

# Causes of death: Examining effects on life expectancy

## Highlights

Global life expectancy increased by 6.2 years since 1990, largely thanks to:

- lower mortality rates for diarrhea and lower respiratory infections.

- lower mortality rates in ages over 55 for stroke, cancers, and ischemic heart disease.

COVID-19 derailed health improvements in many locations.

Diabetes and kidney diseases are rising threats to health all over the world.

## What's new in this study?

First study to compare deaths from COVID-19 to deaths from other causes globally.

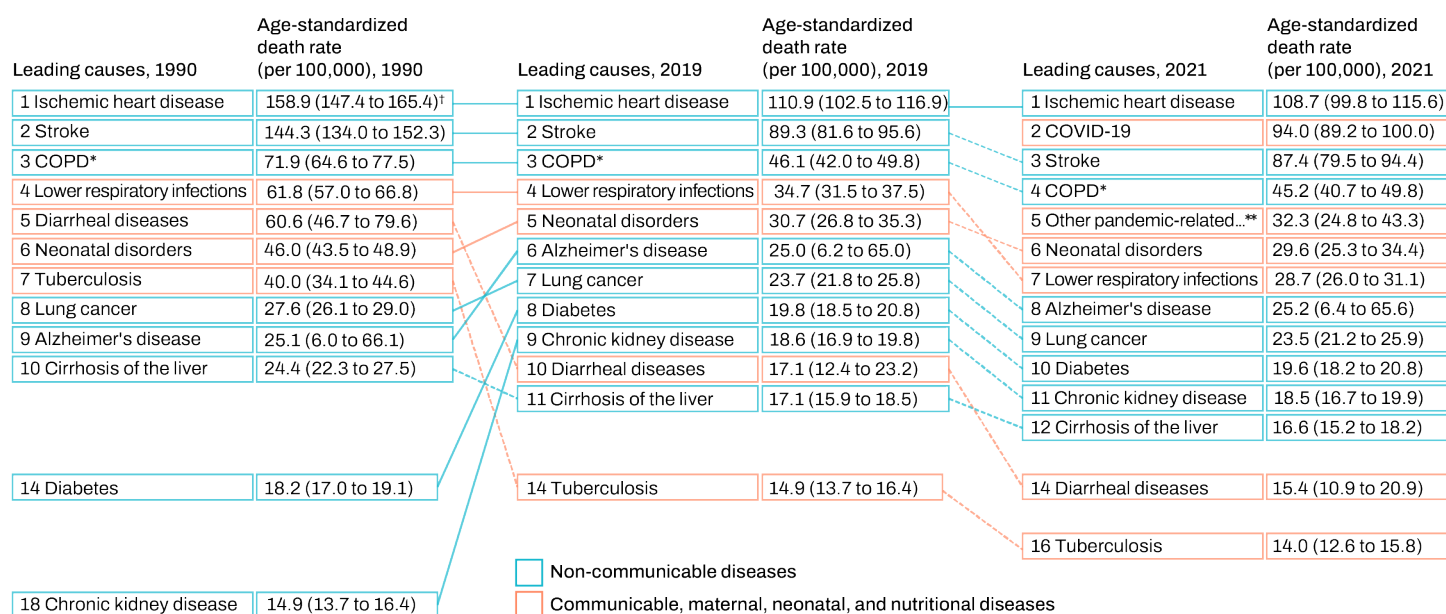
Links specific causes of death to changes in life expectancy.

Utilized hundreds of new data sources and improved statistical methods.

Added 12 new causes of death and more detailed age groups.

Mortality from leading causes of death declined over the past 30 years, but COVID-19 radically altered these rankings.

## Leading causes of death around the world in 1990, 2019, and 2021



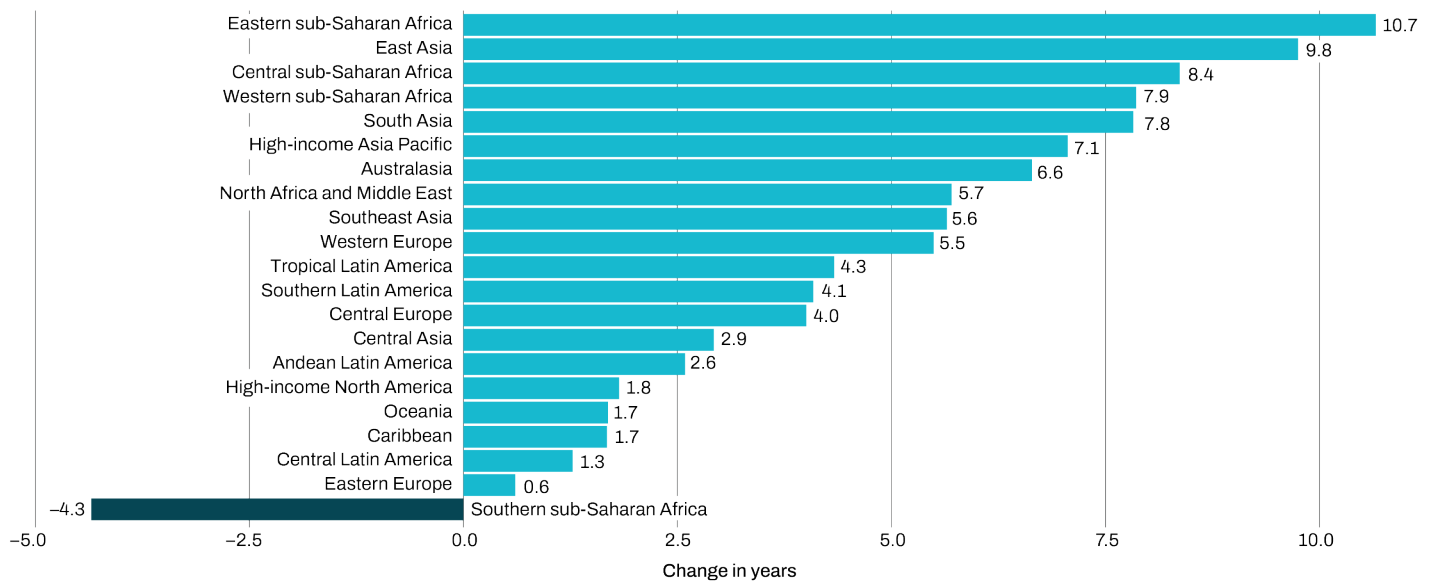
<sup>†</sup> Uncertainty intervals are a range of values that are likely to include the correct estimate of health loss for a given cause.

\* Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

\*\* Other pandemic-related mortality; includes excess mortality associated with the pandemic.

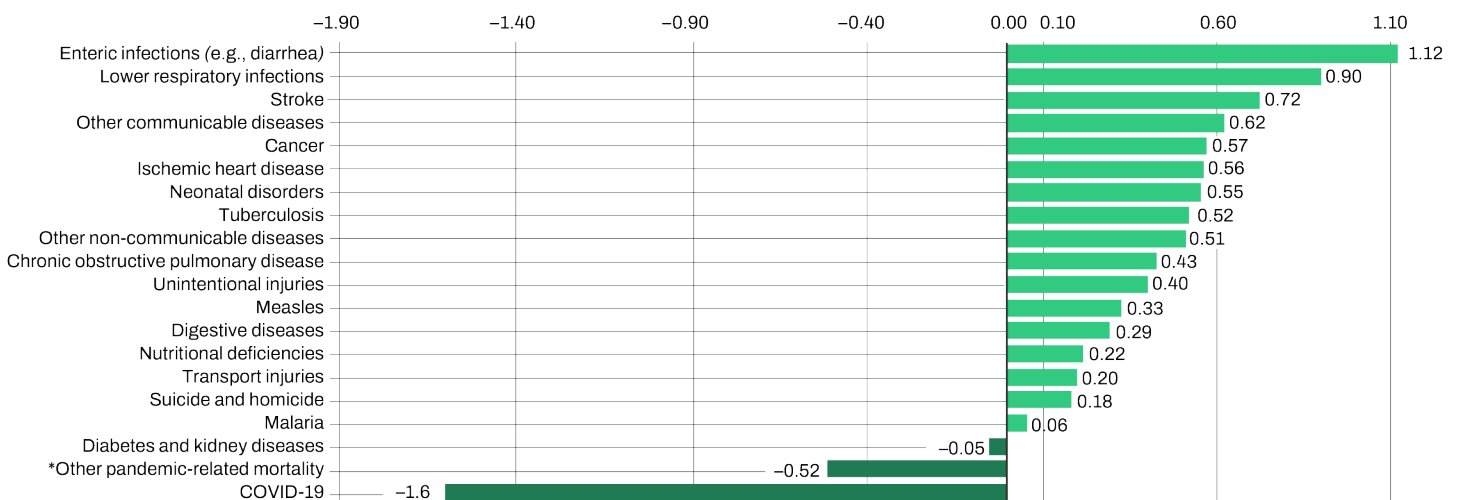
Eastern sub-Saharan Africa saw the largest increase in life expectancy among regions; the region's biggest gains stemmed from efforts to combat combat diarrhea, tuberculosis, lower respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, and measles.

Change in life expectancy by region, 1990–2021



The highest increases in global life expectancy have come from progress against enteric diseases, including diarrhea and typhoid. The largest decreases in life expectancy have come from COVID-19 and COVID-related causes.

Years of life expectancy gained or lost from leading causes of death globally, 1990–2021



\* Other pandemic-related mortality includes excess mortality associated with the pandemic.