

Excess deaths for the first ten months of 2022 were 16,600 more than predicted, just over half due to COVID-19

30 January 2023

- Excess mortality for September was 5% (+700 deaths) and for October was 3% (+500 deaths), lower than any other month in 2022
- The lower excess deaths are due to fewer COVID-19 deaths and the early Australian influenza season
- Deaths from ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, and “other” causes were higher than expected in September

Excess deaths for the first ten months of 2022 were +16,600, or 11% more than predicted, the Actuaries Institute said. It said excess deaths in September and October were 5% and 3% more than predicted, respectively, the lowest we have seen during 2022.

Actuaries Institute Chief Executive, Elayne Grace, commented, “This analysis is a useful reminder as to how important a feature and driver COVID-19 remained in 2022, three years into the pandemic.”

Applying their model to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shortform¹ data (released 24 January), the Institute’s COVID-19 Mortality Working Group estimates that just over half of the excess mortality for the first ten months of 2022 (+8,900 deaths) was due to COVID-19 (‘from COVID-19’), with another +2,500 deaths in people who had COVID-19 listed as a contributory cause (‘with COVID-19’). The remaining excess deaths of +5,200, around one-third, had no mention of COVID-19 on the death certificate.

Table 1 - Excess deaths in Australia – by month for 2022

Month	Excess Deaths				% Excess			
	From COVID-19	With COVID-19	Other causes	Total	From COVID-19	With COVID-19	Other causes	Total
Jan-22	1,670	220	810	2,700	12%	2%	6%	20%
Feb-22	1,060	200	640	1,900	9%	2%	5%	16%
Mar-22	420	120	470	1,000	3%	1%	3%	7%
Apr-22	720	200	380	1,300	5%	1%	3%	10%
May-22	930	300	670	1,900	6%	2%	5%	13%
Jun-22	890	290	1,320	2,500	6%	2%	9%	17%
Jul-22	1,400	460	640	2,500	9%	3%	4%	16%
Aug-22	1,130	450	20	1,600	7%	3%	0%	10%
Sep-22	450	190	60	700	3%	1%	0%	5%
Oct-22	250	100	150	500	2%	1%	1%	3%
Total	8,900	2,500	5,200	16,600	6%	2%	4%	11%

The months of September 2022 and October 2022 had the lowest levels of excess deaths seen in 2022. Karen Cutter, spokesperson for the Working Group, said, “There are two clear drivers of this result. Firstly, the number of deaths from, and with, COVID-19 in these two months is considerably lower than in previous months. Secondly, the influenza season was earlier than usual in Australia in 2022, meaning there was lower than expected mortality in respect of respiratory disease in August to October.”

¹ The January ABS release was only a shortform summary of the usual release, with no information provided by cause of death other than for COVID-19. Therefore, the usual analysis by cause of death has not been completed this month. The ABS will return to their normal reporting next month.



She added, “While we have seen low levels of excess deaths from non-COVID causes in the latest three months, it is important to note that deaths from ischaemic heart disease (heart attack), cerebrovascular disease (strokes and the like), diabetes, and “other” causes are higher than expected. Higher-than-expected deaths from these causes more than offset the lower-than-expected deaths from respiratory disease in August and September, and it is likely that this will also be the case for the month of October 2022.”

The latest *Actuaries Digital* article on COVID-19 excess mortality can be found [here](#).

Karen Cutter is available for interview.

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