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OLDEST-OLD ADULTS FACE HIGHER RISK OF COVID-19 MORTALITY

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Oldest-old Adults Face Higher Risk of COVID-19 Mortality

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The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that nearly 8 in 10 COVID-19 related deaths reported in the U.S. have been in individuals 65 years and older.¹ But are all older adults equally vulnerable in the COVID-19 epidemic? The short answer is NO. Figure 1 presents the number of COVID-19 specific deaths by age group. Figure 2 presents deaths per 100,000 people.

Figure 1 (as of 4/15/2020)

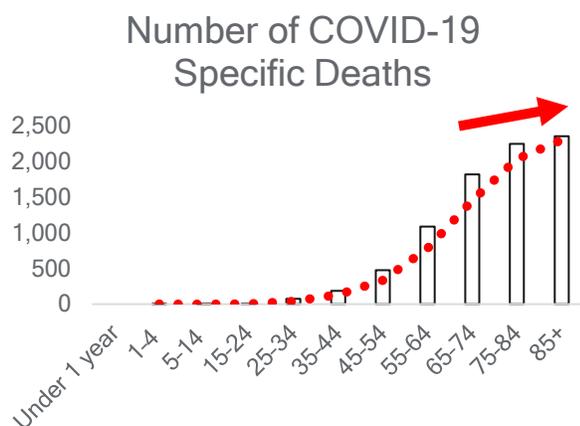
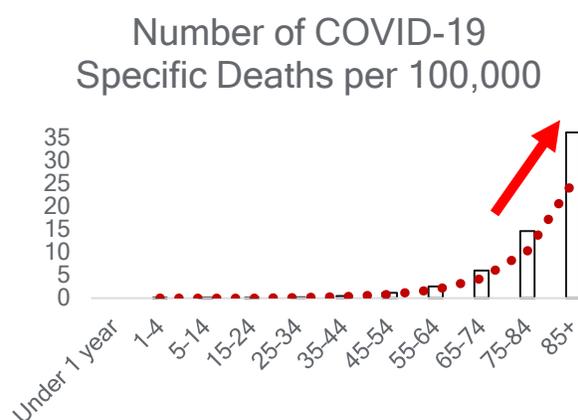


Figure 2 (As of 4/15/2020)



A comparison of these figures highlights the importance of considering how data are presented. The 'raw count' of deaths in Figure 1 can be misleading, as each age group has different population size and it may look like a gradual increase in the risk of COVID-19 deaths after around 45 years old. However, Figure 2 (the 'standardized' death rates or per 100,000 people in each age group) shows how COVID-19 attributable deaths do not increase slowly in accordance with age, instead they increase exponentially for the middle-old (age 75+) and oldest old (age 85+).

Take-home message

The standardized death rates (# per 100,000 people) highlights the impact of COVID-19 on adults in different age groups. Adults who are around age of 75 - 85 and older face significantly higher risk of COVID-19 related deaths, compared to those who are 74 years and younger.

1. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Author's website: <https://sites.google.com/umbc.edu/tkresearch>

UMBC Center for Aging Studies website: <https://sahap.umbc.edu/>