



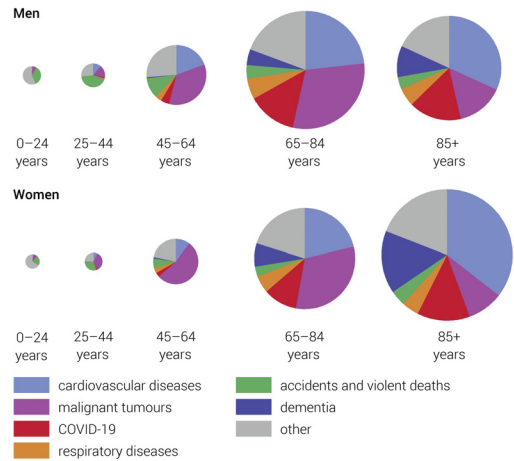
Cause of death statistics: Acceleration of the coding and publication process

For all deaths occurring in Switzerland, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) records the underlying, immediate and concomitant causes of death (COD).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the underlying cause of death as the illness or injury that initiated the sequence of events leading directly to death, or the circumstances of the accident or use of force that led to the fatal injury.

The standard publications for the causes of death generally only report the underlying COD, which is consistent with the monocausal nature of the publication of cause-of-death statistics.

Underlying causes of death by age group in 2020



Areas are proportional to the absolute number of deaths.

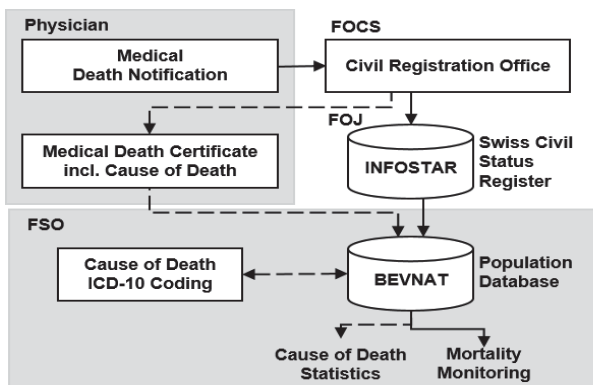
Source: FSO – Cause of Death Statistics (CoD)

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Causes of death are reported to the FSO by the certifying physicians on paper or online (eCOD). All reported causes are coded according the World Health Organization rules, using the International Classification of Diseases version 10 (ICD-10).

Subsequently, the data are checked for plausibility and are consolidated with cancer registry data on deaths due to cancer and with Federal Office of Public Health data on deaths due to notifiable infectious diseases.

Cause of death statistics, data flow



FOCS Federal Office of Civil Status; FOJ Federal Office of Justice; FSO Federal Statistical Office

Source: Swiss Med Wkly. 2021;151:w30030

In line with international practice, the reporting of the causes of death in Switzerland has been annually. Since 2021, the FSO has accelerated the coding process to overcome a two-year lag and to facilitate the provisional monthly reporting in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To this end, the FSO recruited and trained additional coding personnel and initiated the use of the automatic coding system IRIS. The acceleration resulted in reducing the reporting lag by 6 months by the end of April 2022 and can reduce it by another 6 months by the end of 2022.

The monthly provisional COD statistics provide data on Covid-19 as the underlying cause of death as well. In addition, the data related to Covid-19 were checked and consolidated with data from the compulsory notification system for infectious disease of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH).

Cause of death statistics Acceleration of coding and publication

