

# UW-Madison: 20 million years of life lost

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MADISON - The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than 20 million years of life across 81 countries, according to a new analysis of the disease's mortality through all of 2020. That's an average of 16 years of lost life per death.

In heavily affected areas like the U.S., Western Europe and Latin America, COVID-19 has cost 2-to-7 times the number of lost years of life as a typical year of seasonal influenza, depending on the country. This is despite herculean public health efforts to stem the transmission of the disease. In these countries, the pandemic has also surpassed traffic deaths in number of years of life cut short and is comparable to heart disease, the leading killer in most countries.

The years of lost life metric, or YLL, measures premature mortality by subtracting the age at death from the life expectancy in a given country.

"The YLL doesn't detract from still caring about metrics like deaths and cases. But it's a measure that can directly assess the loss of human potential based off of the differences in how much life could have been lived," says Adeline Lo, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a co-author of the new study.

Although COVID-19 has disproportionately killed older people, younger populations have suffered a similar burden of lost years of life. In many poorer countries, those under age 55 account for the majority of lost years.

And men have lost 44% more years to COVID-19 than women have on average. More men have also died of the disease.

The researchers also found that the true number of years lost to COVID-19 may be

up to three times higher on average than what official records would suggest, due to an undercounting of deaths attributable to the disease.

STORY CONTINUES AT <https://news.wisc.edu/20-million-years-of-life-lost-to-covid-19/>