

Demography – deaths and causes of deaths in the SR in the 4th quarter of 2023

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Slovakia returned to a higher excessmortality at the end of the year, the number of deaths exceeded thepre-pandemic level by a thousand

The overall mortality rate in Slovakia at the end of 2023 increased to almost 8%, in the group of younger seniors it reached over 23%. From a regional perspective, the worst situation was in Košický and Trenčiansky kraj, where the number of deaths exceeded the 2015-2019 average by more than a tenth.

In Slovakia during the 4th quarter of 2023, 14.3 thousand people died, representing a year-on-year decrease by 5%. However, the number of deaths exceeded the values of the long-term average before the pandemic. After the positive development of the previous three quarters, the excess mortality in Slovakia was manifested at the level of almost 8%. There were approximately by one thousand more deaths than before the pandemic (compared to the 5-year average of the corresponding period of 2015-2019¹⁾). This follows from preliminary data on the number of deaths and the causes of death for the last three months of 2023, which are currently published by the Statistical Office of the SR.

"Excess mortality compared to the five-year average caused a higher increase in the number of deaths from diseases of the respiratory system and infectious and parasitic diseases. Compared to the previous two quarters, the number of people who died as a result of the COVID-19 infection also increased significantly," explained Zuzana Podmanická, the Director of the Population Statistics Department of the Statistical Office of the SR.

The higher number of deaths in the 4th quarter also influenced the increase in the gross mortality rate. The number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants²⁾ rose above the 1 000 death mark again after two quarters. On average, during the corresponding period of the last 5 years before the pandemic, it was at the level of 978 deaths per 100 000 inhabitants.

The excess mortality of younger seniors has increased again

The largest group of the deceased, seniors aged 65 and over, represented 79% of the total number of deaths (11.3 thousand persons) in the 4th quarter. Their number was higher by 14% than the five-year pre-pandemic average, but at the same time by 4% lower than in 2022. While older seniors over 75 died only by a tenth more than on average before the pandemic, in the group of younger seniors (from 65 to 74 years) the death rate exceeded 23% compared to the pre-pandemic average.¹⁾ The double-digit death rate in this age category has been showing up continuously for 3 and a half years. In the productive age group (15 to 64 years) and among children (0 to 14 years), the number of deaths was lower year-on-year and also compared to the five-year average.

The number of deaths in the last three months of last year decreased year-on-year in all eight regions of Slovakia. At the same time, however, in all regions it exceeded the number of deaths before the pandemic¹⁾. The excess mortality ranged from 3.8% in Nitriansky kraj to 14% in Košický kraj.

After taking into account the size of the regions in terms of population, the gross mortality rate compared to the pre-pandemic situation decreased only in Bratislavský kraj, while it increased in the other seven SR regions. It was the lowest in Bratislavský and Prešovský kraj with less than 910 deaths per 100 000 inhabitants. The worst situation within the SR was in Banskobystrický kraj, where the mortality rate in the 4th quarter represented 1 214 deaths per 100 000 inhabitants.

210 people died of the infection of COVID-19

The most common causes of death even in the last three months of last year were diseases of the circulatory system, which represented 45.4% of deaths (6.5 thousand people) and tumors for 24.2% (almost 3.5 thousand people). These two groups of deaths have long been among the most common causes of death in Slovakia. 1.1% more people died from diseases of the circulatory system than the average for the years 2015-2019, but there were more than 8% fewer of them year-on-year. By 1% more people succumbed to cancer than the five-year average and at the same time by 3.6% more than at the end of 2022.

The third most common cause of death - diseases of the respiratory system - contributed the most to the overall excess mortality. Compared to the period not marked by the pandemic, their number increased by more than a third. Even more significantly, the number of victims of infectious and parasitic diseases increased by almost 82%.

210 people died in the 4th quarter as a result of the COVID-19 infection. Despite the fact that the number of victims increased significantly by the end of the year compared to the previous two quarters, with a 1.5% share of all deaths, it is still among the causes of death that only partially affect mortality. It was on the shared ninth place among the 22 disease groups²⁾.

The total mortality rate in Slovakia was at the level of the pre-pandemic average

In total, according to the preliminary results, 53.9 thousand people died in Slovakia for the entire year 2023, which represented a 9.6% decrease in the year-on-year comparison. Compared to the five-year pre-pandemic average, however, it was by 0.7% more.

- ¹⁾ due to an objective answer to the question to what extent the current mortality rate was worse than in the period before the pandemic, the Statistical Office of the SR adjusted the selection of years from which the average number of deaths before the pandemic was calculated. The values for 2015-2019 were calculated into the 5-year average, which were the last years unaffected by the pandemic. The year 2020 was already influenced by the pandemic especially in the last months of the year, the year 2021 in the first and last months of the year and the year 2022 mostly in the first months of the year
- ²⁾ for the purposes of calculating the gross mortality rate, the average number of inhabitants (as of July 1) is used
- ³⁾ causes of death are classified according to 22 categories of diseases of the **International Classification of Diseases (ICC)**.

Data source:

Data on mortality and causes of death can be found at www.statistics.sk in the DATAcube. database of the Statistical Office of the SR.:

- [Deaths by Month of Death, Age, Sex and Causes of Death - SR-Area-Reg \(monthly\) \[om3801mr\]](#)
The datacube includes the numbers of deaths and causes of death in the SR according to 22 groups of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) by months (including COVID-19). It also contains regional structures (regions, SR), age structures (pre-productive, productive and post-productive age, as well as age groups after 5 years). Monthly data for 2022 are preliminary, data for previous years are definitive.
- **Definitive results for the year 2023 on the number of people who died of a specific disease (the main cause of death) will be published by the Statistical Office of the SR on March 28, 2024.**

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