



2020 Report

BCCO gets many requests for data, mostly regarding drug overdoses, suicides, motor vehicle accidents and child deaths, including infant mortality. The purpose of this report is to provide data to those who work to reduce preventable deaths.

Indiana coroners do not investigate all deaths. Most deaths are natural in manner and certified by the attending physician. Coroners have jurisdiction over all homicides, suicides, and accidents. In addition, coroners investigate natural deaths when the death was sudden and unexpected, unwitnessed, or suspicious, or if the decedent did not have a physician.

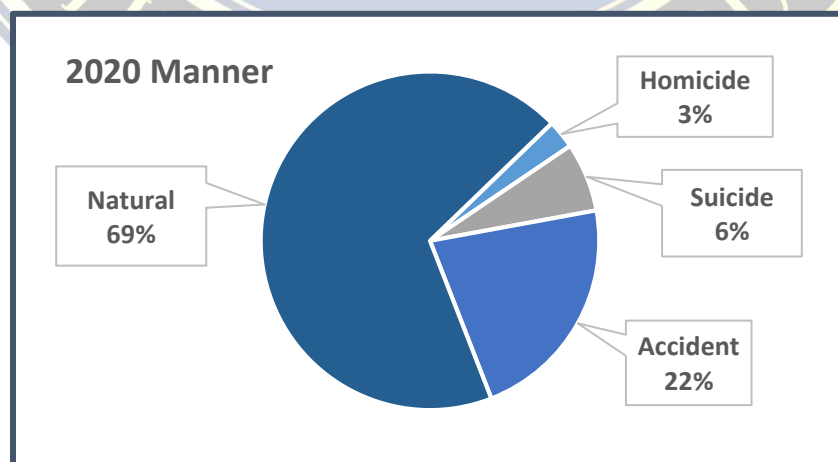
Deaths are certified in the county where the death occurs, not the decedent's county of residence. Thus, patients who were transported to Indianapolis hospitals prior to death are not included in this report. Likewise, patients who are transported from nearby communities and die in Columbus are included in Bartholomew County's numbers.

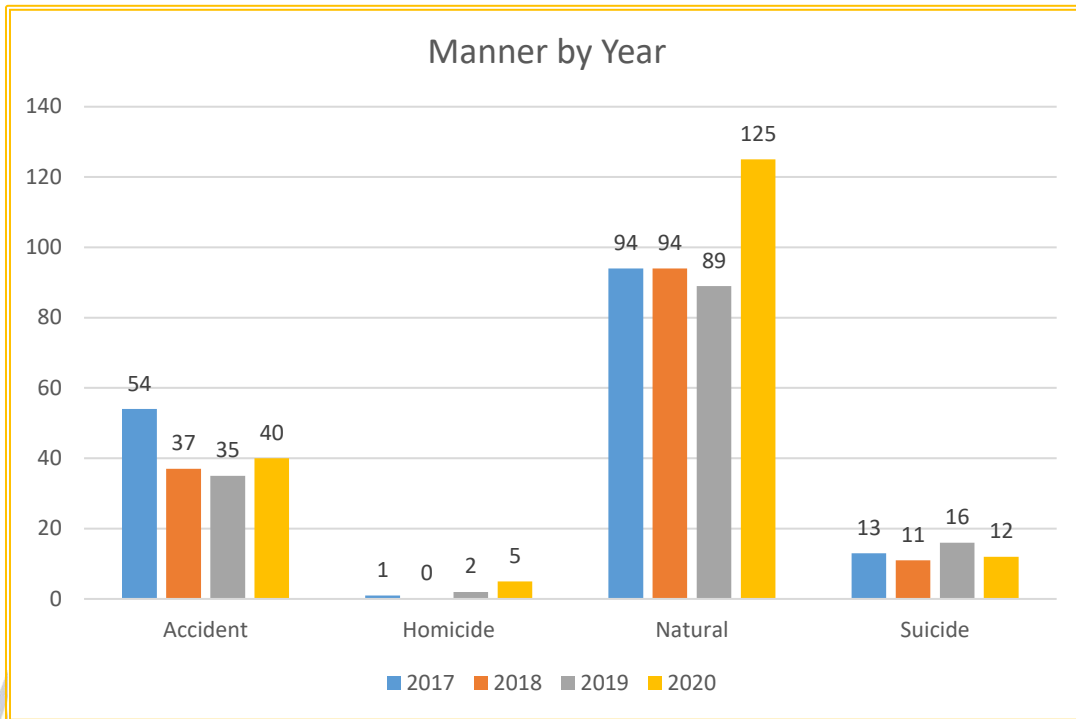
BCCO investigated 182 cases in 2020, up substantially from the previous three years which were all in the 140's. 43 autopsies were ordered in 2020, up from 34 the previous year.

Deaths due to COVID-19 are generally not handled by the coroner's office, since the manner is natural and these patients were under a doctor's care prior to death. In those cases the attending physician or county health officer certifies the death.

Manner of Death

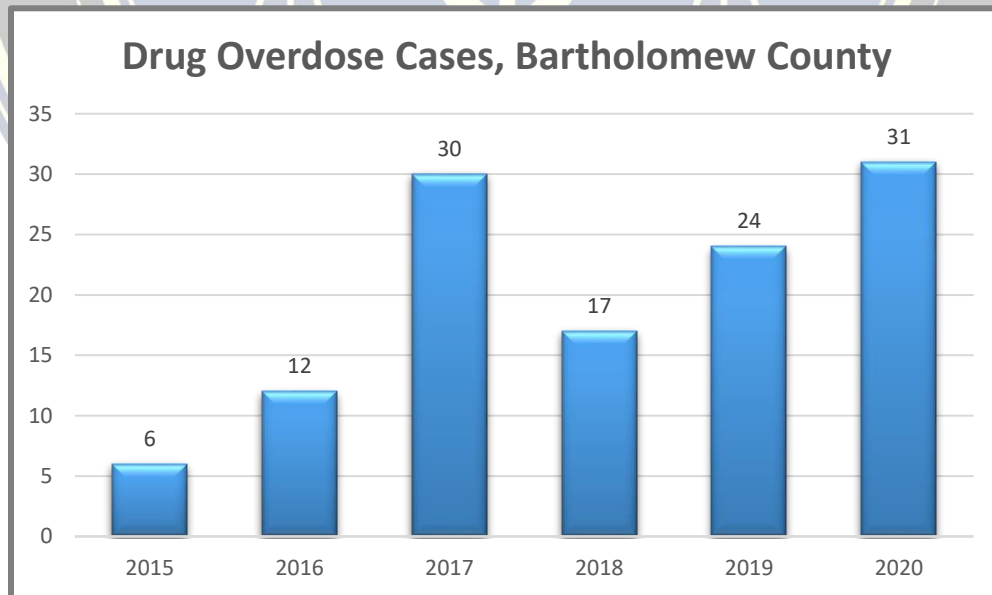
2020 represented a significant increase in natural deaths at 125 cases. There were 40 accidents, 12 suicides, and 5 homicides investigated.





Drug Overdose

BCCO investigated 31 overdose deaths in 2020. This is the highest number on record, but only slightly over 2017's 30.



The 31 cases involved 17 males and 14 females. Two of the cases were ruled suicide, with the remaining 29 cases ruled accidental.

All suspected overdoses involve comprehensive toxicology testing as part of the investigation. Very few overdose deaths involve a single drug; 23 of the year's cases involved multiple drugs.

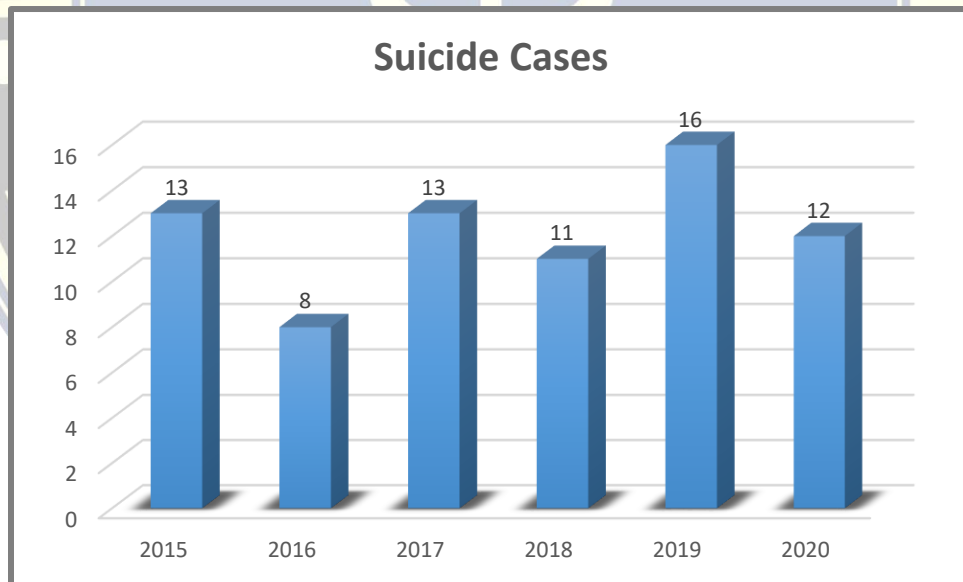
The most common drug involved in overdose cases was fentanyl, including fentanyl analogs. Fentanyls were documented in 17 cases.

The second most common drug seen was methamphetamine, found in 15 cases. In 9 of the year's cases, both fentanyl and methamphetamine contributed to the death.

The third most common drug was alprazolam (brand name Xanax), found in 6 cases. Alprazolam belongs to a class of drugs called benzodiazepines, which were found in 10 cases. Prescription drugs were involved in 16 of the 31 cases.

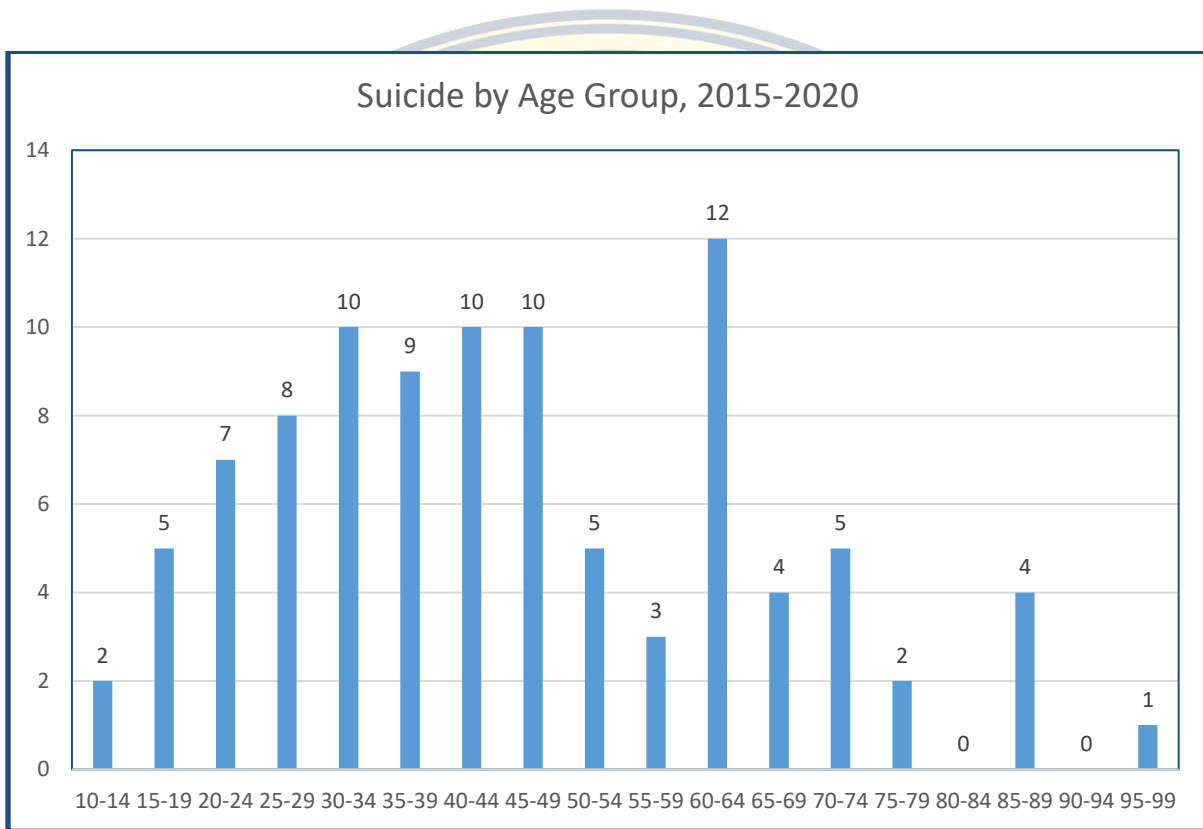
Suicide

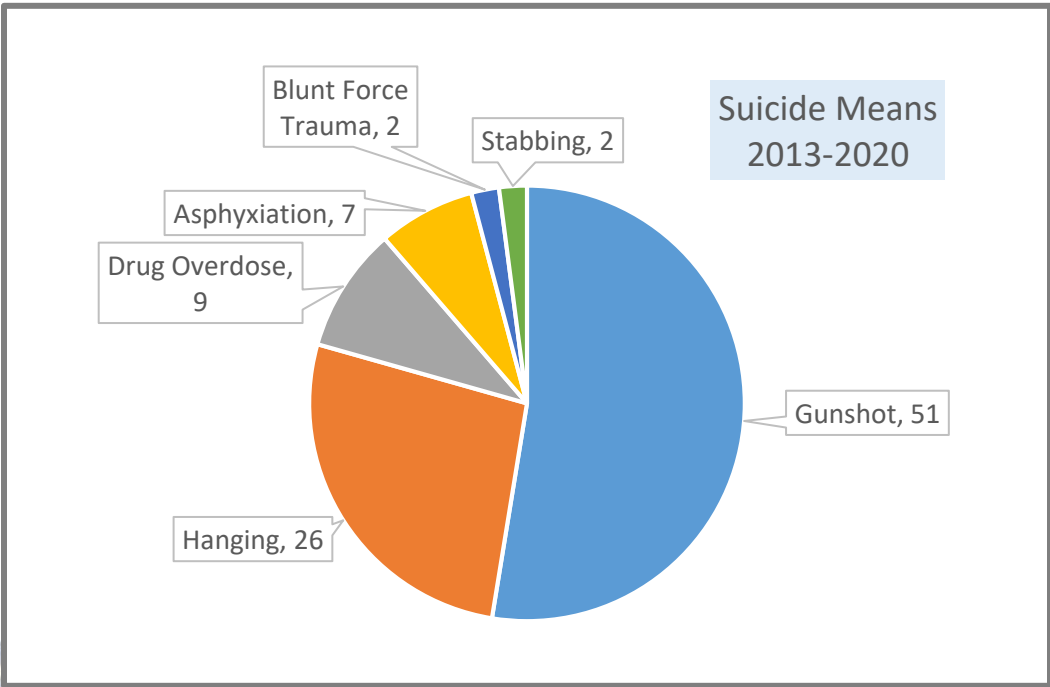
BCCO investigated 12 suicide deaths in 2020, down from a high of 16 the previous year.



The 97 suicide deaths from 2013-2020 were examined. The deaths included 71 males and 26 females. Ages ranged from 13 to 98 years old. The average age was 46, and the median age was 44.

The most common means of suicide was gunshot wound (51 cases), followed by hanging (26 cases). Other means included drug overdose, asphyxiation (example carbon monoxide poisoning), stabbing, and blunt force trauma.





Child Deaths

The coroner's office investigated zero deaths under 18 years old in 2020. This is down from 6 in 2019, and 5 in each of the two prior years.

Most infant deaths are natural, and the vast majority of these do not come under the jurisdiction of the coroner. The 2019 cases included 5 infants (under 12 months), while 2018 had 1 and 2017 had 3.

In presenting the foregoing statistics, the staff of the coroner's office recognizes that each number represents a unique human life. We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have died. It is our hope that fewer families will come to experience the same grief by our sharing statistical data to assist those who work to reduce preventable deaths.

The Bartholomew County Coroner's Office participates in the Indiana Violent Death Reporting System. The program is administered by the State Department of Health's Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Additional data can be found at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/19096.htm>.

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