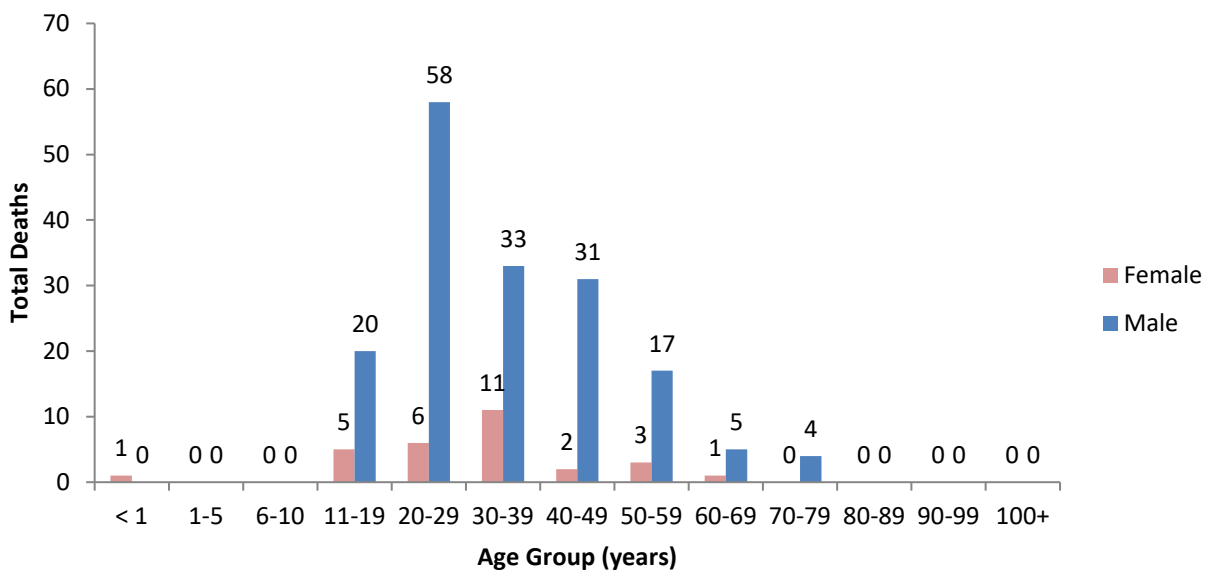
**Total Number of Homicides by Place of Injury, 2023**

Figure 3.8: N=197, represents all homicide deaths by place of injury.



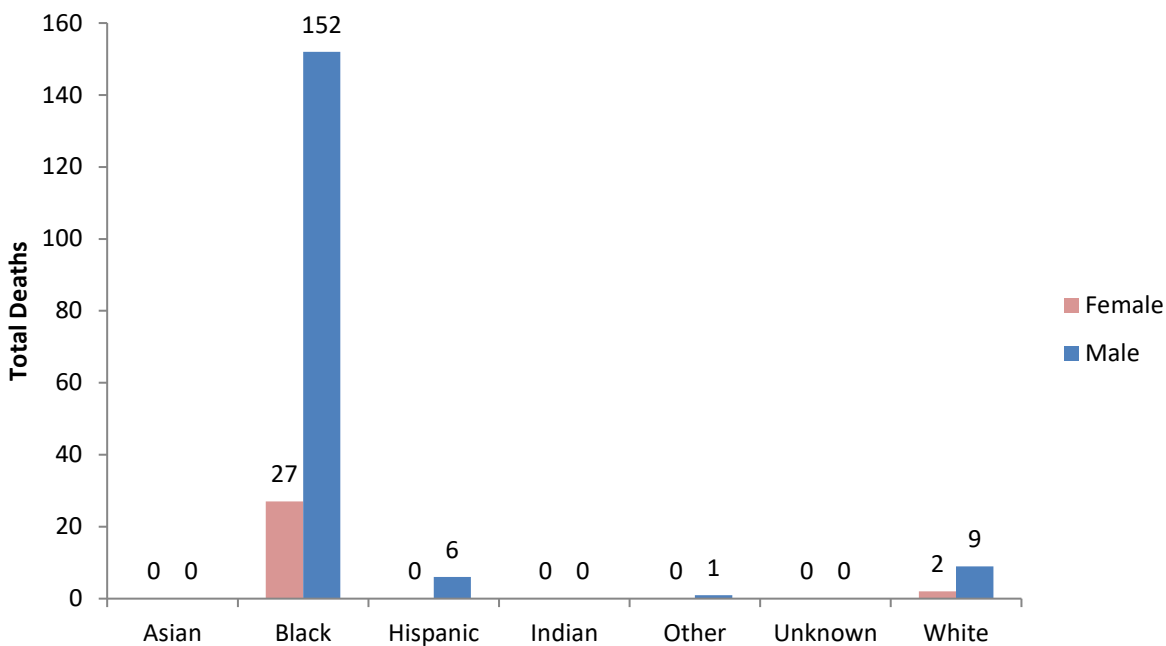
### Total Number of Homicides by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 3.9: N=197, represents all homicides by sex and age group.



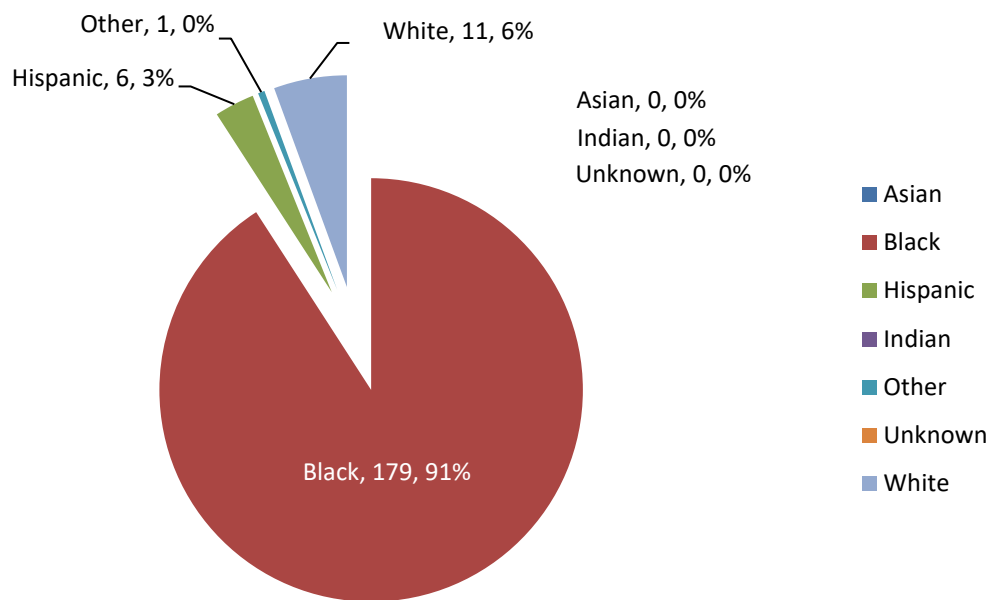
### Total Number of Homicides by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 3.10: N=197, represents all homicides by sex and race.



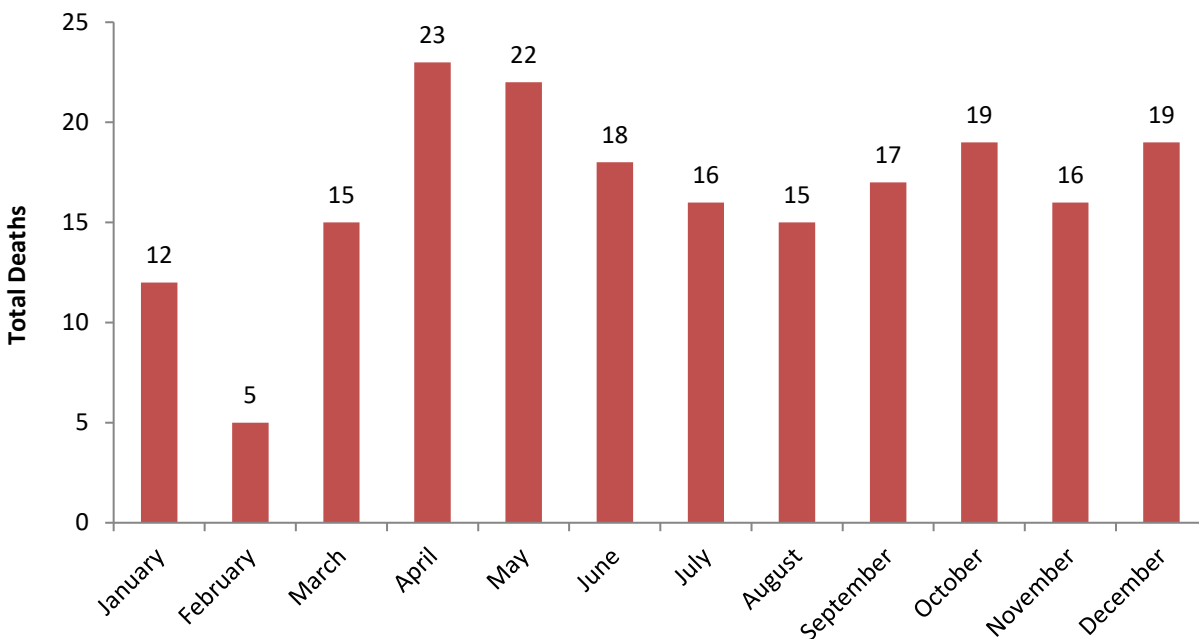
**Percentage of Homicides by Race, 2023**

Figure 3.11: N=197, represents all homicides by race.



**Total Number of Homicides by Month of Death, 2023**

Figure 3.12: N=197, represents all homicides by month of death.



**Total Number of Homicides by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 3.2: N=197, represents all Homicides by means of death and weapon type.

Means of Death	Total
Blunt:	
Wooden board	1
Parking lot	1
Unknown	1
Firearm:	
Handgun	130
Handgun/Rifle	9
Rifle	40
Shotgun	1
Unknown	27
Sharp:	
Knife	4
Scissors	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>

## Natural

Natural deaths accounted for 23% of the Assumed cases investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023.

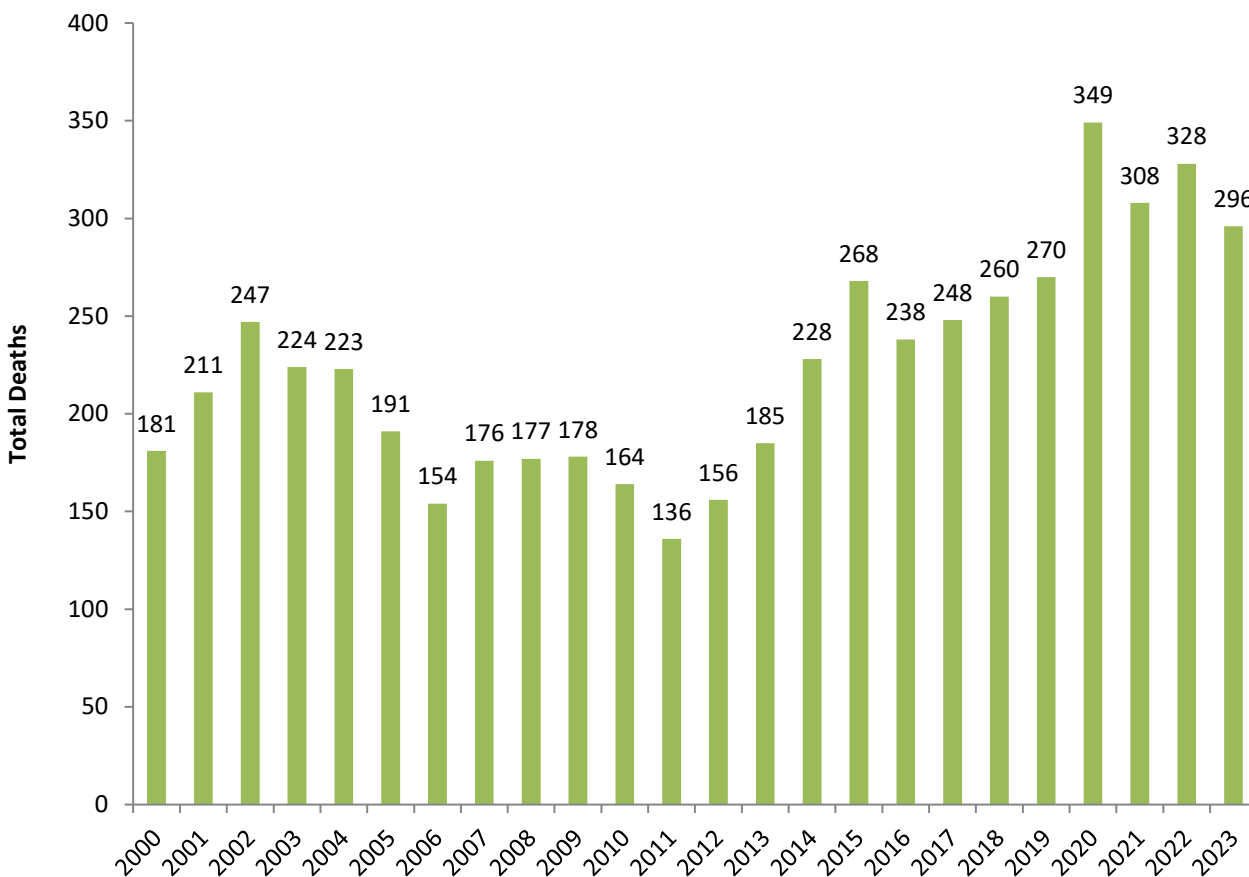
There was a 9.7% decrease in the total number of natural deaths, from 328 deaths in 2022 to 296 deaths in 2023.

Deaths due to heart disease were the most common cause of natural death in 2023 accounting for 55% of the deaths, followed by other natural disease accounting for 13% of the deaths and chronic substance use (ethanol/drugs) accounting for 12% of the deaths.

The most common race was white representing 55% of the natural deaths, while males were the most common sex representing 66% of natural deaths.

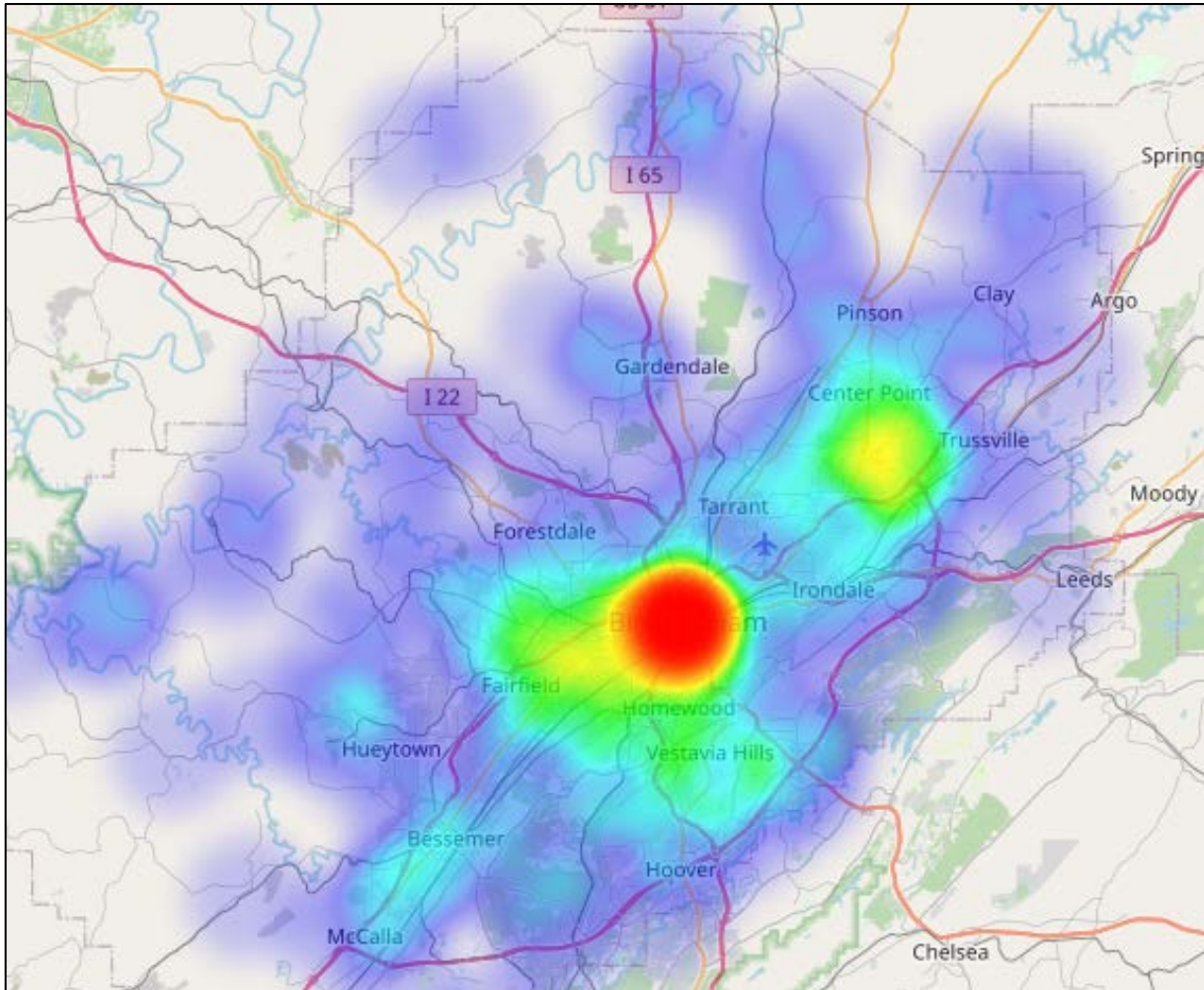
### Total Number of Natural Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

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



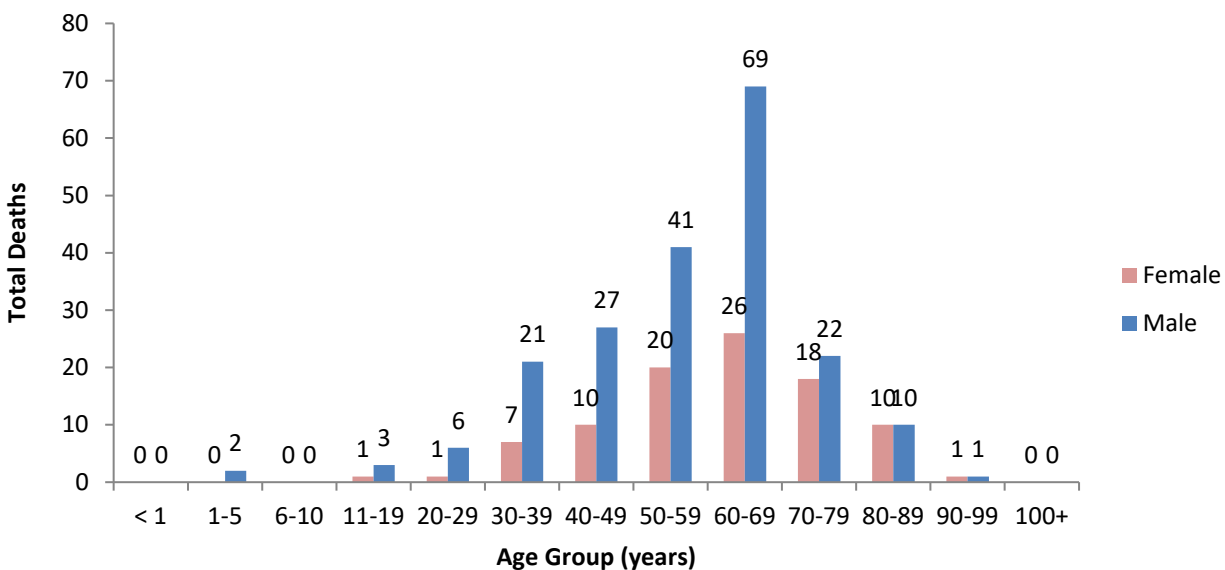
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Place of Death, 2023

Figure 3.14: N=296, represents all natural deaths by place of death.



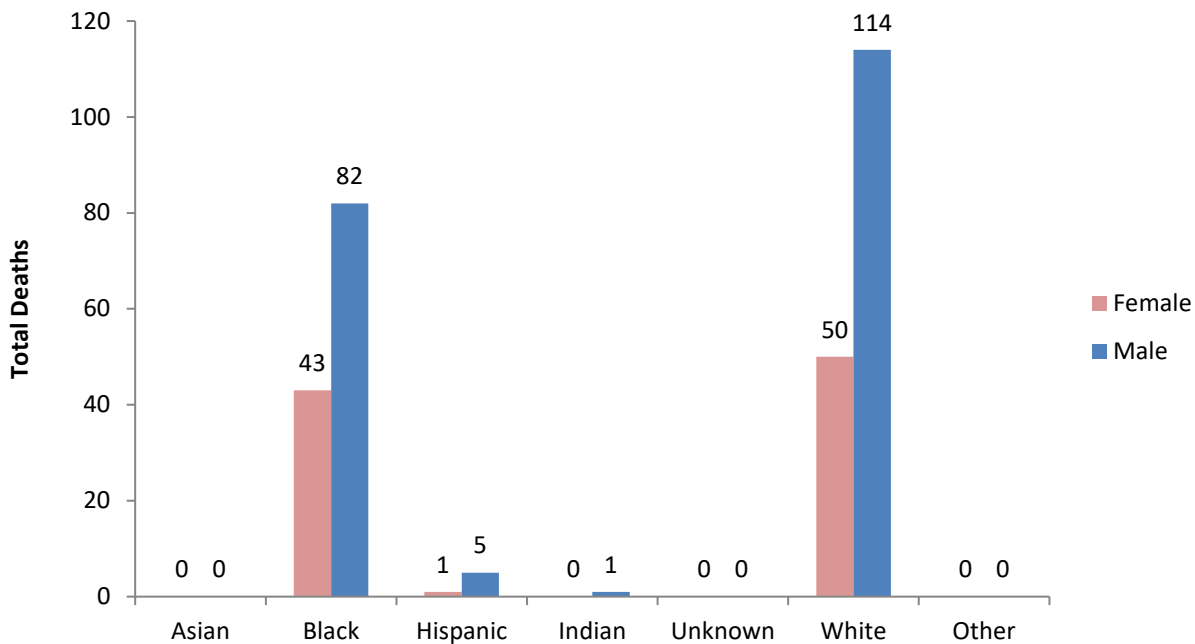
**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023**

Figure 3.15: N=296, represents all natural deaths by sex and age group.



**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023**

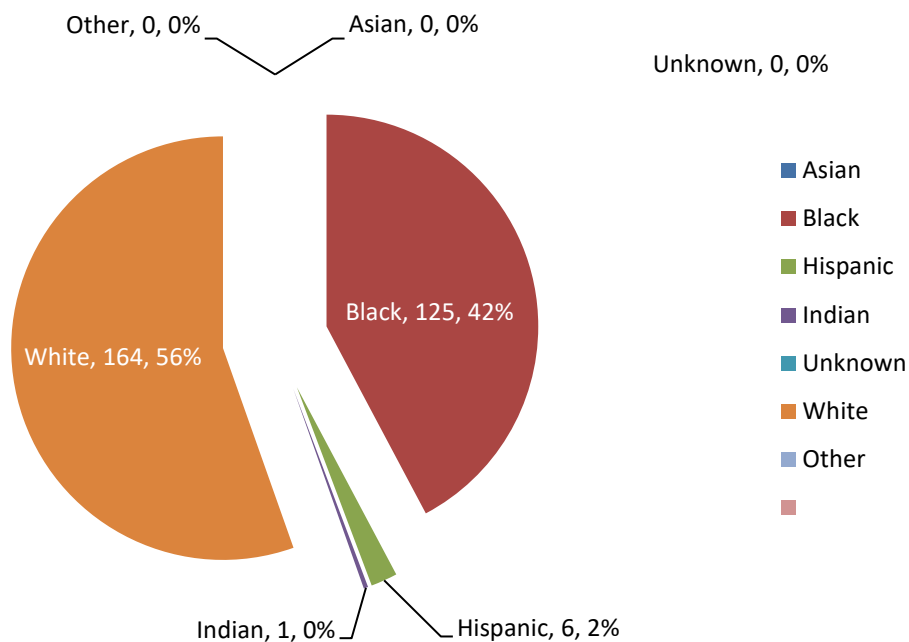
Figure 3.16: N=296, represents all natural deaths by sex and race.





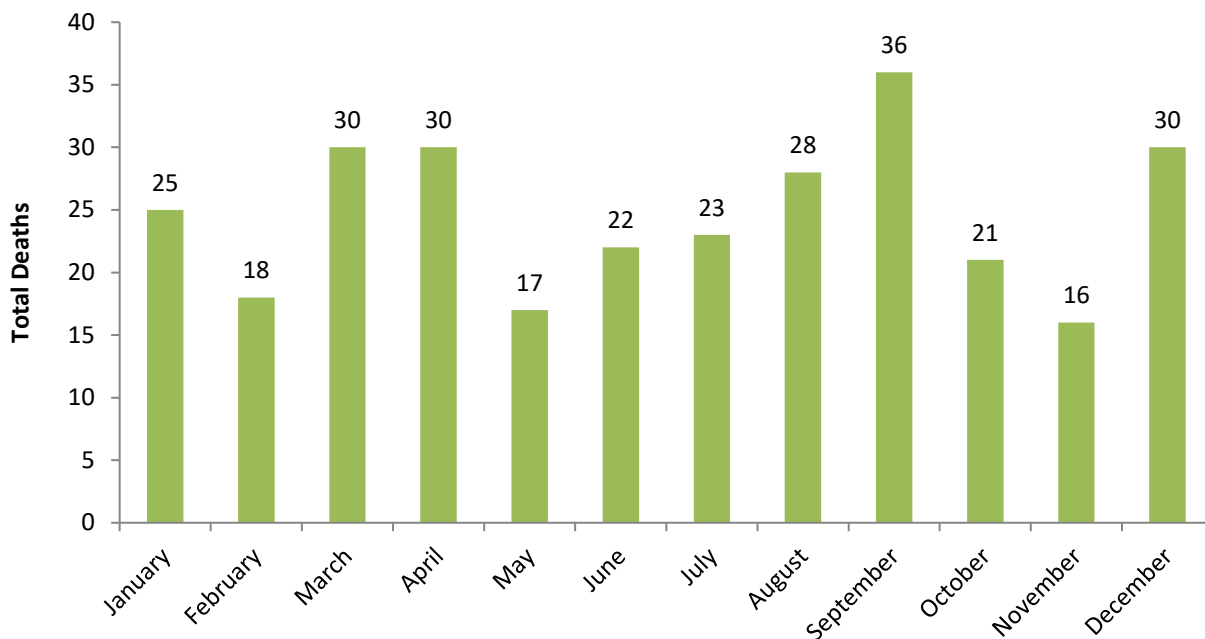
### Percentage of Natural Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 3.17: N=296, represents all natural deaths by race.



### Total Number of Natural Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 3.18: N=296, represents all natural deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Natural Deaths by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 3.3: N=296, represents all natural deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Heart:	
Coronary artery atherosclerosis	18
Hypertensive heart disease	85
Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease	40
Other heart disease	20
Lungs:	
Pneumonia	11
COPD / asthma	4
Pulmonary thromboembolism	6
Liver: Cirrhosis	2
Brain:	
Seizure disorder (epilepsy)	3
Meningitis	3
Nontraumatic intracranial hemorrhage	11
Malignancy NOS (includes all organ systems)	5
Chronic substance use (ethanol/drug)	37
Diabetes	10
Gastrointestinal bleeding	1
Other	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>

## Suicide

Suicide deaths accounted for 6% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023 and represents the lowest number in the past 7 years.

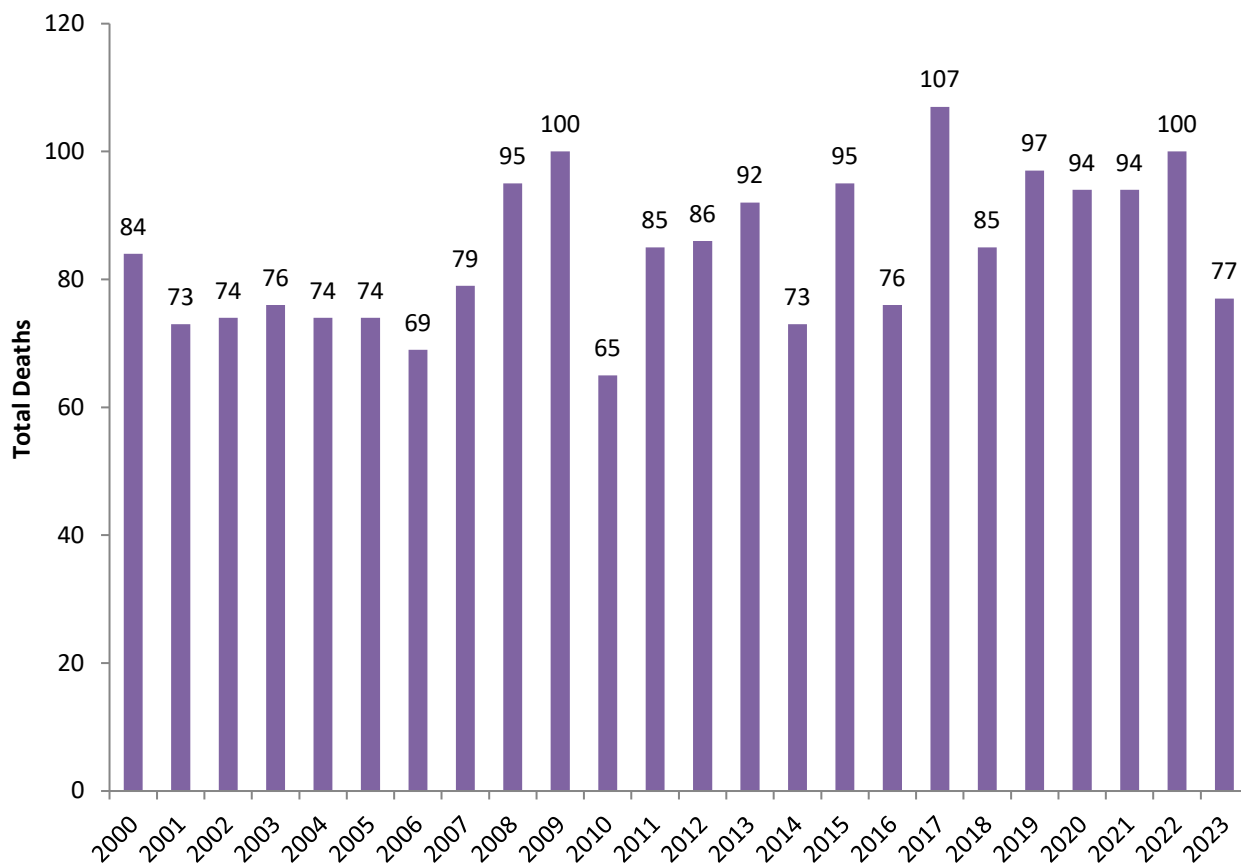
There was 23% decrease in suicide deaths, from 100 deaths in 2022 to 77 deaths in 2023.

Deaths due to gunshot wounds were the most common cause of suicide death in 2023 accounting for 77% of the deaths and, followed by deaths due to hanging accounting for 16% of the suicide deaths.

The most common race was white representing 71% of the suicide deaths, while males were the most common sex representing 76% of suicide deaths.

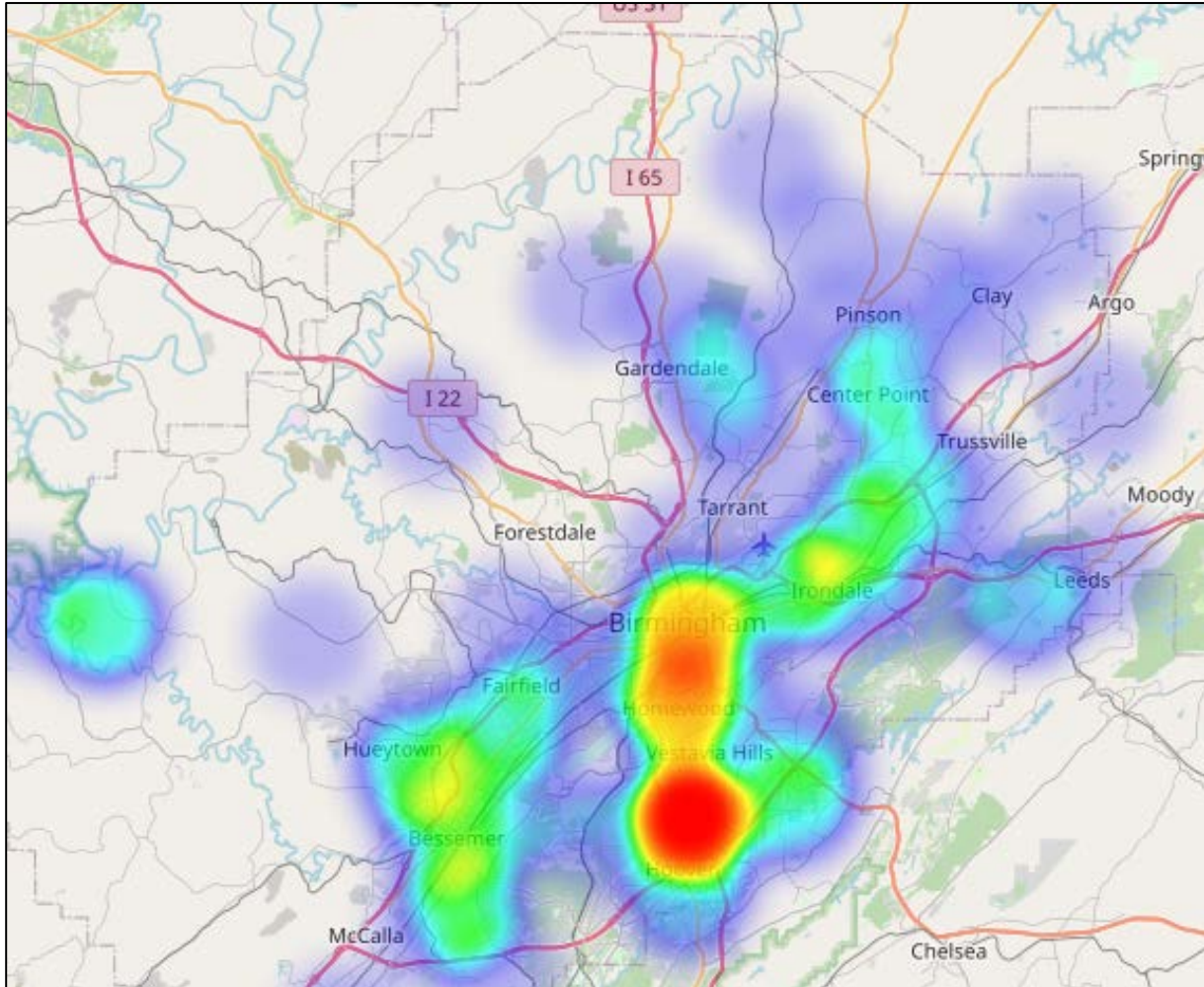
### Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

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



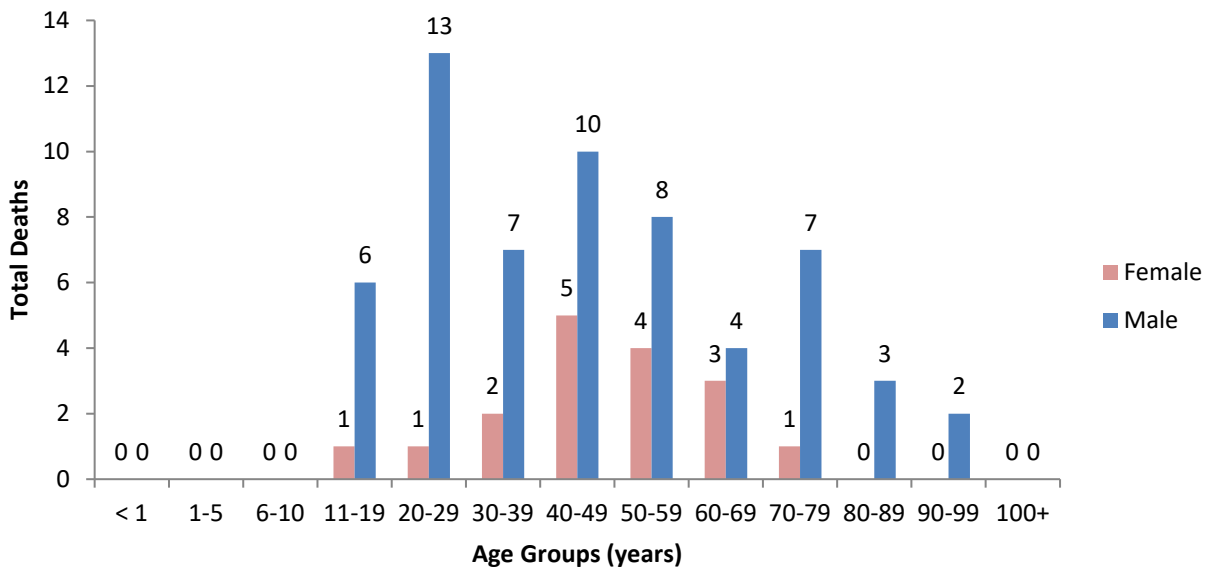
**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Place of Injury, 2023**

Figure 3.20: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by place of injury.



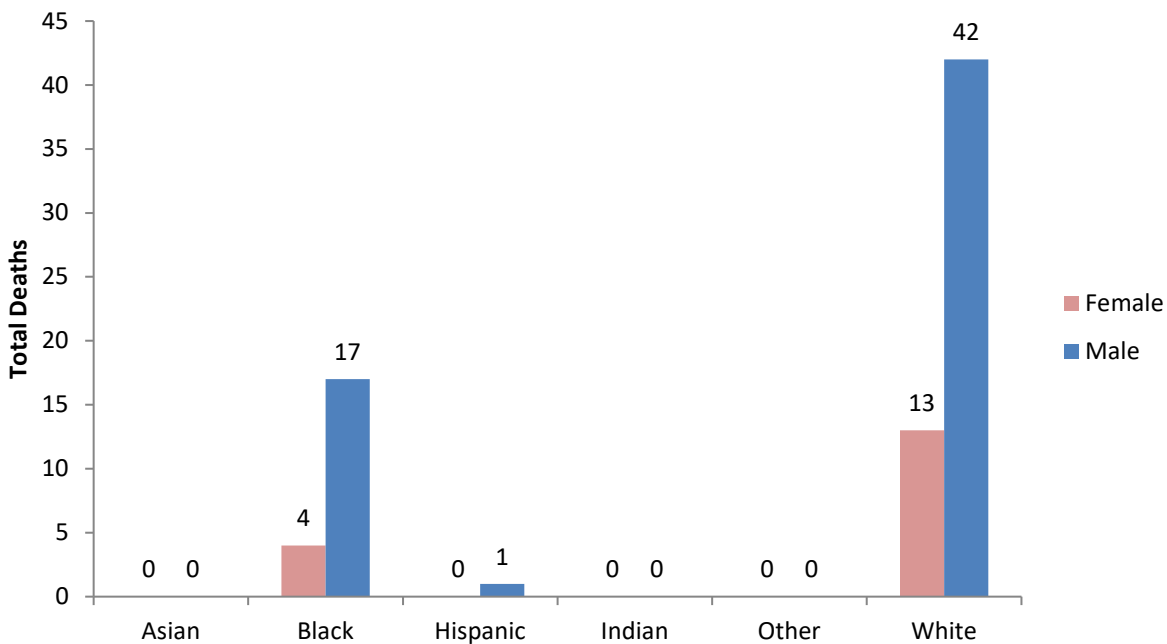
**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023**

Figure 3.21: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by sex and age group.



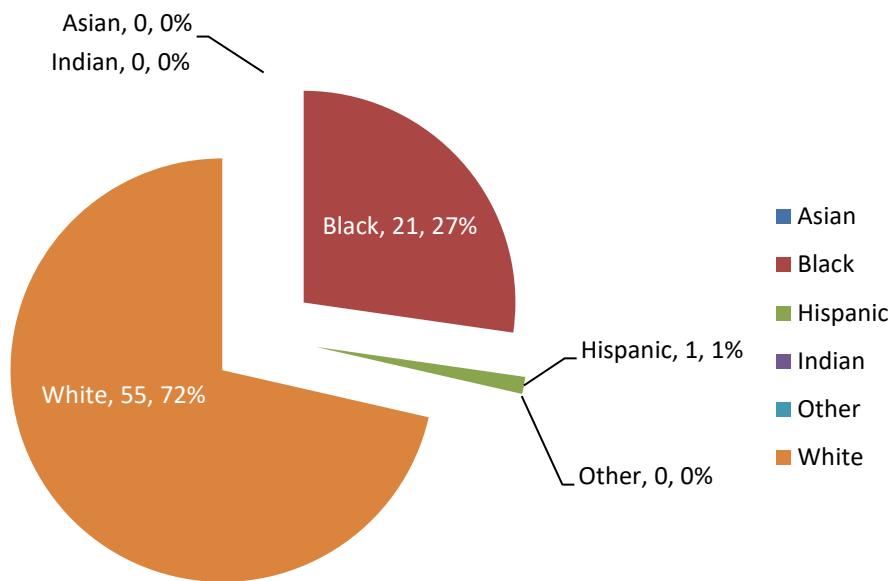
**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023**

Figure 3.22: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by sex and race.



**Percentage of Suicide Deaths by Race, 2023**

Figure 3.23: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by race.



**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Month of Death, 2023**

Figure 3.24: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 3.4: N=77, represents all suicide deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia: belt	1
Fall:	
Cliff	1
Parking deck	2
Drug	2
Firearm:	
Handgun	52
Rifle	3
Shotgun	3
Unknown	1
Hanging:	
Bed sheet	1
Belt	2
Electrical cord	1
Leash	1
Nylon strap	2
Rope	3
Sheet	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>

## Undetermined

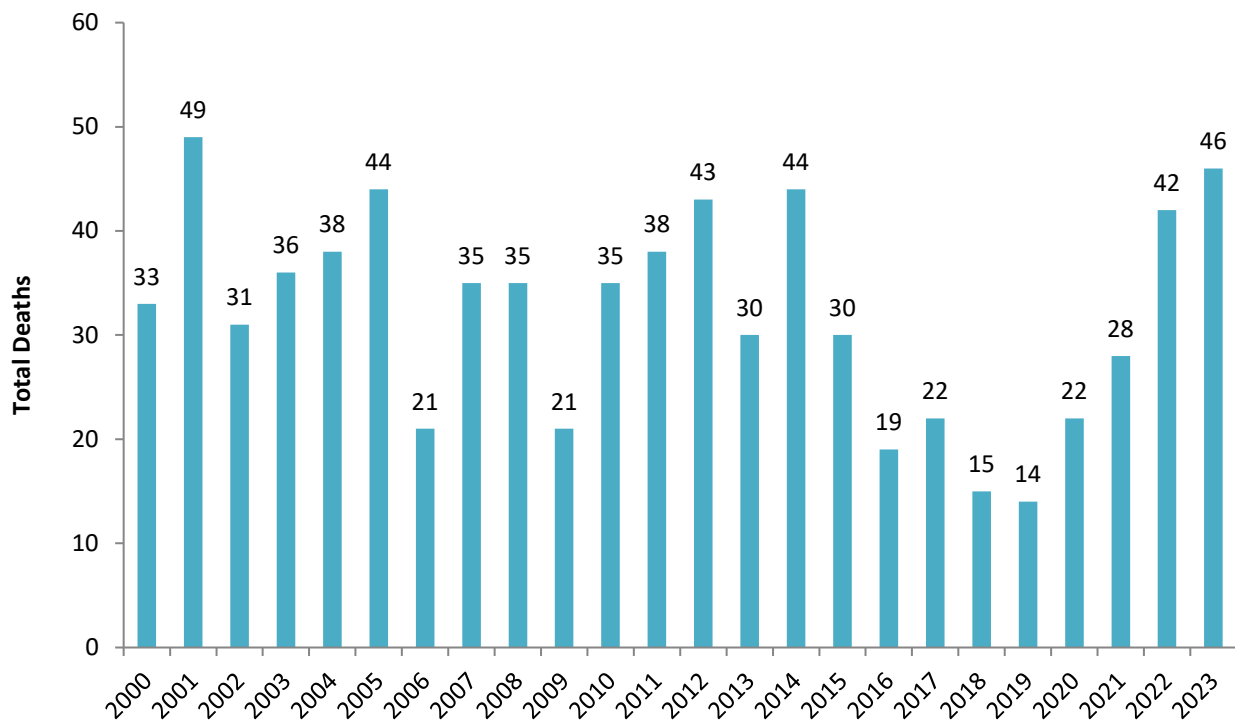
Undetermined deaths accounted for 4% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023.

There was a 10% increase in the total number of undetermined deaths, from 42 deaths in 2022 to 46 deaths in 2023.

Undetermined was the most common means of Undetermined death, accounting for 48% of the deaths.

### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

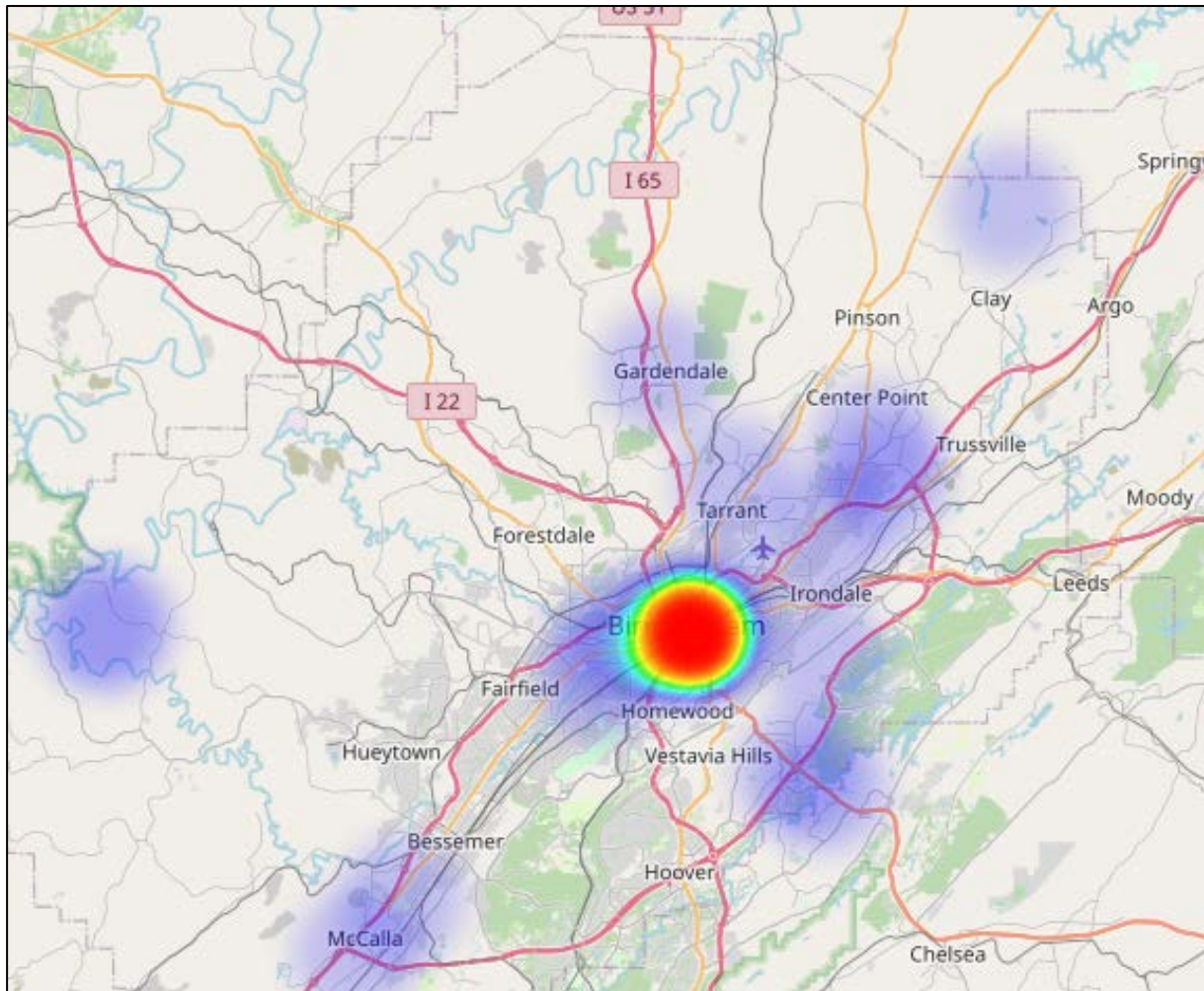
Figure 3.25: represents all undetermined deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.





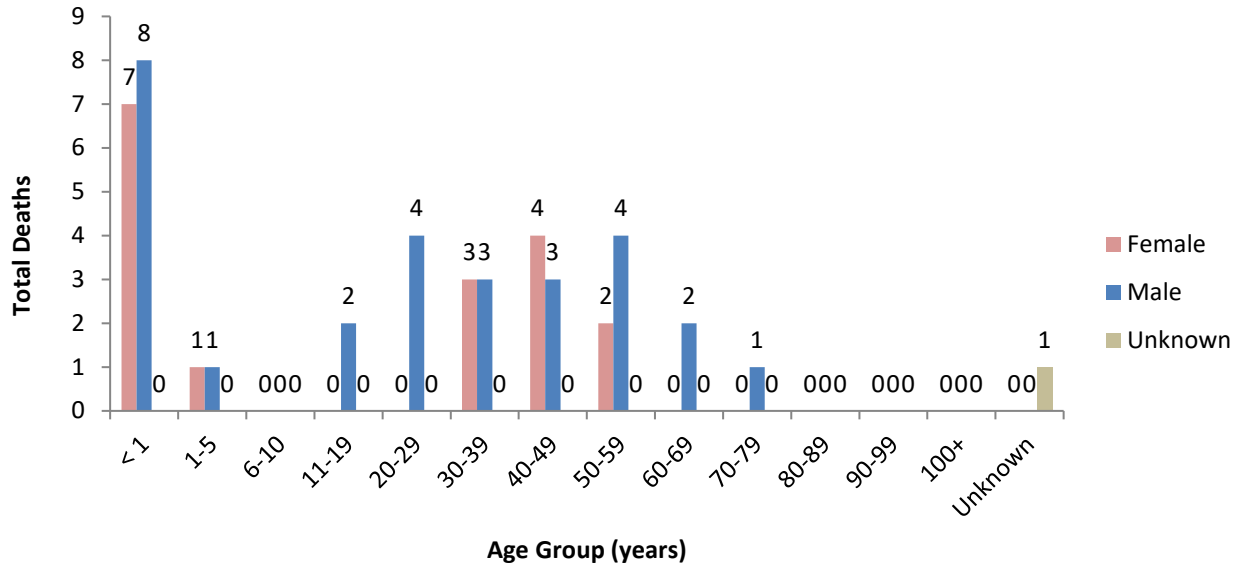
**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Place of Death, 2023**

Figure 3.26: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by place of death.



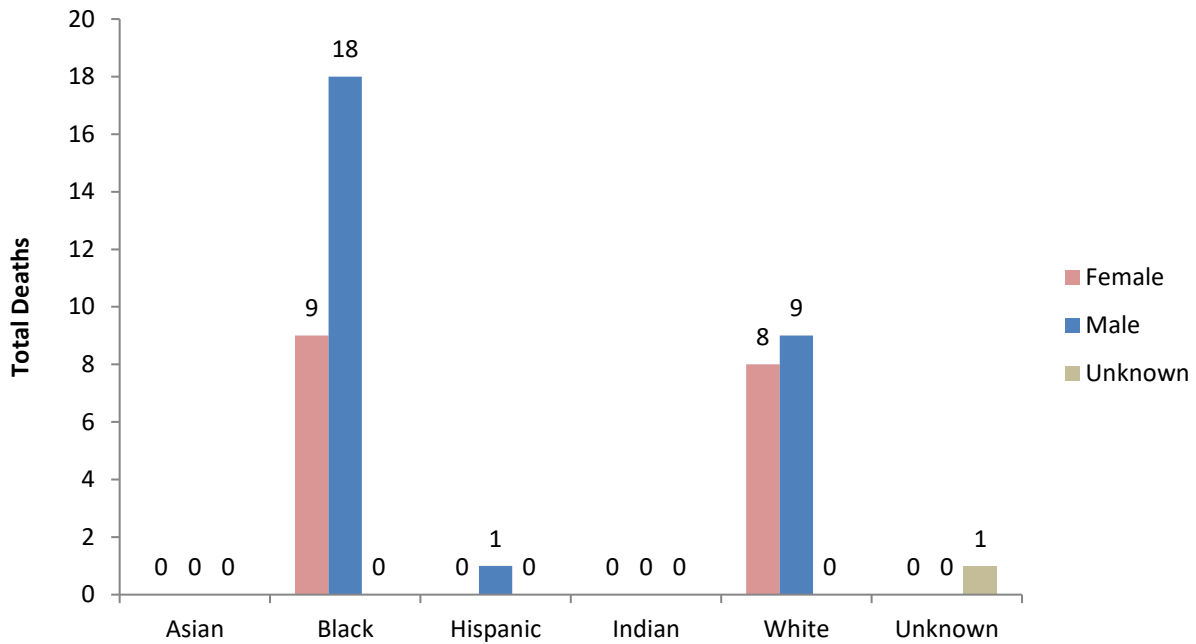
### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 3.27: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by sex and age group.



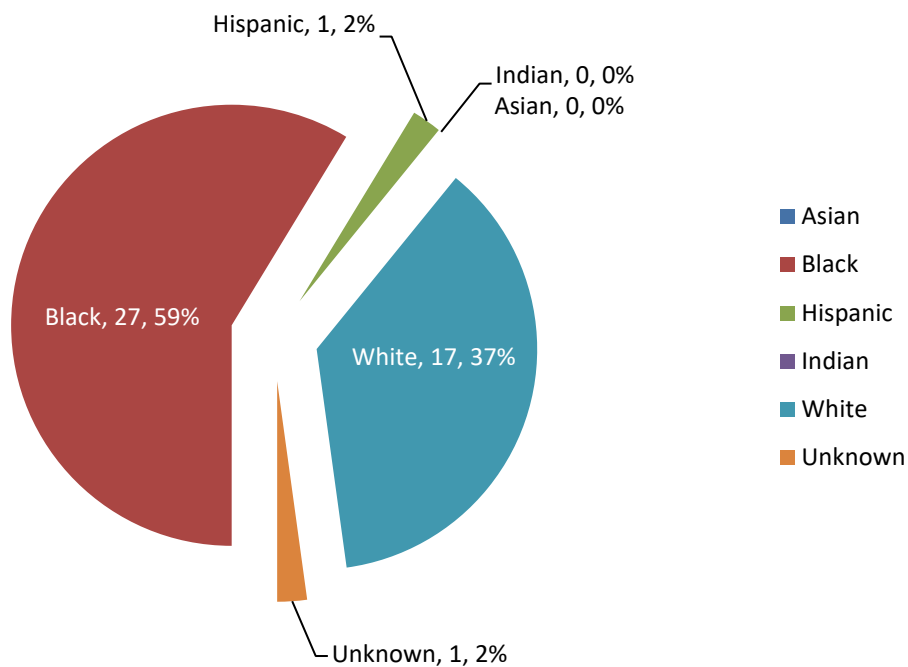
### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 3.28: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by sex and race.



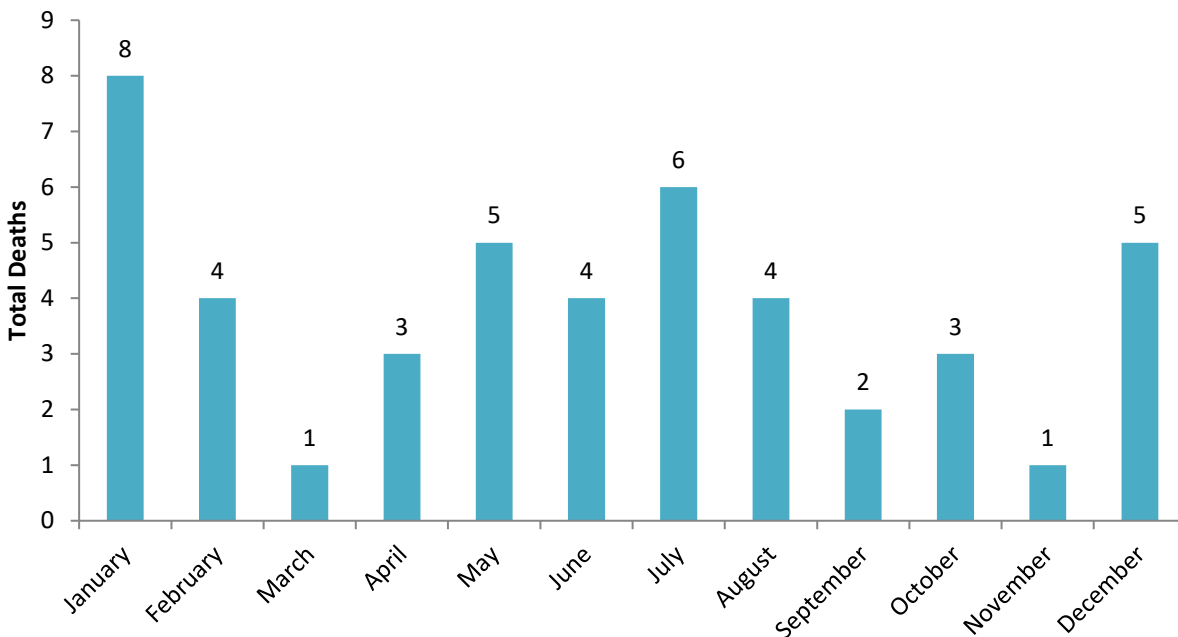
### Percentage of Undetermined Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 3.29: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by race.



### Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 3.30: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by month of death.



**Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 3.5: N=46, represents all undetermined deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Automobile-pedestrian	1
Automobile-single vehicle: bridge column	1
Blunt:	
Unknown	2
Roadway	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	6
Couch	1
Drug	7
Gun:	
Handgun	2
Rifle	1
Unknown	1
Train-automobile	1
Undetermined:	
Bassinet	2
Car seat	1
Crib	5
Undetermined	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

## Section 4: Infant/Juvenile Deaths

Infant/Juvenile deaths accounted for 5% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023. There was a 17% increase in the total number of infant/juvenile deaths, from 53 deaths in 2022 to 62 deaths in 2023. Infant deaths decreased 10%, from 21 deaths in 2022 to 19 deaths in 2023 and, juvenile deaths increased 34%, from 32 deaths in 2022 to 43 deaths in 2023.

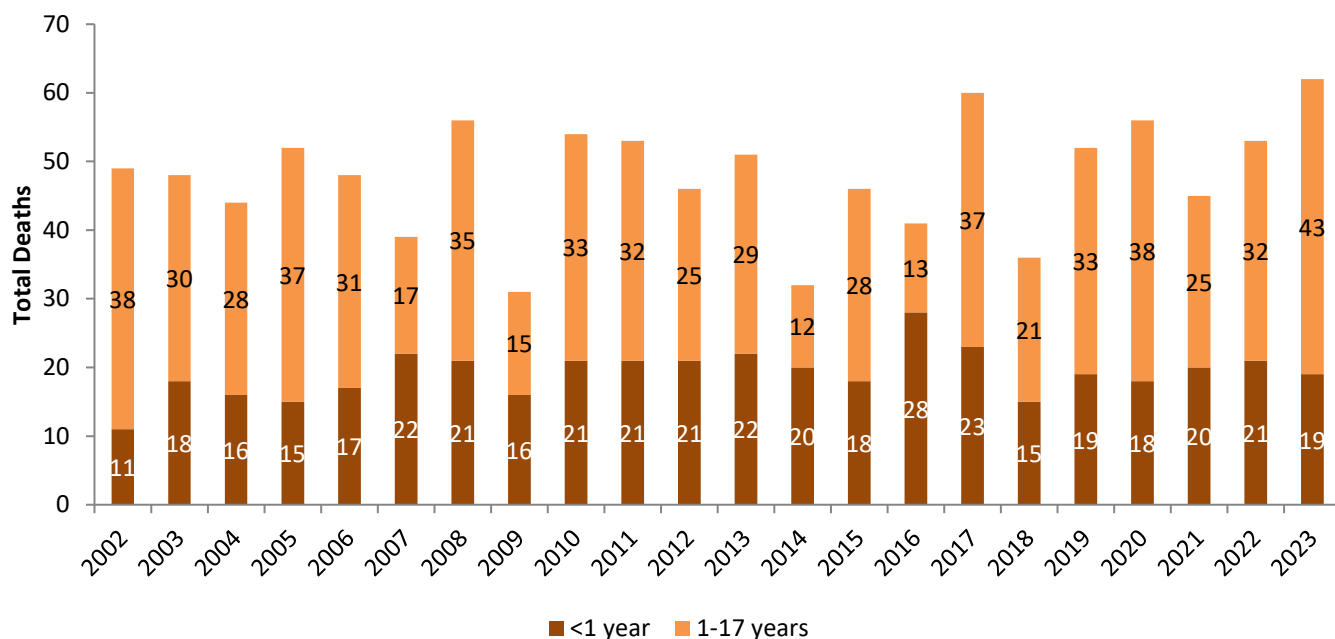
Infants (<1 year of age): Deaths due to co-sleeping and undetermined means was the most common means of infant death in 2023, accounting for 16 of the 43 or 84% of the infant deaths. Undetermined death was the most common manner of infant death, accounting for 79% of the deaths. The most common race was Black representing 74% of the infant deaths, while males were the most common sex representing 58% of the infant deaths.

Juveniles (1–17 years of age): Deaths due to firearms were the most common means of juvenile death in 2023, accounting for 51% of the deaths. Accident and Homicide were the most common manners of death, accounting for 65% of the deaths. The most common race was Black representing 84% of the juvenile deaths, while males were the most common sex representing 70% of the juvenile deaths.

### Historical Summary

#### Total Number of Infant and Juvenile Deaths by Year of Death 2002-2023

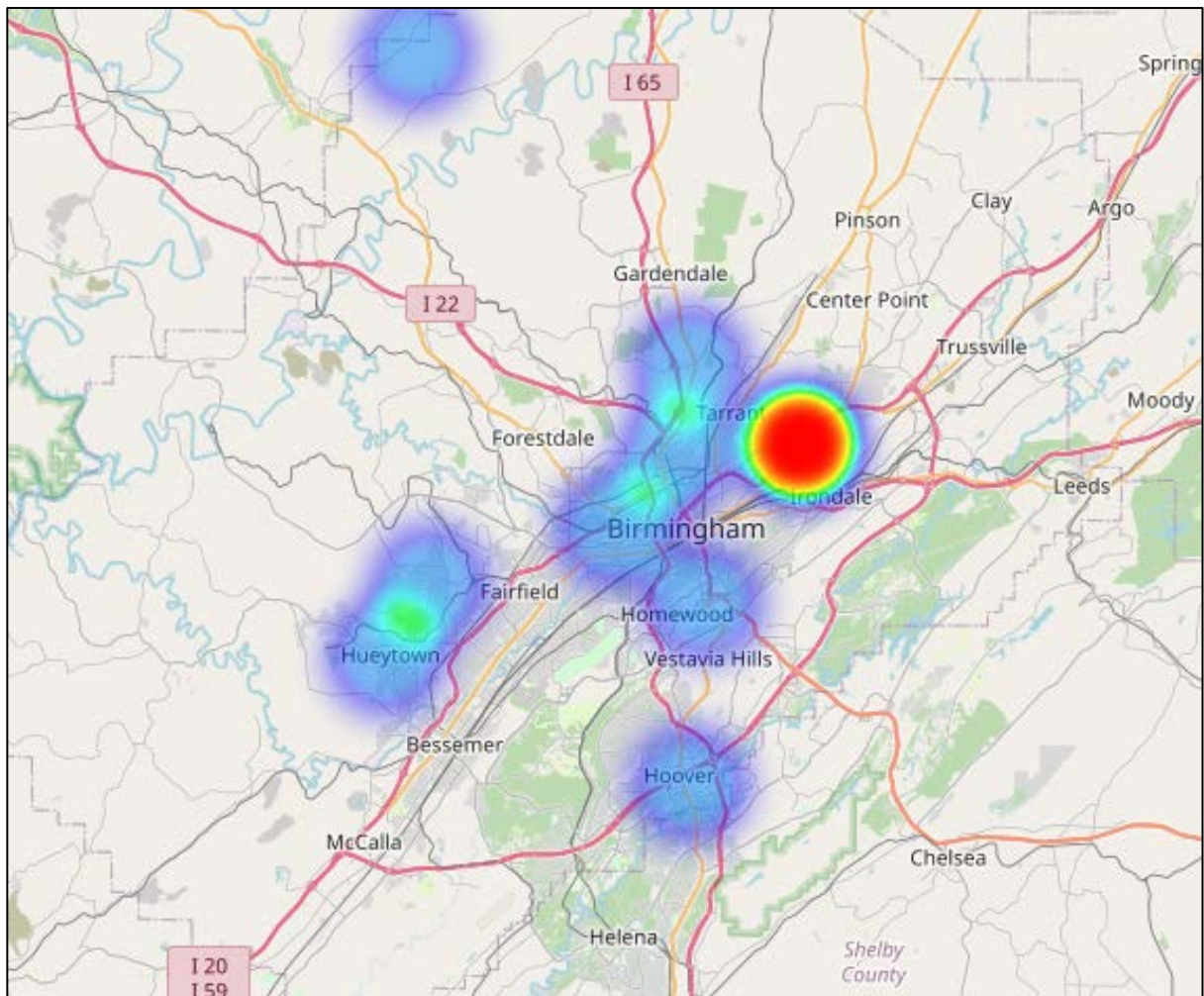
Figure 4.1: represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) and juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) investigated by the JCCMEO.



## Infant Deaths

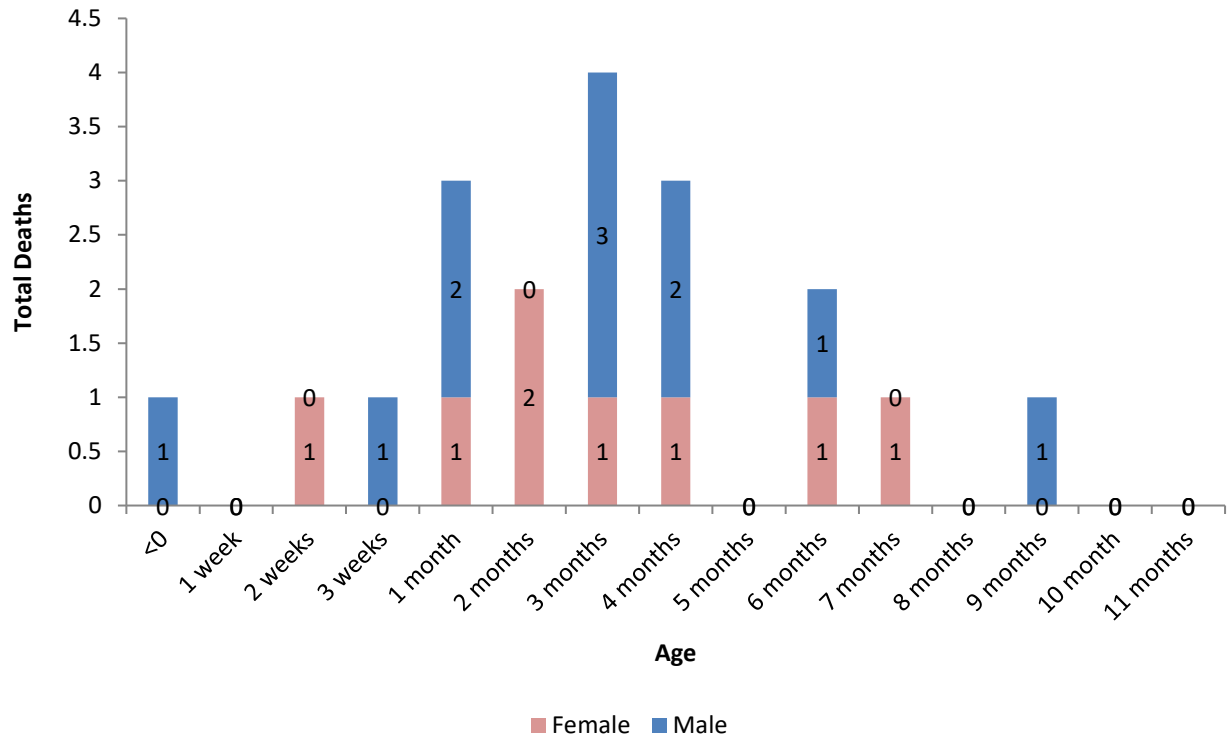
### Total Number of Infant Deaths by Place of Injury, 2023

Figure 4.2: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by place of injury.



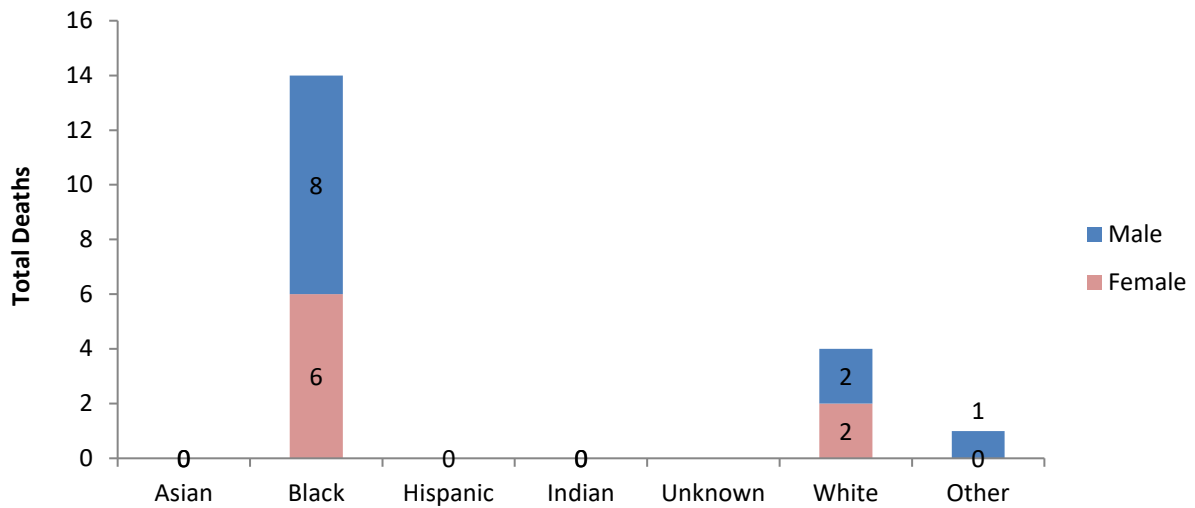
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Sex and Age, 2023**

Figure 4.3: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by sex and age.



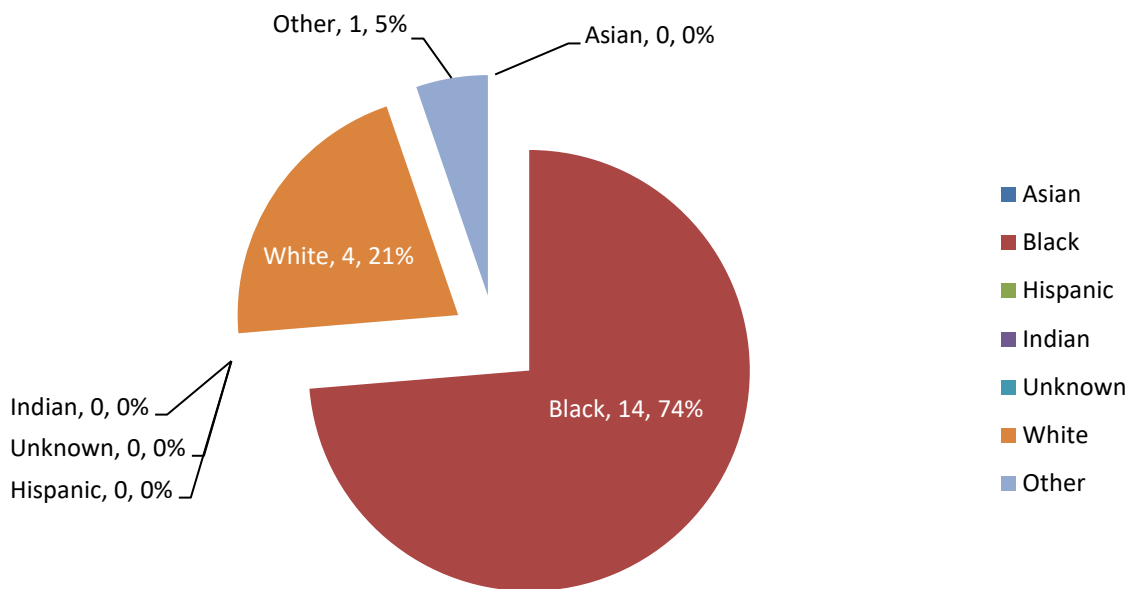
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023**

Figure 4.4: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by sex and race.



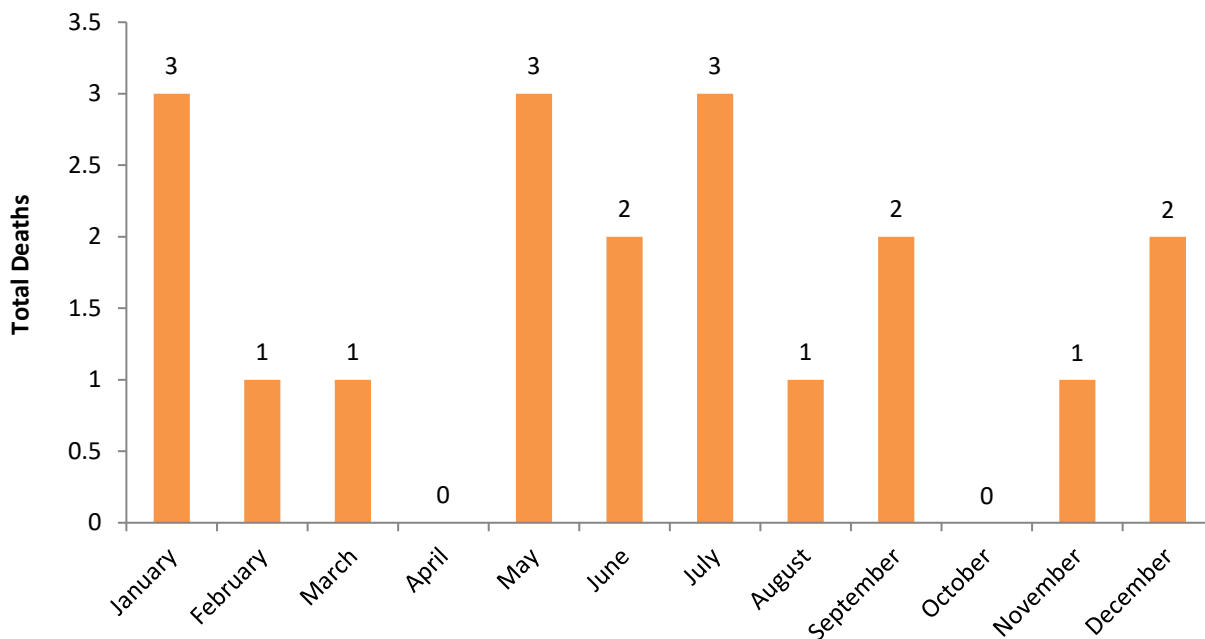
### Percentage of Infant Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 4.5: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by race.



### Total Number of Infant Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 4.6: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by month of death.





**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Means of Death, 2023**

Table 4.1: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Bassinet	1
Bed	1
Blunt: Unknown	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	6
Couch	1
Drug: Illicit	1
Undetermined:	
Bassinet	2
Car seat	1
Crib	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

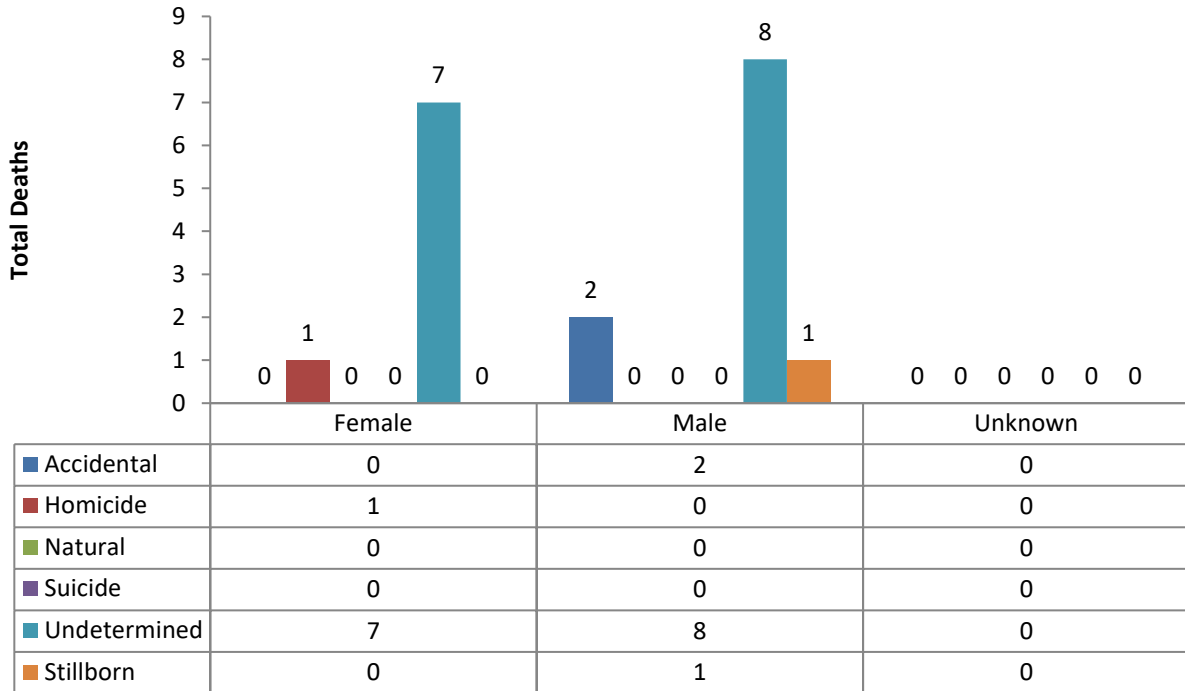
**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2023**

Table 4.2: N=19, 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	0	1	0	0	12	1	14
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	1	0	0	0	3	0	4
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>

**Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Sex, 2023**

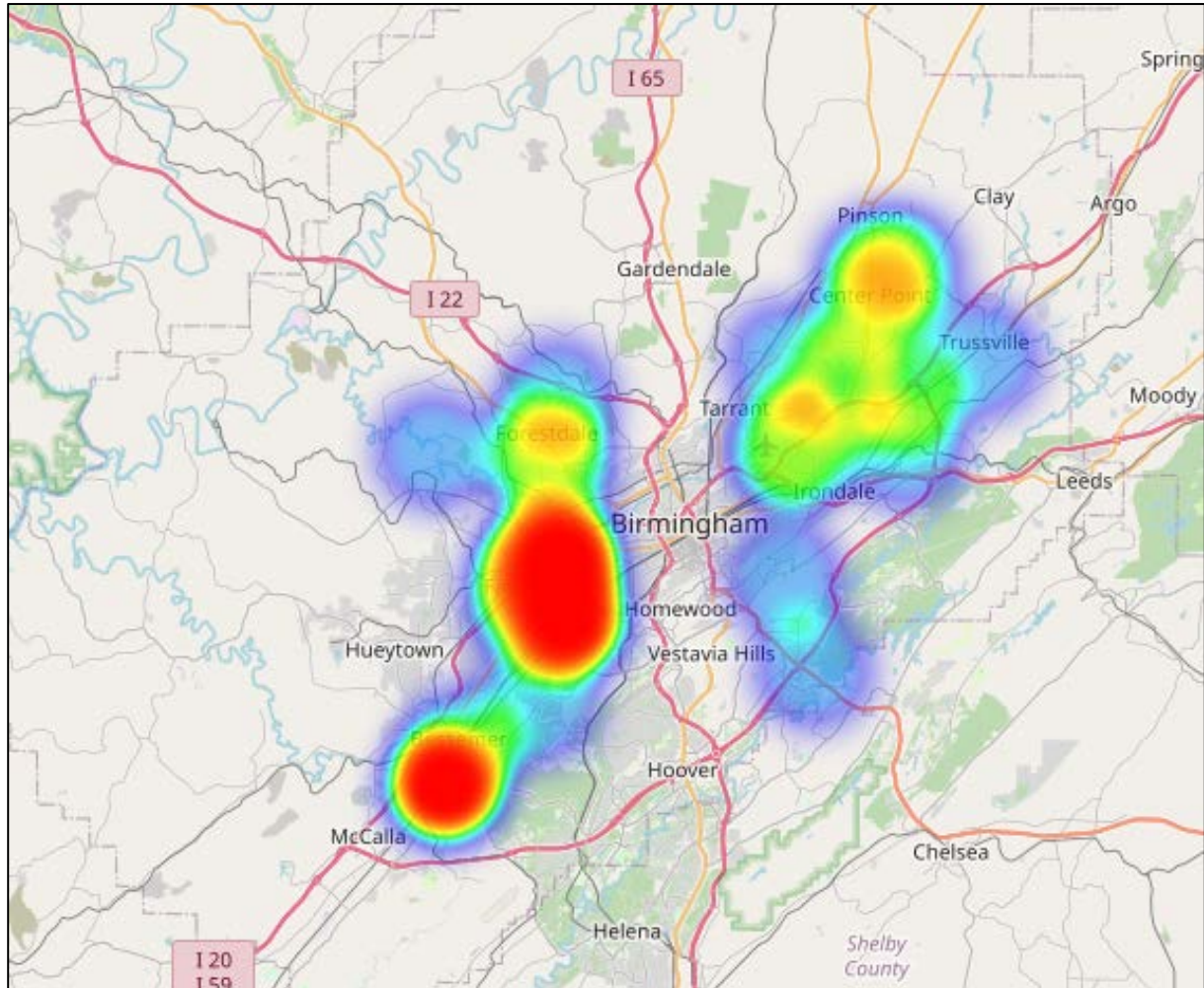
Figure 4.7: N=19, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by manner of death and sex.<sup>1</sup>



## Juvenile Deaths

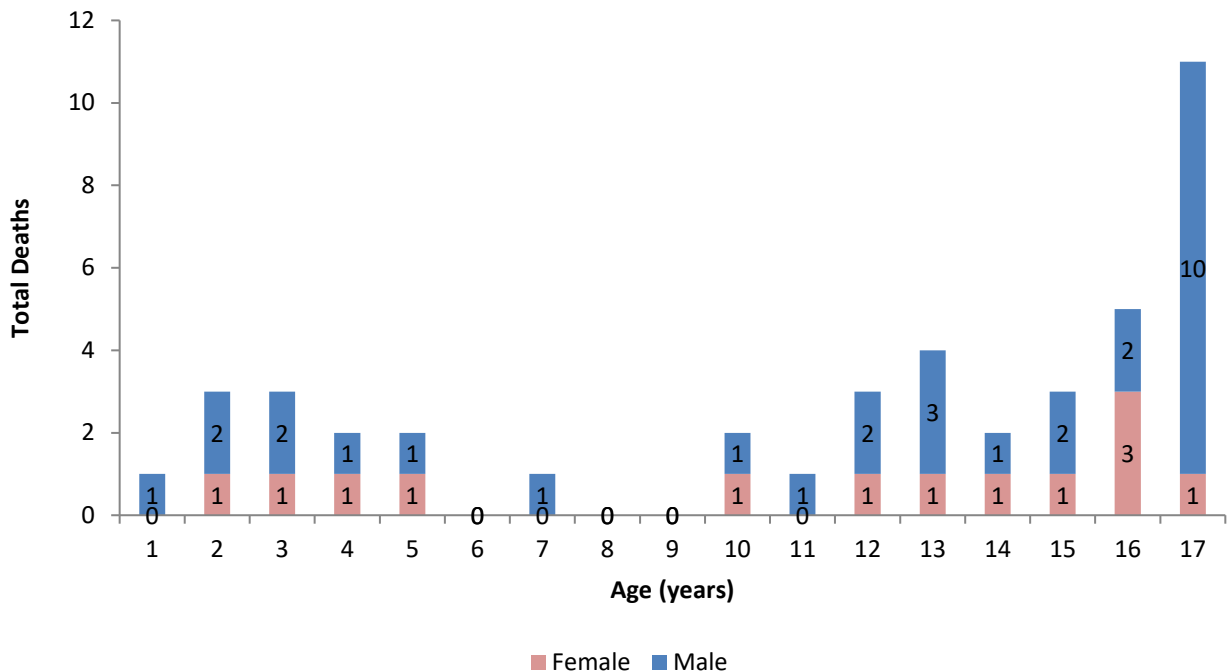
### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Place of Injury, 2023

Figure 4.8: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by place of injury.



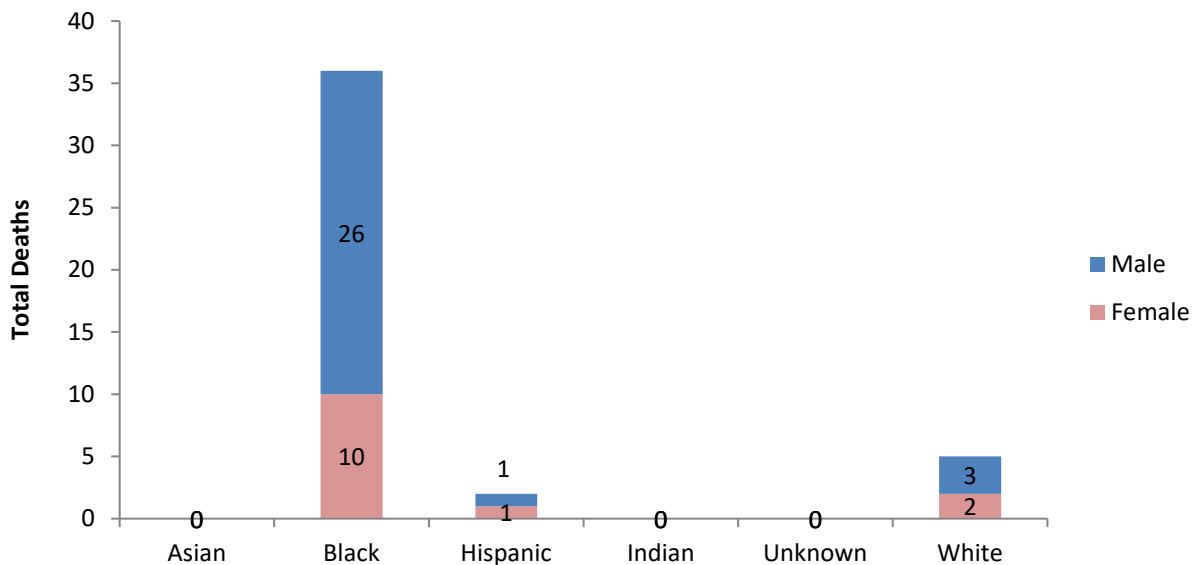
### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Sex and Age, 2023

Figure 4.9: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by sex and age.



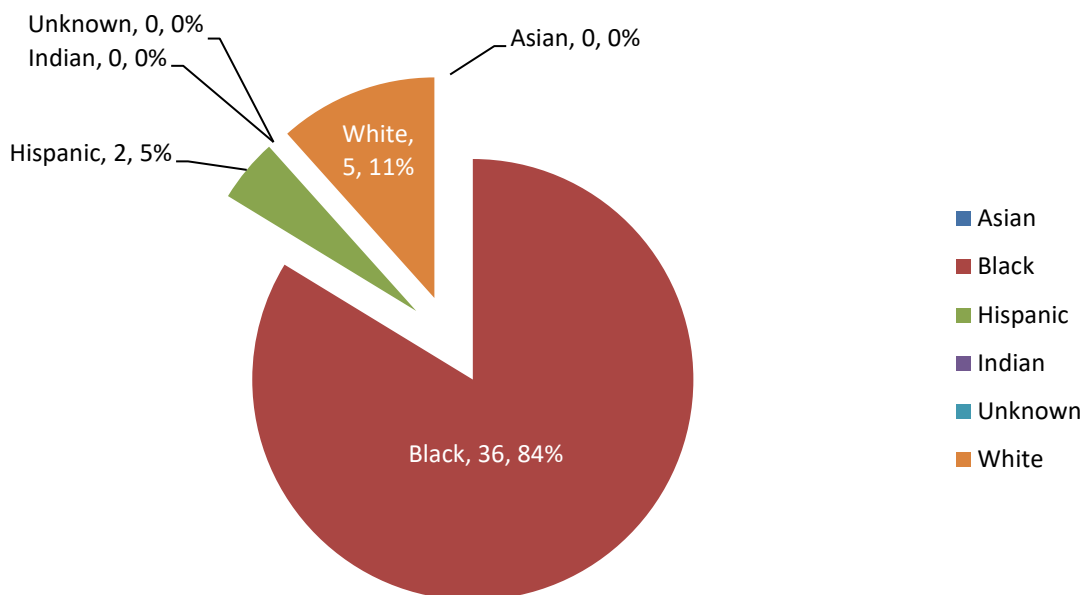
### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 4.10: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by sex and race.



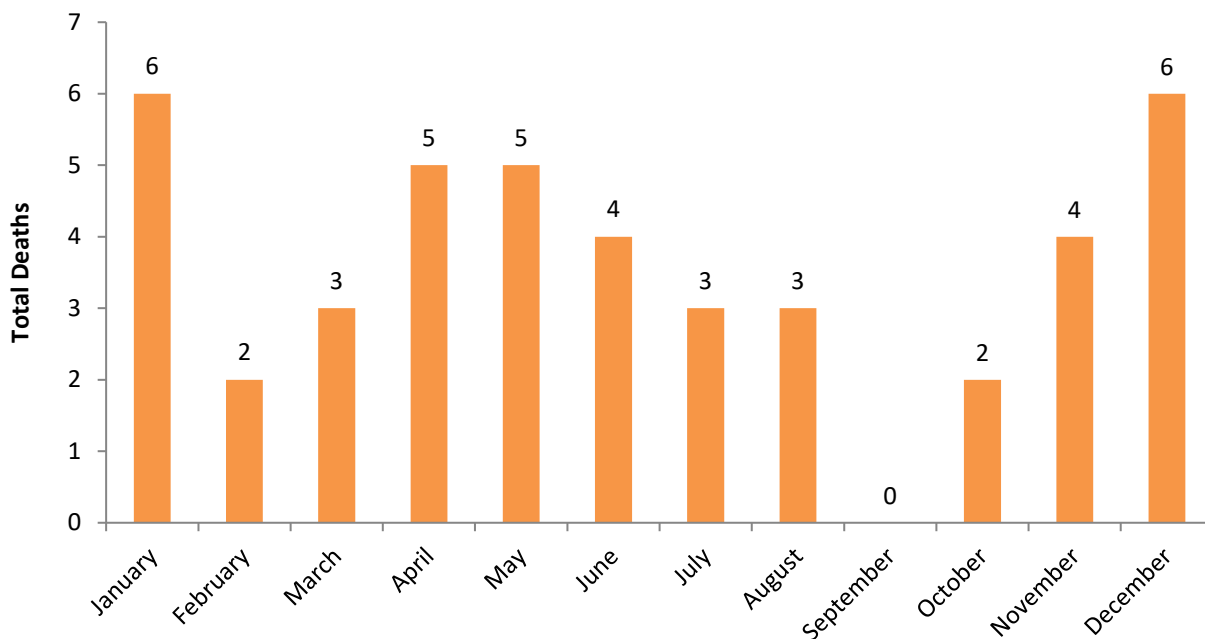
### Percentage of Juvenile Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 4.11: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by race.



### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 4.12: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by month of death.



### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Means of Death, 2023

Table 4.3: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia: Laundry hamper	1
Auto:	
Bicycle	1
Pedestrian	1
Single vehicle	2
Multiple vehicles	1
Drowning: Pool	3
Drug: Opioid	3
Fire: Home	1
Gun:	
Handgun	17
Handgun/rifle	1
Unknown	4
Hanging:	
Belt	1
Rope	1
Natural:	
COPD/asthma	1
Heart disease	1
Other natural	2
Pneumonia	1
Seizure disorder (epilepsy)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

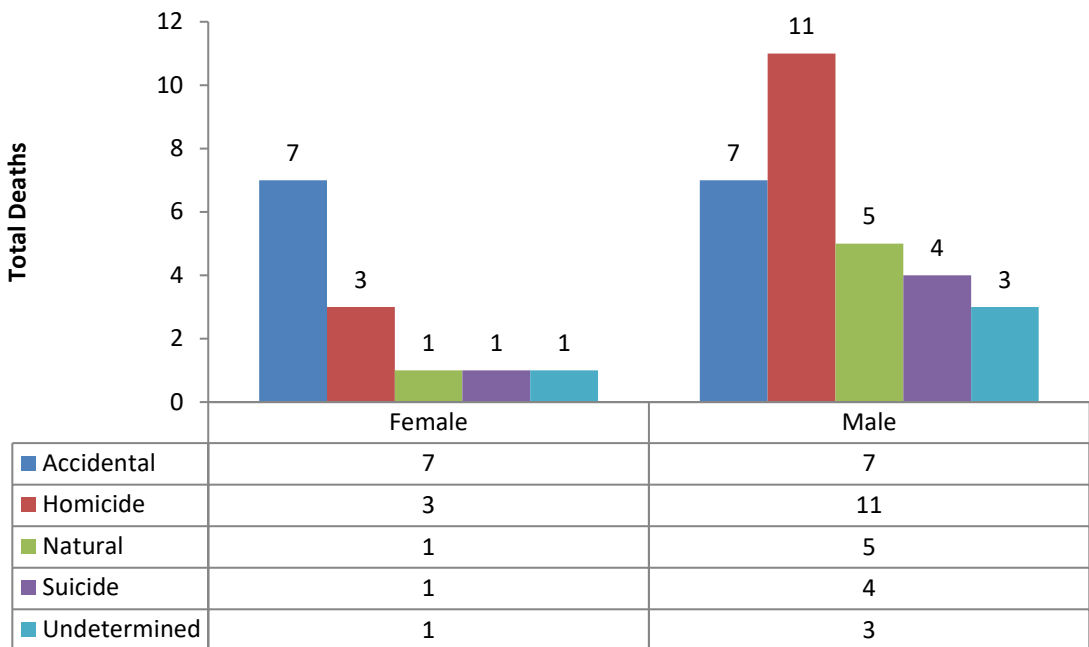
### Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2023

Table 4.4: N=43, 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	11	13	5	3	4	36
Hispanic	2	0	0	0	0	2
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	1	1	1	2	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>

**Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Sex, 2023**

Figure 4.13: N=43, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by manner of death and sex.



## Section 5: Motor Vehicle Deaths

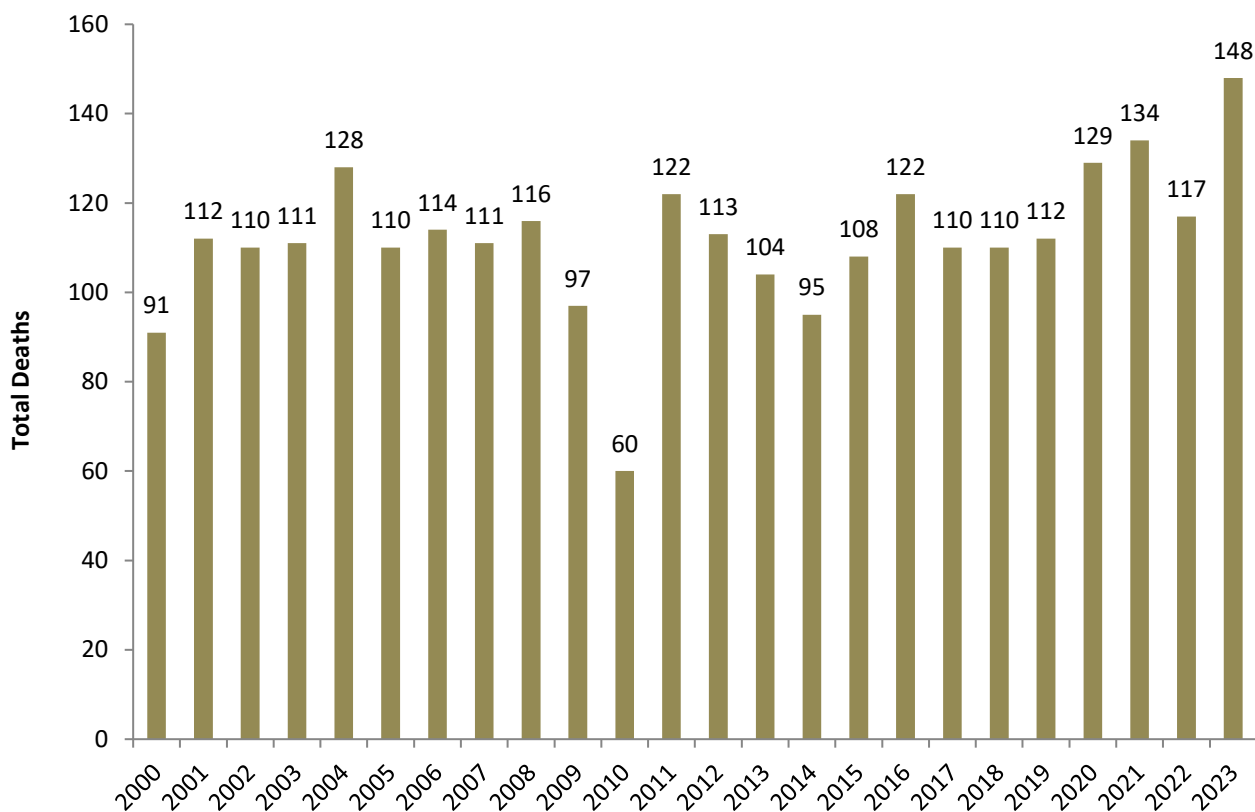
For the purpose of this report, motor vehicle deaths include airplane, all-terrain vehicle, automobile, motorcycle, train, and pedestrian deaths.

Motor vehicle deaths accounted for 11% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2023. There was a 26% increase in the total number of motor vehicle deaths, from 117 deaths in 2022 to 148 deaths in 2023.

Single-vehicle collisions was the most common means of motor vehicle death accounting for 26% of the deaths, followed by multi-vehicle collisions accounting for 27% of the deaths and motor vehicle-pedestrian collisions accounting for 23% of the deaths.

### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

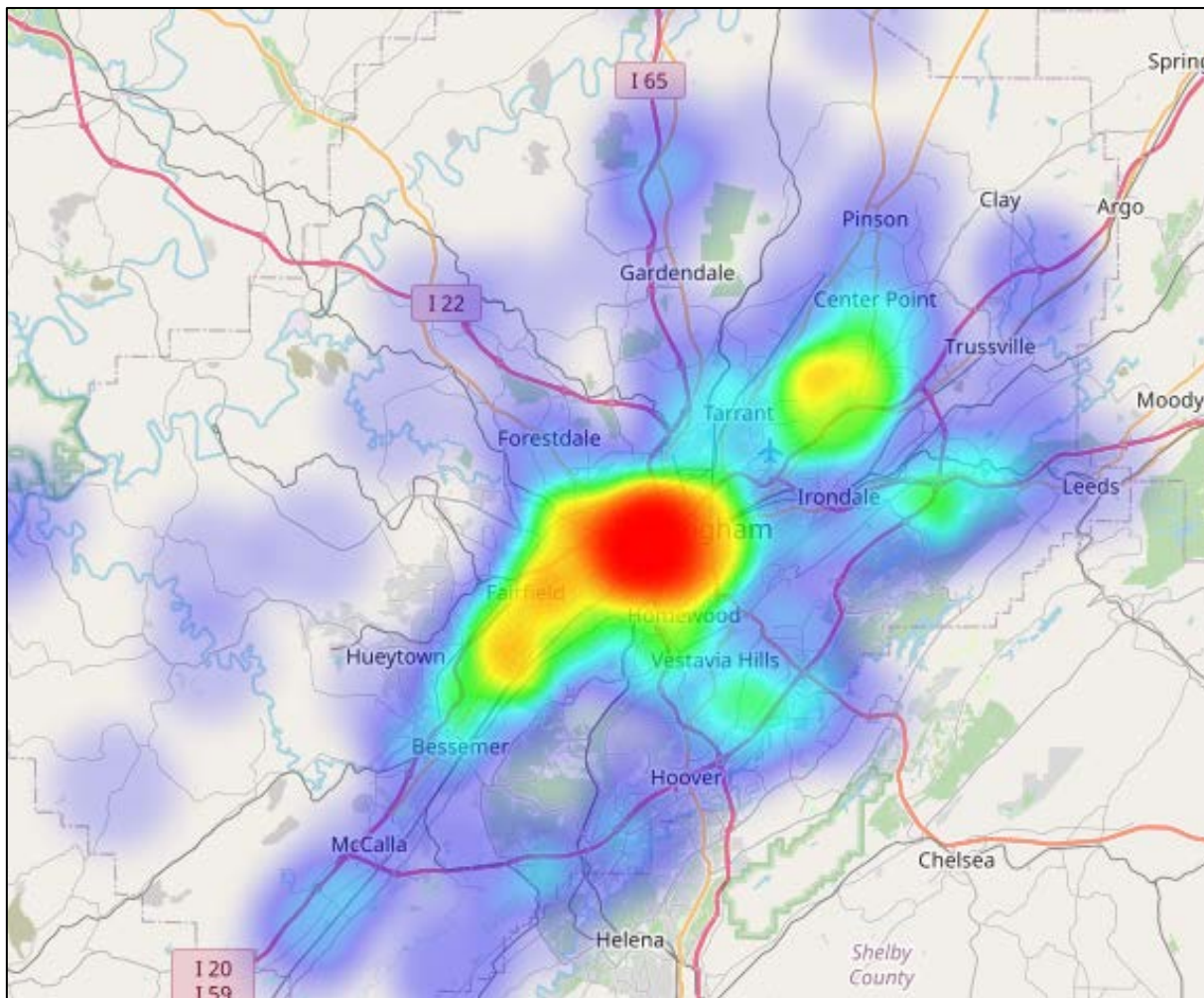
Figure 5.1: represents all motor vehicle deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.





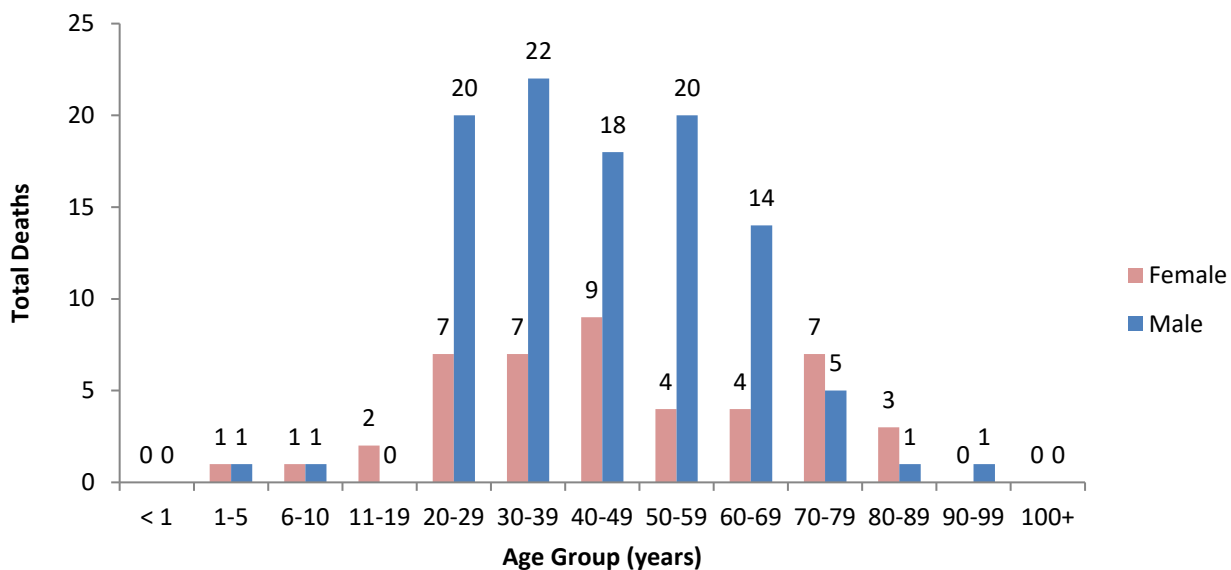
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Place of Injury, 2023

Figure 5.2: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by place of injury.



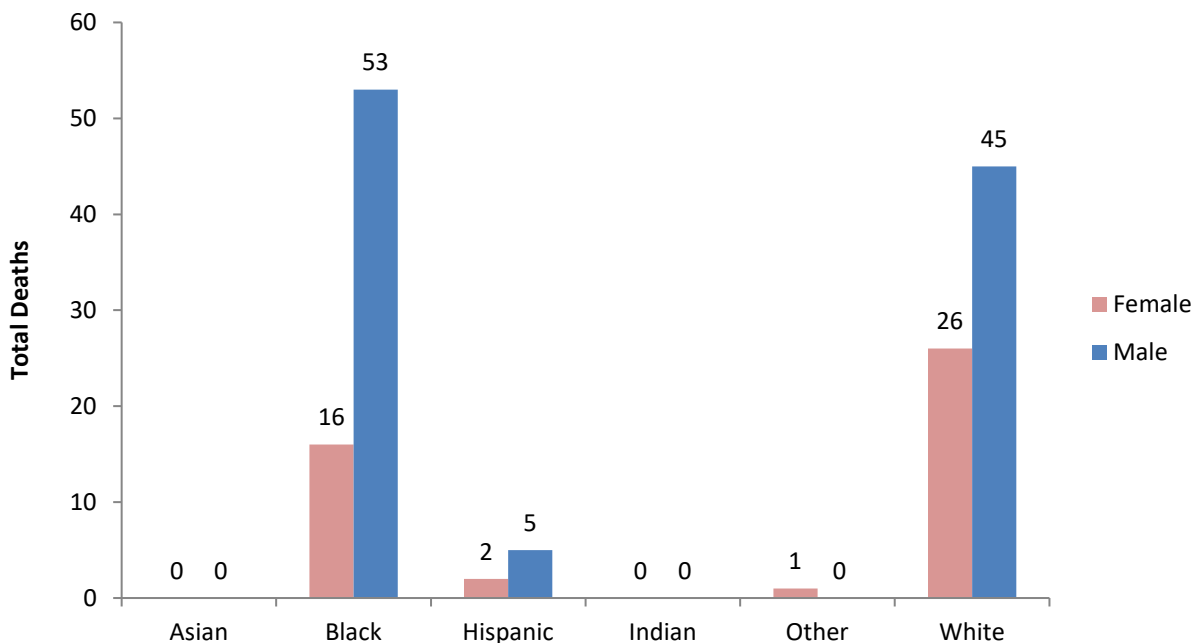
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 5.3: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by sex and age group.



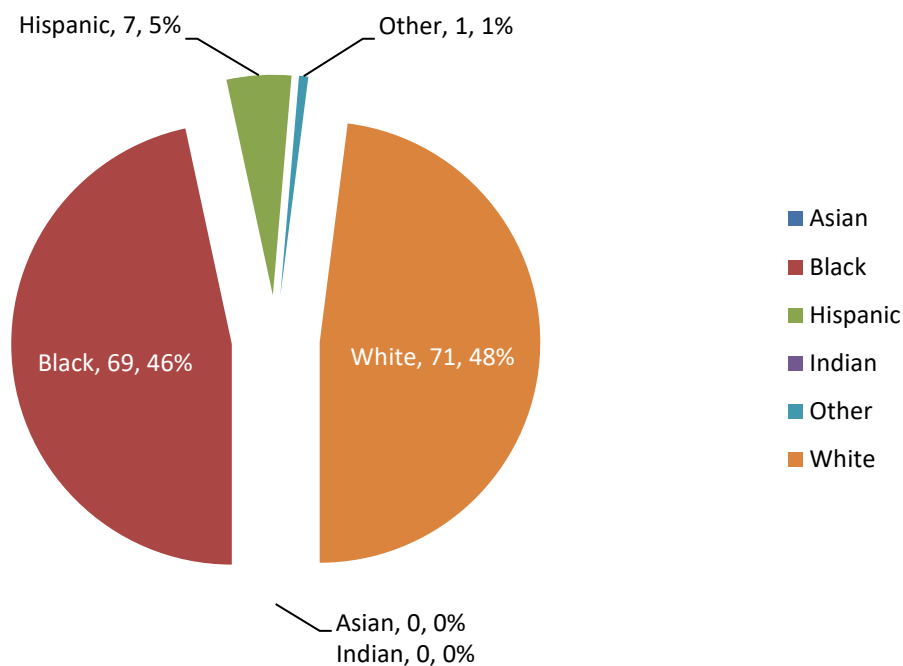
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 5.4: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by sex and race.



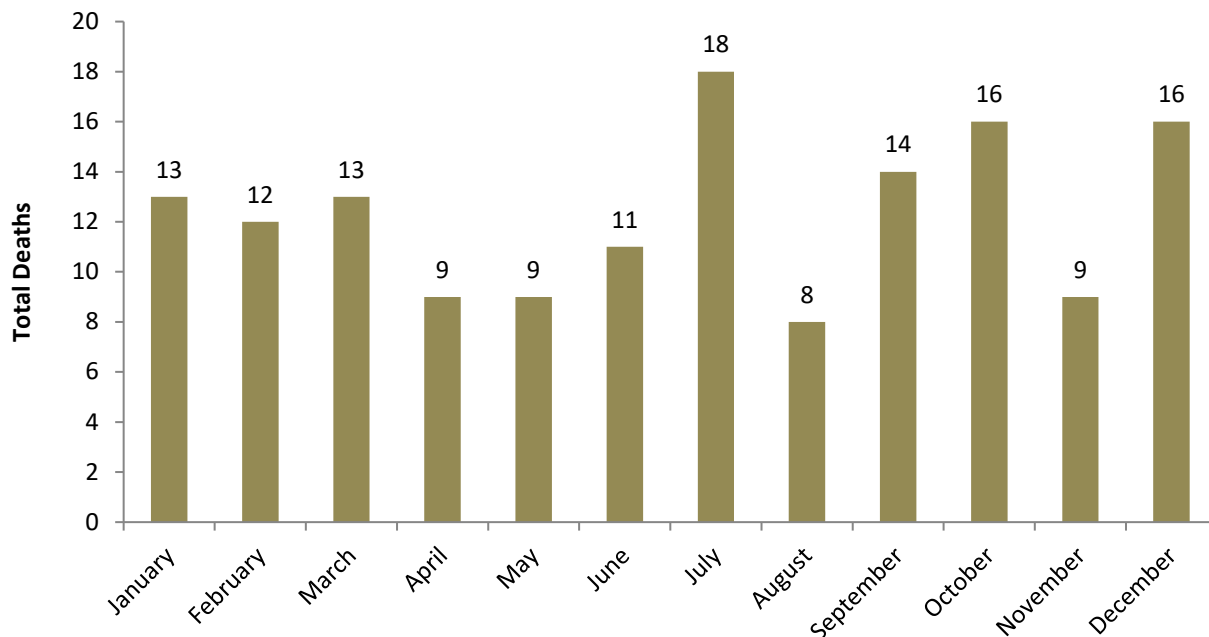
### Percentage of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 5.5: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by race.



### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 5.6: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by month of death.



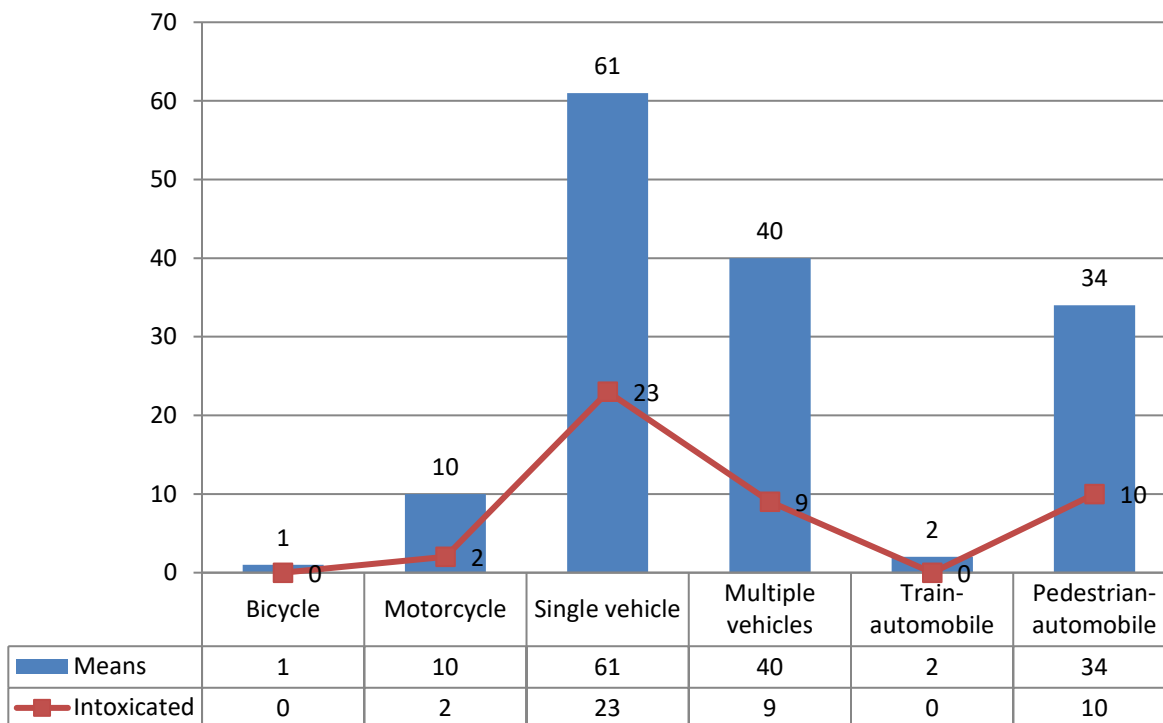
### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Means of Death, 2023

Table 5.1: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Motor-vehicle:	
Bicycle	1
Motorcycle	10
Single vehicle	61
Multiple vehicles	40
Train	2
Pedestrian:	
Motor vehicle	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>

### Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Intoxication Contributing, 2023

Figure 5.7: N=148, represents all motor vehicle deaths where an intoxicant contributed to the death.



## 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 2023 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 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.

## General Statistics and Notable Trends

There was a 9% increase in total overdose deaths last year, from 452 deaths in 2022 to 494 deaths in 2023 and, continues a five-year trend of increased overdose deaths.

There was a 9% increase in opioid deaths, from 376 deaths in 2022 to 411 deaths in 2023.

There was a 9% increase in fentanyl deaths, from 355 deaths in 2022 to 386 deaths in 2023.

There was an 8% increase in cocaine deaths, from 143 deaths in 2022 to 154 deaths in 2023.

There was a 11% increase in methamphetamine deaths, from 148 deaths in 2022 to 165 deaths in 2023.

There was a 15% decrease in heroin deaths, from 20 deaths in 2022 to 17 deaths in 2023.

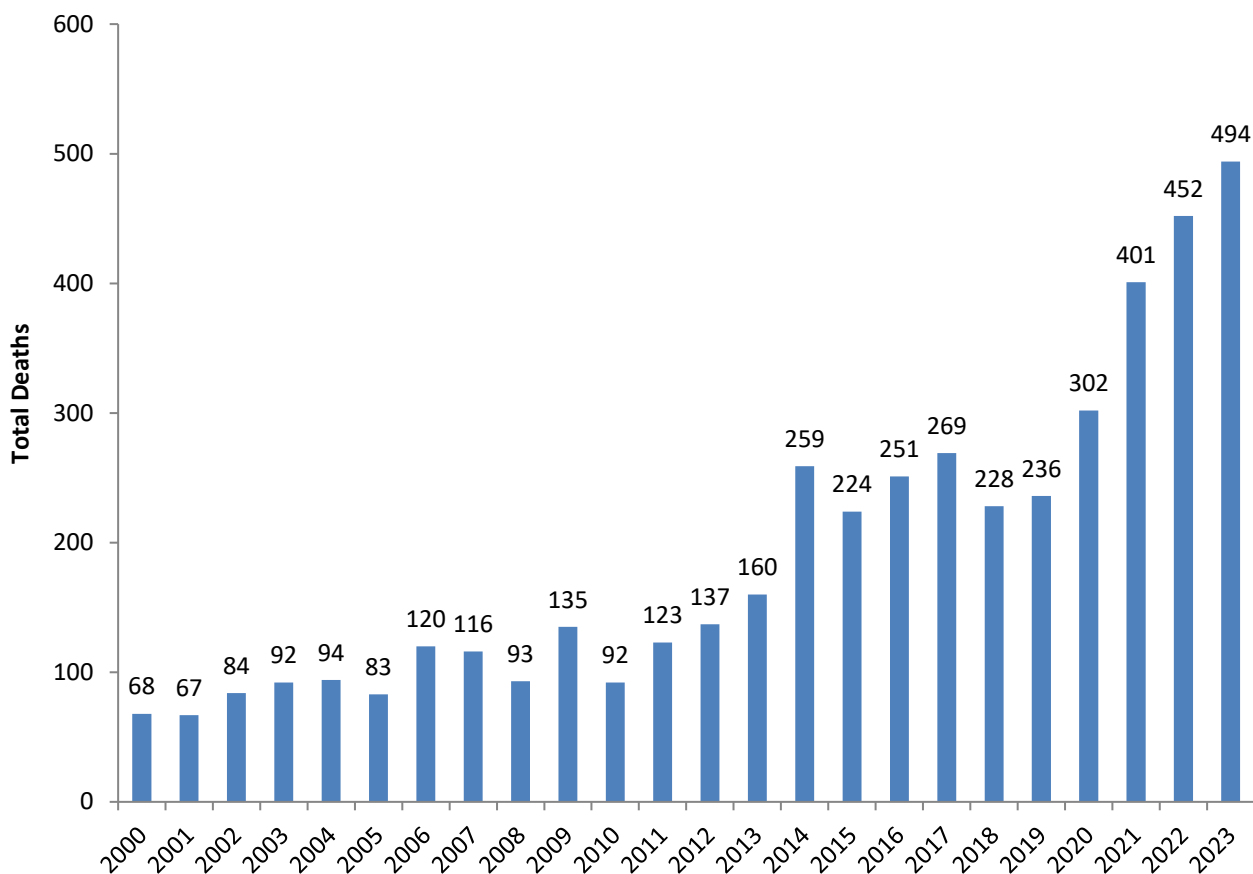
Overdose deaths of black male and females combined increased 26%, from 194 deaths in 2022 to 244 deaths in 2023 and, continues a five-year trend of increased deaths in the Black community.

Overdose deaths of black males increased 20%, from 147 deaths in 2022 to 177 deaths in 2023 and, represents the highest demographic of overdose deaths.

## Historical Summary

### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2023

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

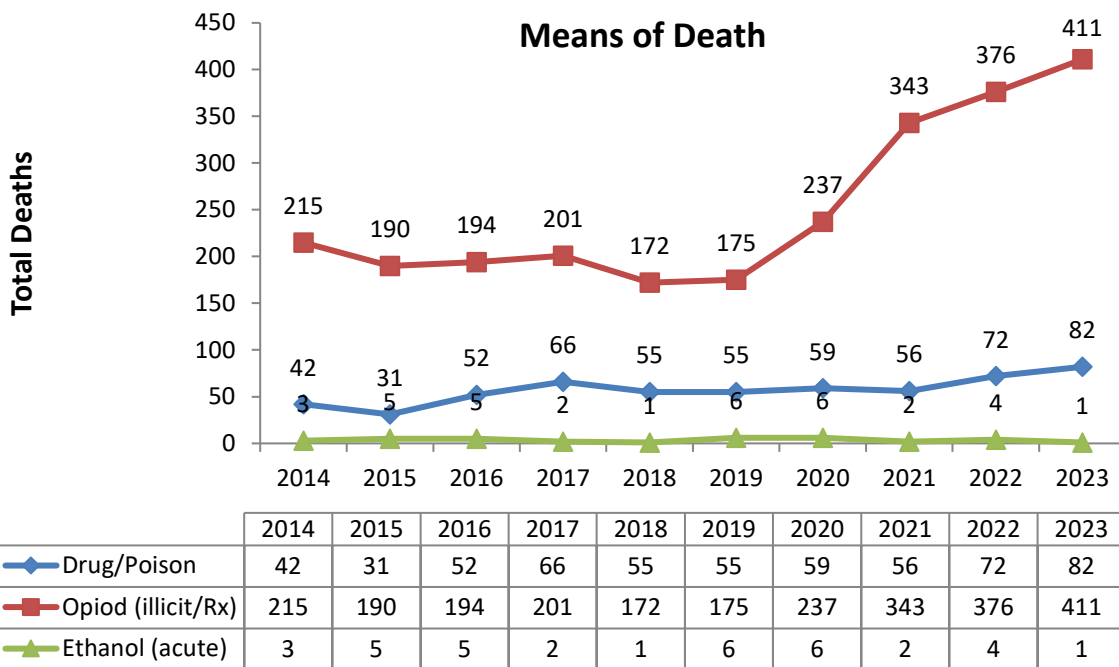


**Historical Summary: Means of Death, 2014-2023**

Table 6.1: represents all overdoses by means of death, 2014-2023.

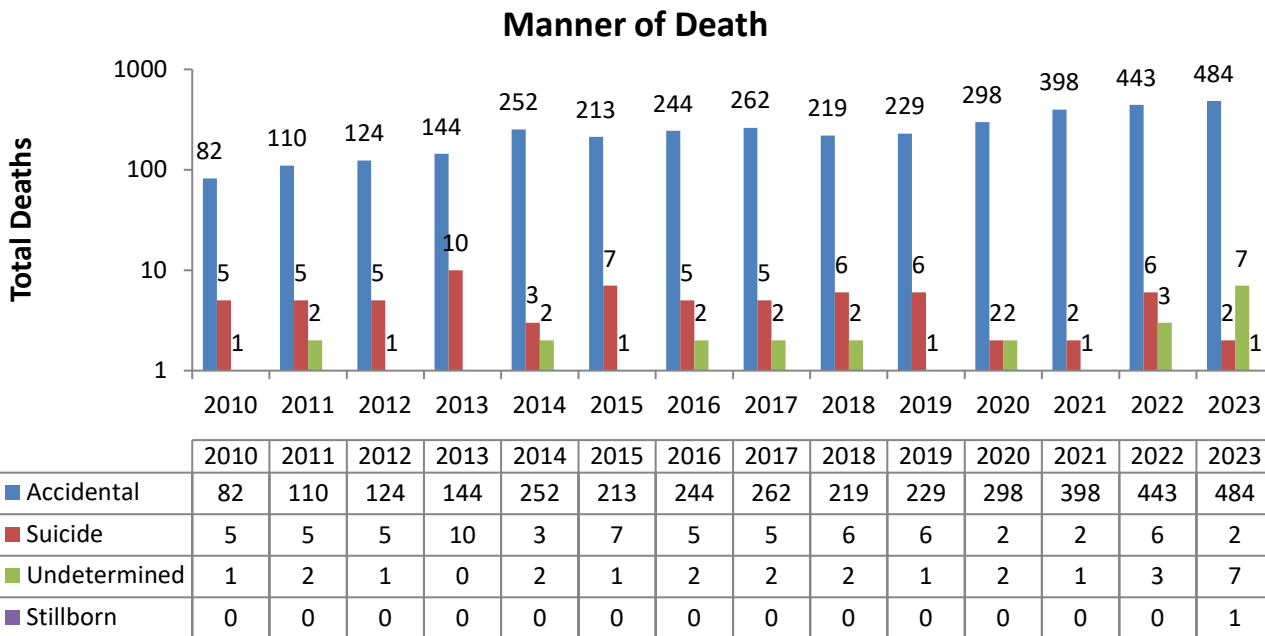
Year	Drug/ Poison	Opioid (illicit/Rx)	Ethanol (acute)	=	Total Overdose Deaths
2014	42	215	3	=	260
2015	31	190	3	=	224
2016	52	194	5	=	251
2017	66	201	2	=	269
2018	55	172	1	=	228
2019	55	175	6	=	236
2020	59	237	6	=	302
2021	56	343	2	=	401
2022	72	376	4	=	452
2023	82	411	1	=	494

Figure 6.2: represent all overdoses by means of death, 2014-2023.



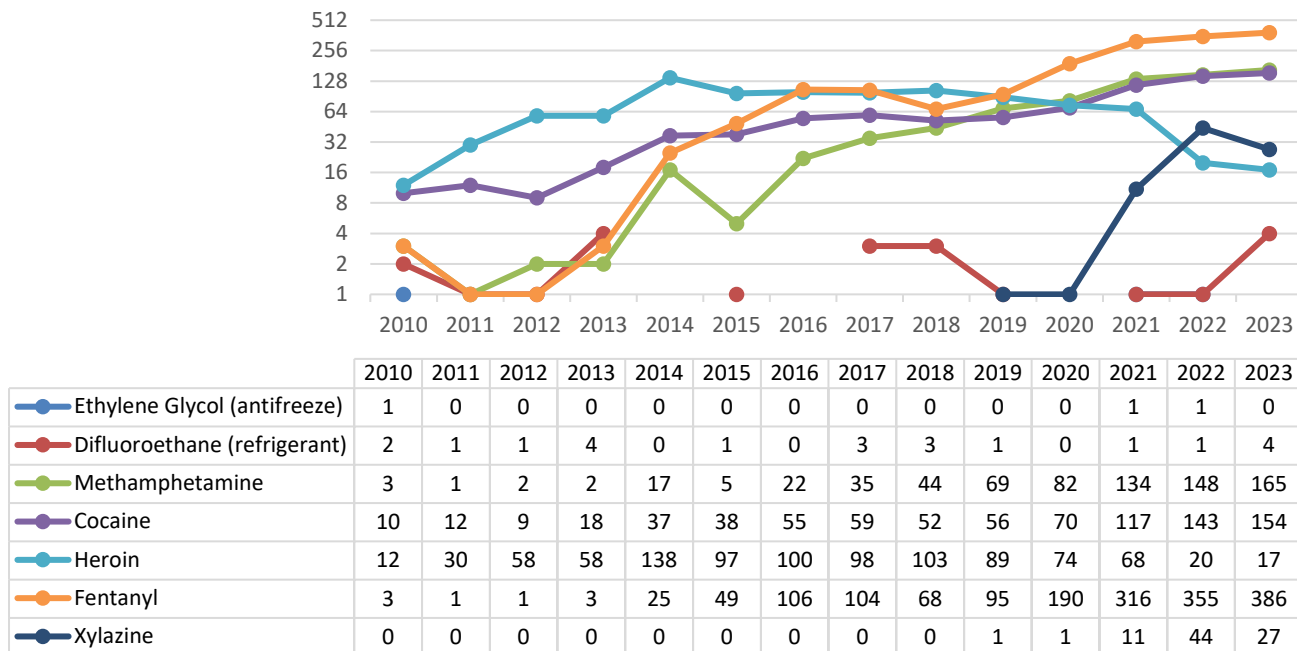
**Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2010-2023**

Figure 6.3: represents all overdoses by manner of death.



**Historical Summary: Illicit Drugs/Poisons, 2010-2023**

Figure 6.4: represents illicit drugs and poisons.

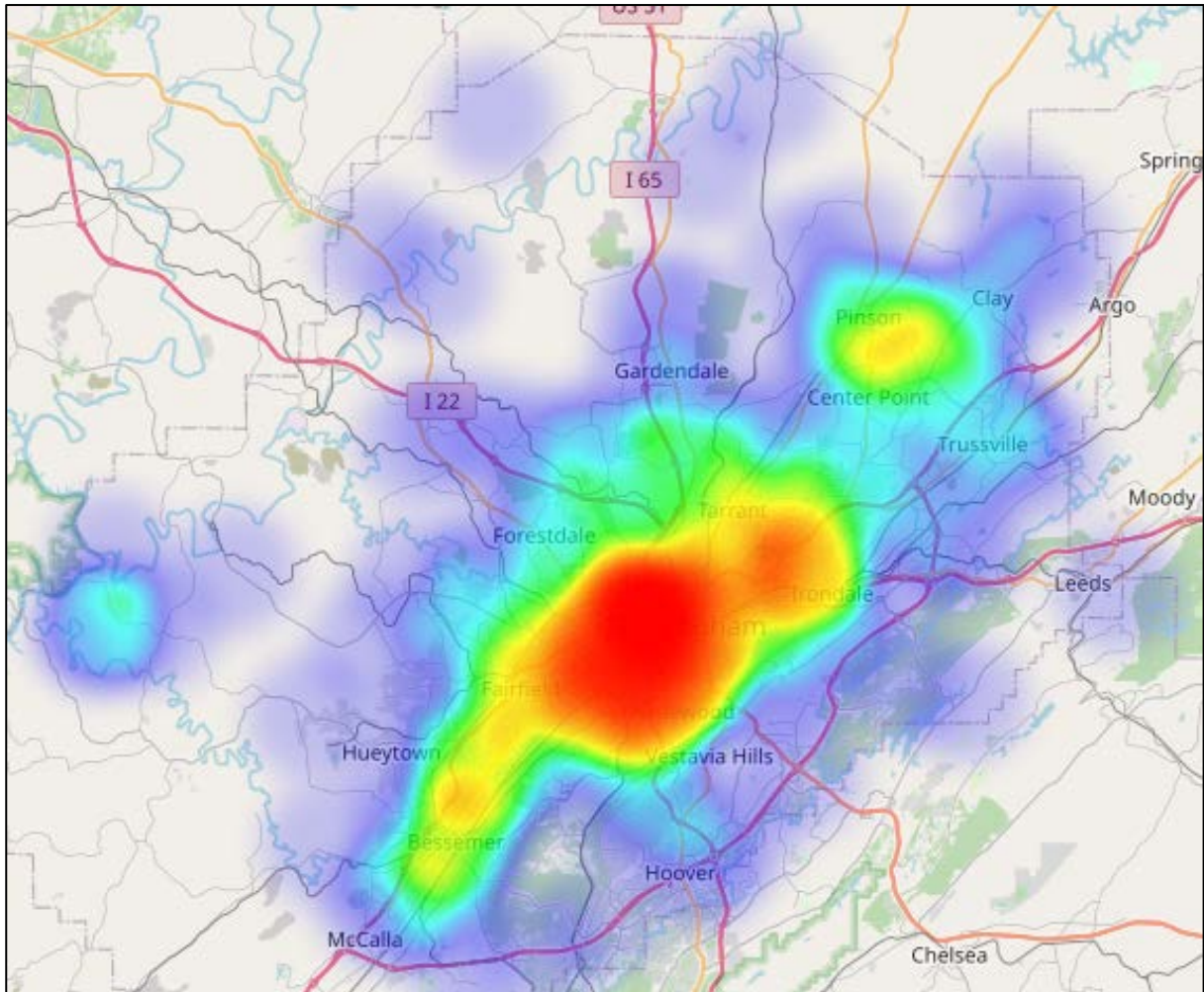




## 2023 Overdose Deaths

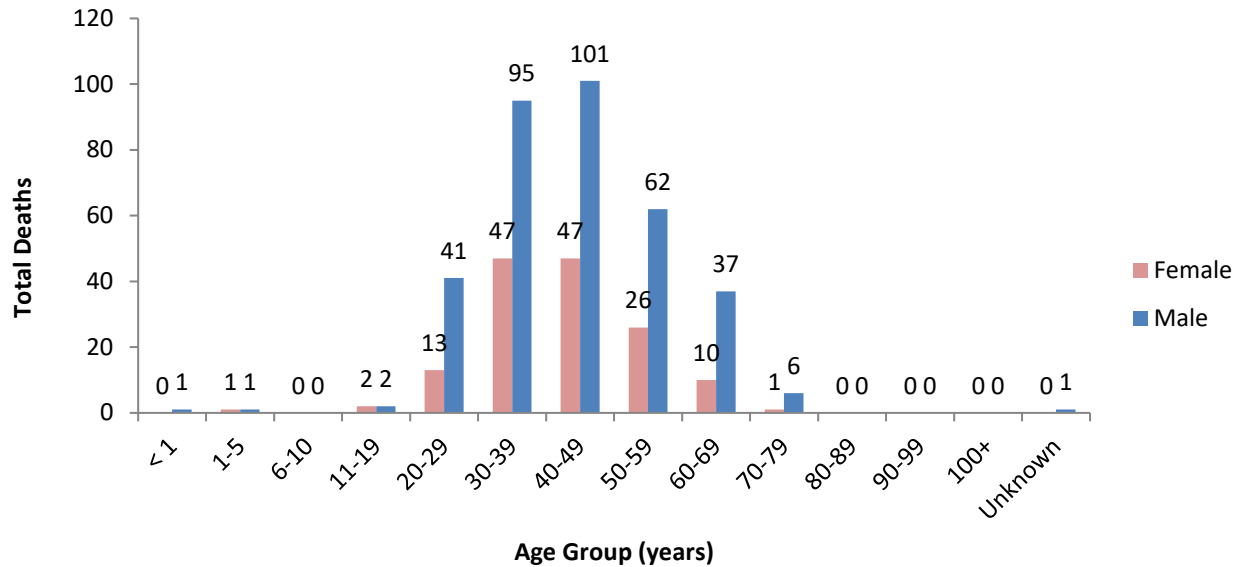
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Place of Injury, 2023

Figure 6.5: N=494, represents all overdose deaths by place of injury.



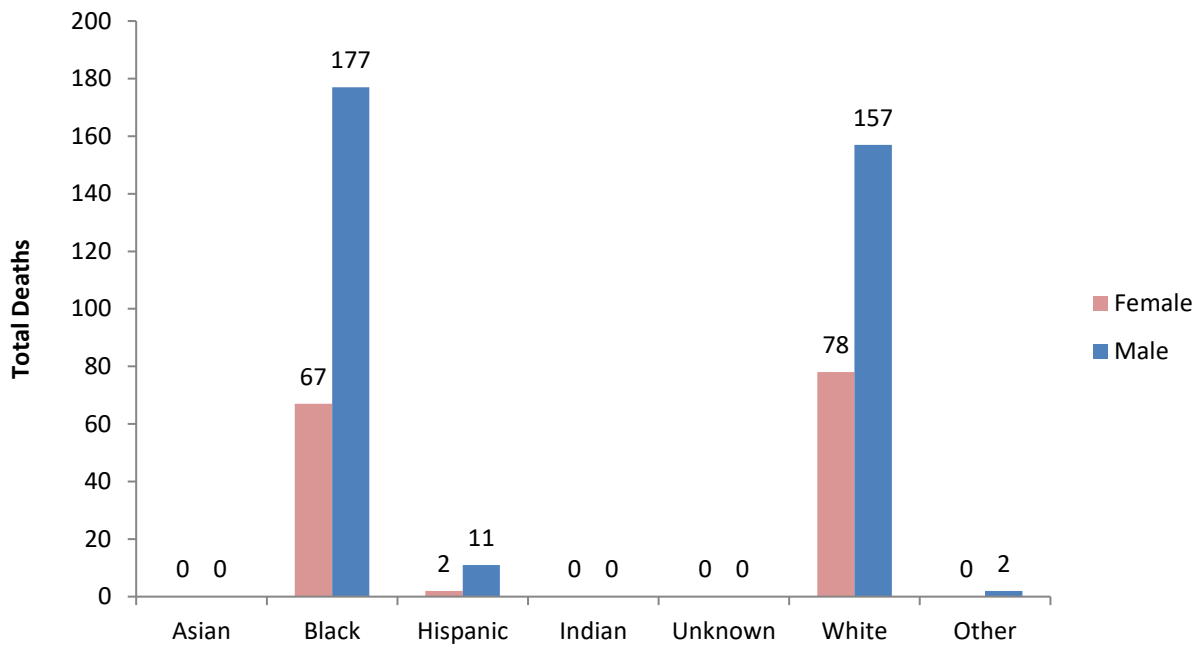
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Sex and Age Group, 2023

Figure 6.6: N=494, represents all overdose deaths by sex and age group.



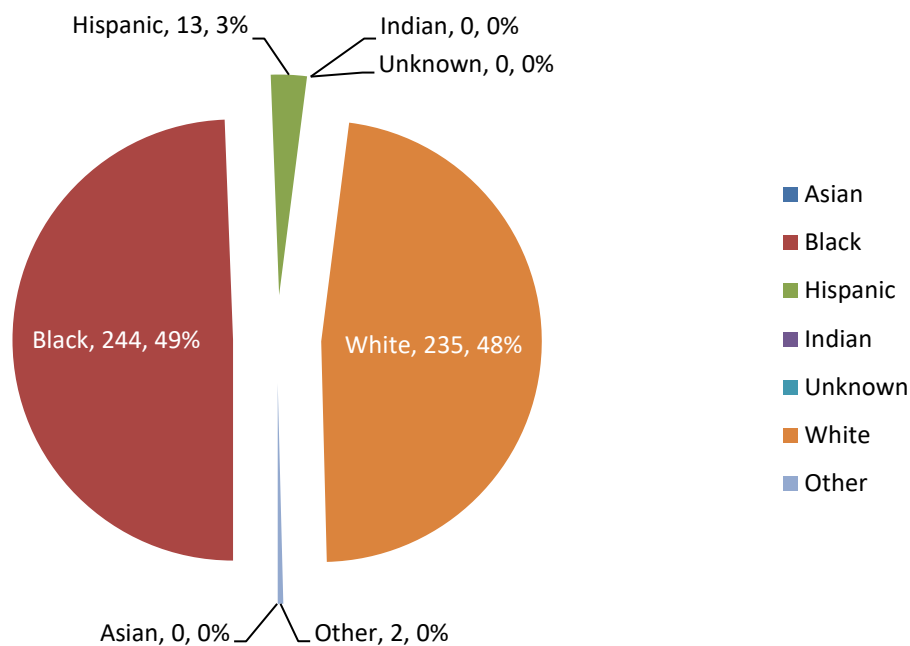
### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Sex and Race, 2023

Figure 6.7: N=494, represents all overdose deaths by sex and race.



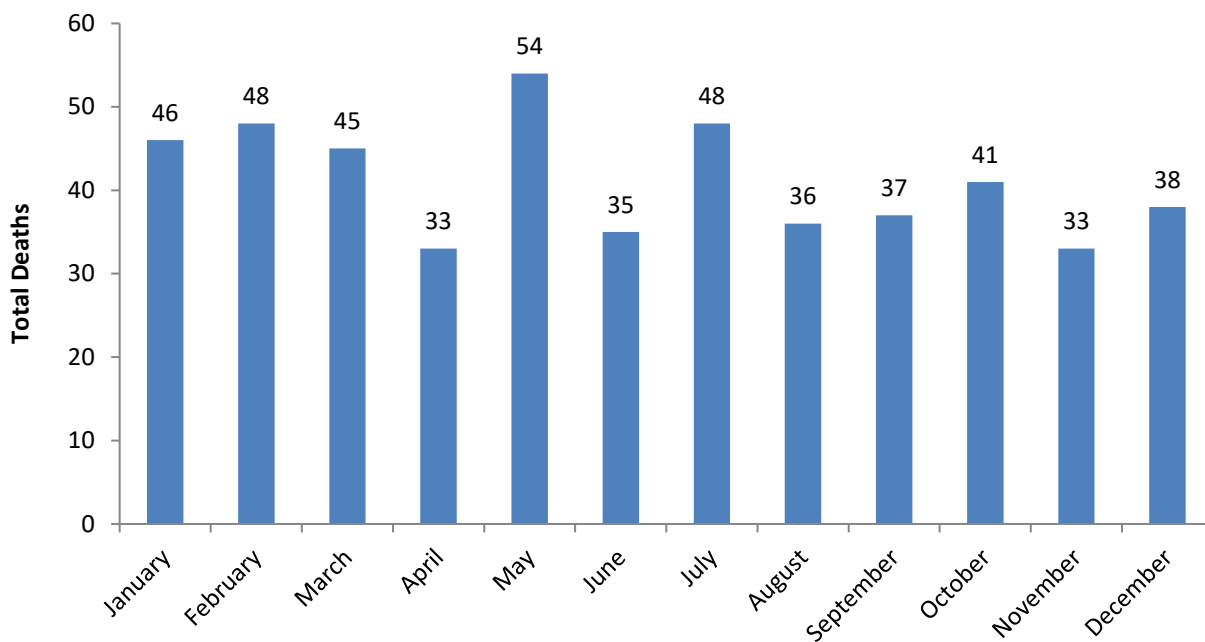
### Percentage of Overdose Deaths by Race, 2023

Figure 6.8: N=494, represents all overdose deaths by race.



### Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Month of Death, 2023

Figure 6.9: N=494, represents all overdose deaths by month of death.



**Common Medications and Ethanol Causing or Contributing to Deaths: 2010-2023**

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	2022	2023
<b>Opioids:</b>														
Hydrocodone	8	7	8	12	28	11	13	15	12	11	11	13	9	6
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0
Methadone	22	13	11	21	21	17	16	7	9	8	5	8	7	0
Morphine	10	17	12	5	7	3	5	3	0	2	8	2	3	2
Oxycodone	4	8	4	13	21	11	12	11	8	13	12	13	11	11
Tramadol	2	0	1	6	5	3	3	9	5	5	3	5	2	2
<b>Benzodiazepines:</b>														
Alprazolam (Xanax)	5	3	7	12	32	8	31	28	15	16	19	22	10	4
Clonazepam (Klonopin)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Diazepam (Valium)	3	1	2	7	11	5	3	6	4	2	4	3	2	2
<b>Barbiturates:</b>														
Butalbital	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Phenobarbital	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Antidepressants:</b>														
Citalopram (Celexa)	4	2	1	1	2	0	1	5	1	2	2	0	1	3
Nortriptyline (Palmelor)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Velafaxine (Effexor)	0	0	0	2	0	0	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	0	1
Amphetamine	3	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	2	1	6	4	12	7
Carisoprodol (Soma)	1	3	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fluoxetine (Prozac)	3	2	1	1	1	4	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	2
Gabapentin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	2

Drug	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Promethazine (Phenergan)	0	0	1	3	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
Quetiapine (Seroquel)	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	7	1	0	2	0
Sertraline (Zoloft)	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Trazodone (Oleptro)	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1
Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Ethanol (alcohol)	0	13	26	16	33	30	24	38	37	40	45	52	59	45

### 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 Jefferson County Sheriff's Office provides death investigation services for the City of Fairfield.

**End of Report**