

The seal of Jackson County, Missouri, is a large, light blue circular emblem in the background. It features a central shield with a plow and a sheaf of wheat, surrounded by a wreath. The words "JACKSON COUNTY" are arched over the top, and "MISSOURI" is arched over the bottom. The year "1820" is on the right side. There are five stars around the bottom edge of the seal.

# **JACKSON COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE**

## **2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

A dark silhouette of a city skyline is at the bottom of the page. It includes various building shapes, a bridge, and a river in the foreground.

**950 E. 21ST STREET KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

# **2019 Annual Report**

## **Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office**

**Marius Tarau, M.D.**  
**Chief Medical Examiner**

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**<http://www.jacksongov.org/151/Medical-Examiner>**



## **What is the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office?**

The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office ( JCMEO) is the only National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) Accredited Medical Examiner's Office in the State of Missouri. The office is staffed with American Board of Pathology (ABP) Certified Forensic Pathologists, American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) registered and certified Death Investigators, Forensic Technicians, and trained Administrative Staff who handle pathologists' dictations, death certificates, case files, and medical records.

Services offered by the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office include expert pathology examination, death scene investigations, medical records review, locating next of kin, court testimony, body examinations, and police and attorney consultation. Accredited by the American Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), JCMEO also provides pathology residency rotations as well as a 1 year Forensic Pathology Fellowship program to train future Forensic Pathologists.

Toxicology, Radiology, and Histology are additional services that assist in determining the cause & manner of death. Forensic services provided include expert Forensic Anthropology, Odontology, and Entomology consultations for cases where identification and time of death cannot be made by normal means. The JCMEO also takes reports of all Hospice and Nursing Home deaths and many attended hospital deaths that occur in Jackson County.

The JCMEO provides 24/7 coverage and death scene investigation to Jackson County by medicolegal death investigators with prompt contract transportation services, and completion of autopsy reports and death certificates within a timely manner. JCMEO is a state of the art resource for the Kansas City Metro area and also provides referral autopsy services to assist other counties in Missouri. The JCMEO supports recovery of organ and tissue donations, and works closely with the Child Death Review Board with documentation of all child deaths, and also works closely with Health Departments to report all potential and confirmed heat and cold related deaths.

The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office is the lead agency for the Kansas City Regional Mortuary Operational Response Group (KCRMORG), a group created by the JCMEO in conjunction with the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) in the area of Mass Fatality preparedness and response. A Mass Fatality Incident is described as any occurrence of multiple deaths that overwhelm the usual routine capacity of the local Medical Examiner or Coroner. KCRMORG consists more than 80 volunteer professionals from several aspects of forensic investigation. This team is responsible for the response and management of a mass fatality event and can be deployed by the Medical Examiner or Coroner to the incident area.

## **CASES REPORTED TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINER: MISSOURI STATUTES CHAPTER 58, SECTION 58.720**

### **Duty and Authority of the Medical Examiner:**

The Medical Examiner has direct jurisdiction for Jackson County and is required by Missouri State Statutes # RSMo 58.720 to investigate deaths as a result of:

- ♦ Violence by homicide, suicide, or accident
- ♦ Thermal, chemical, electrical, or radiation injury
- ♦ Criminal abortions, including those self-induced
- ♦ Disease thought to be of hazardous and contagious nature or which might constitute a threat to public health
- ♦ Any person that dies suddenly when in apparent good health
- ♦ When unattended by a physician, chiropractor, or an Accredited Christian Science Practitioner, during a period of thirty-six hours immediately preceding death
- ♦ While in custody of the law, or while an inmate in a public institution
- ♦ In any unusual or suspicious manner
- ♦ All child deaths, involving individuals below the age of eighteen years

**The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office  
consists of the following disciplines:**

- (1) Full Time Board Certified Chief Medical Examiner
- (1) Full Time Board Certified Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
- (2) Full Time Board Certified Deputy Medical Examiners
- (1) Chief of Forensic Operations and Investigations
- (1) Deputy Chief Investigator
- (8) Full Time Medicolegal Death Investigators
- (3) Full Time Forensic Technicians
- (4) Full Time Administrative Staff
- (1) Executive Assistant to the Chief Medical Examiner
- (1) Forensic Pathology Fellow

The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office is accredited through the  
National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME)

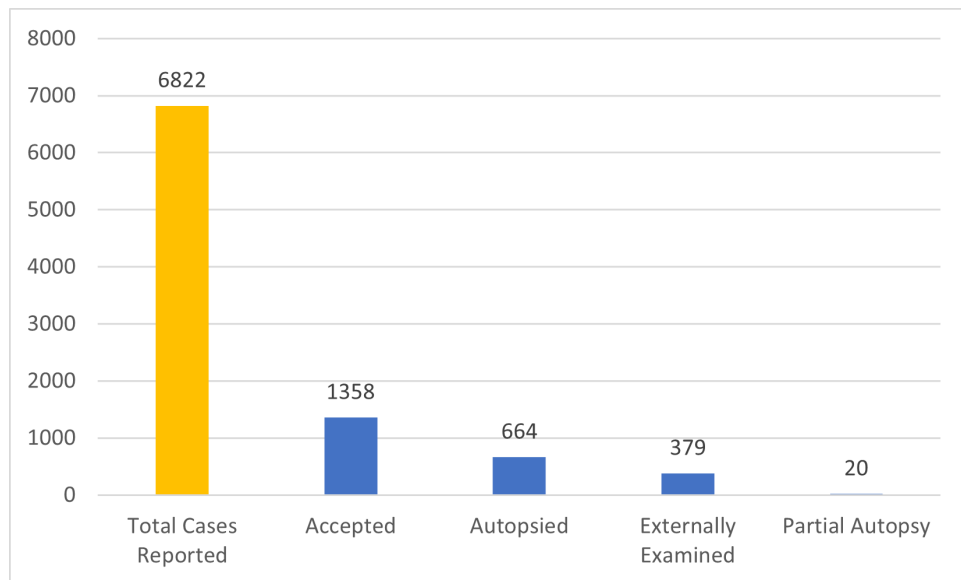
## 2019 Executive Summary

The Medical Examiner's Office 2019 Annual Report reflects the activities in investigating jurisdictional deaths in Jackson County. The mission of the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office (JCMEO) is to investigate sudden, unexpected and unnatural deaths with the highest level of professionalism, compassion and efficiency, and to provide a resource for improving the health and safety of the community.

A total of 6,822 deaths were reported to our office in 2019. These include accepted jurisdiction, declined jurisdiction, and nursing home and hospice cases. The majority of those reported deaths were reported from nursing home and hospice. Nursing home and hospice deaths accounted for 3,751 of those reported. The 1,358 accepted jurisdiction cases were determined as follows.

The Medical Examiner's Office performed a complete autopsy on 664 cases. The manner of death on those 664 cases were determined as: 178 Homicides, 35 Suicides, 25 Traffic Deaths, 164 Accidental Deaths, 240 Natural Deaths, and 22 deaths due to undetermined causes.

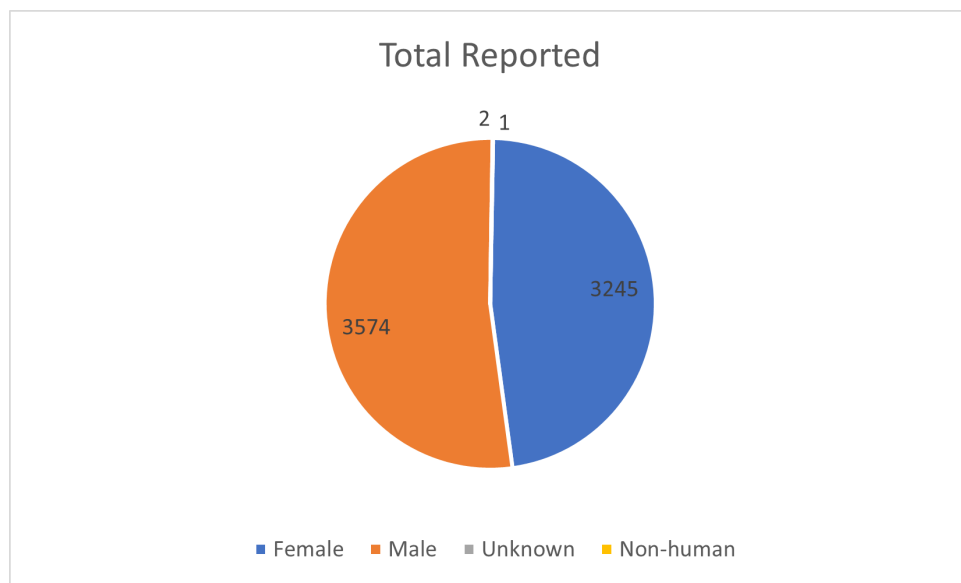
Does the office prepare an annual report tabulating total cases reported, accepted, examined, and autopsied, and the major causes of death sorted by each manner of death category?



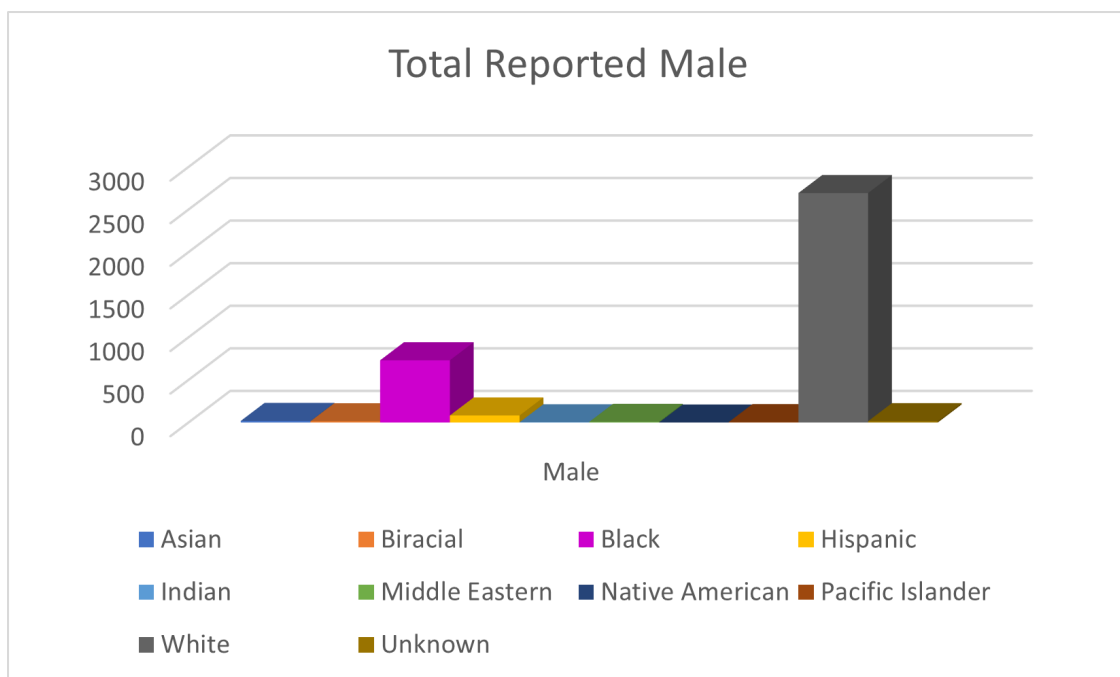
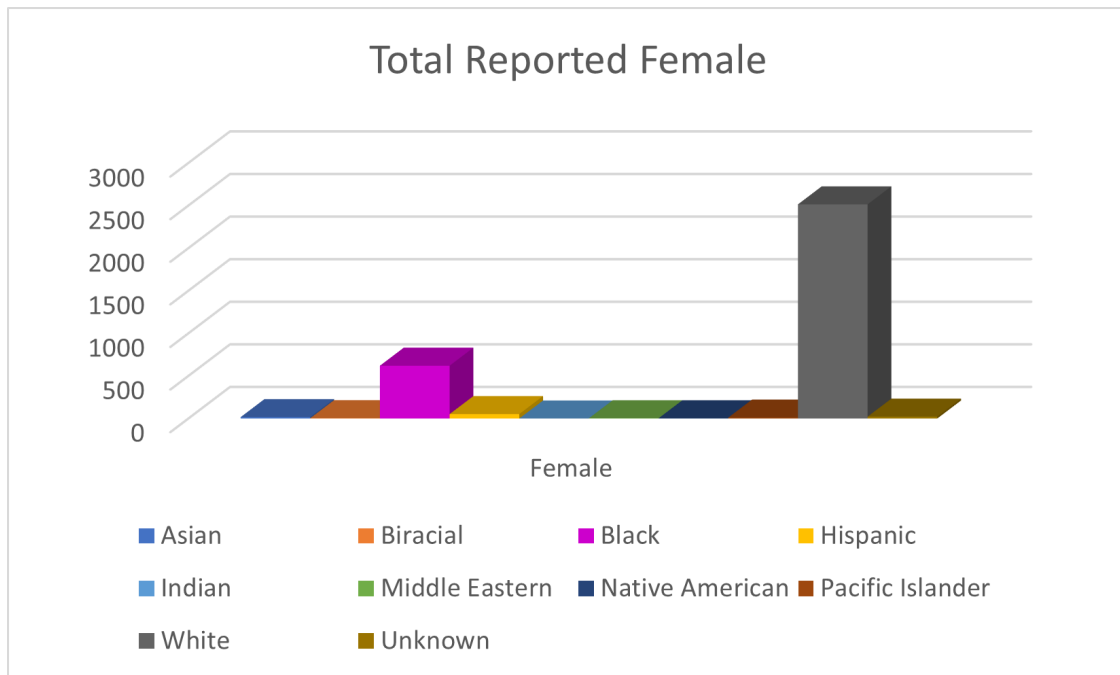
*Out of 6,822 cases reported, we accepted 1,358 into our jurisdiction.*

*Of those cases: 664 were full autopsy, 379 were external examination, and 20 were partial autopsy.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on deaths reported?

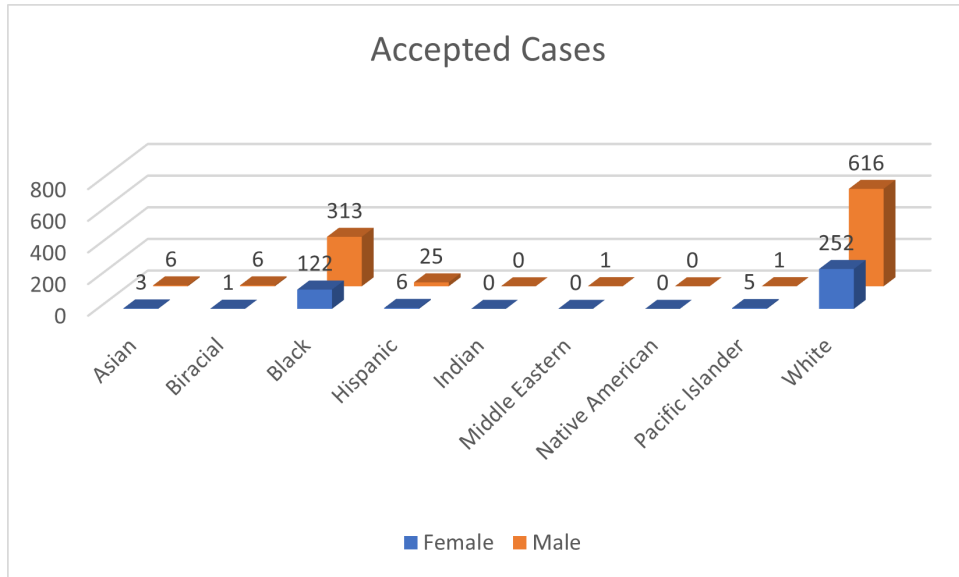


	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	Unknown
Female	16	4	620	52	0	3	3	11	2514	22
Male	19	15	731	83	3	8	0	5	2694	16

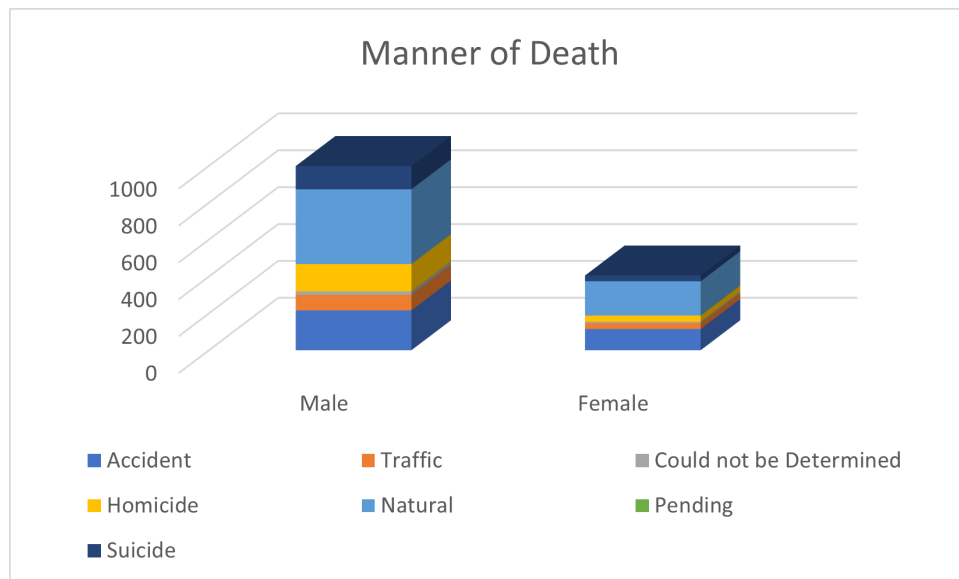




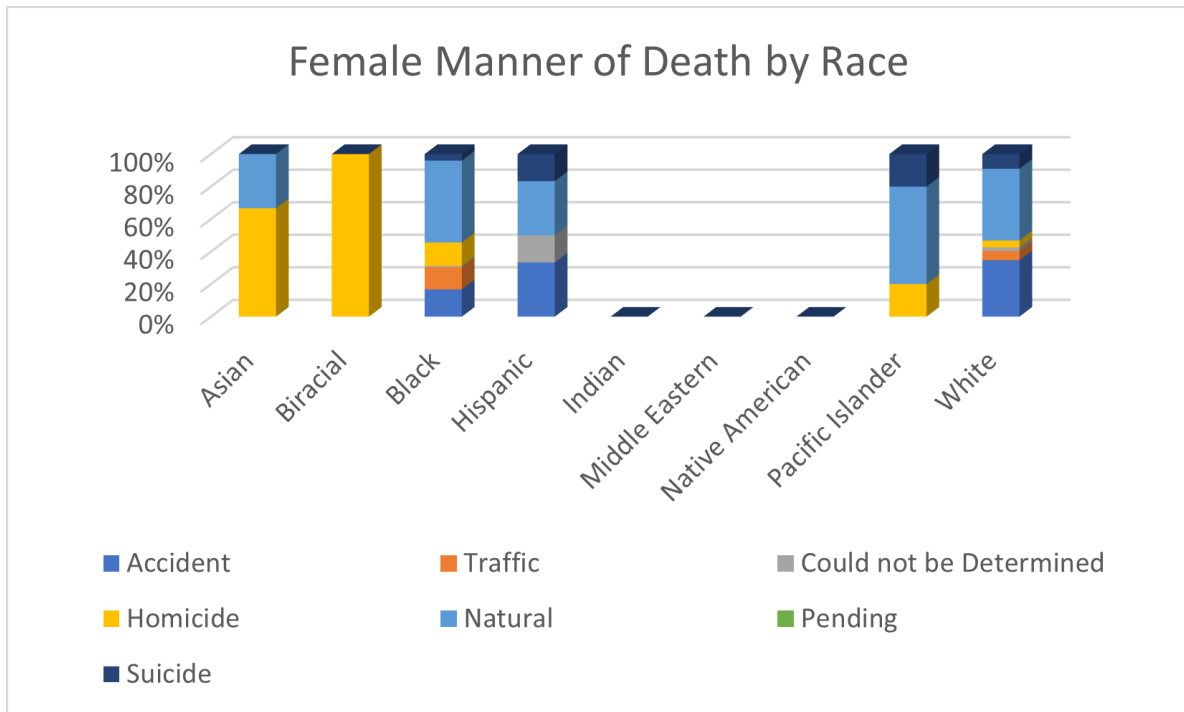
Does the office annually compile statistical data on cases accepted?



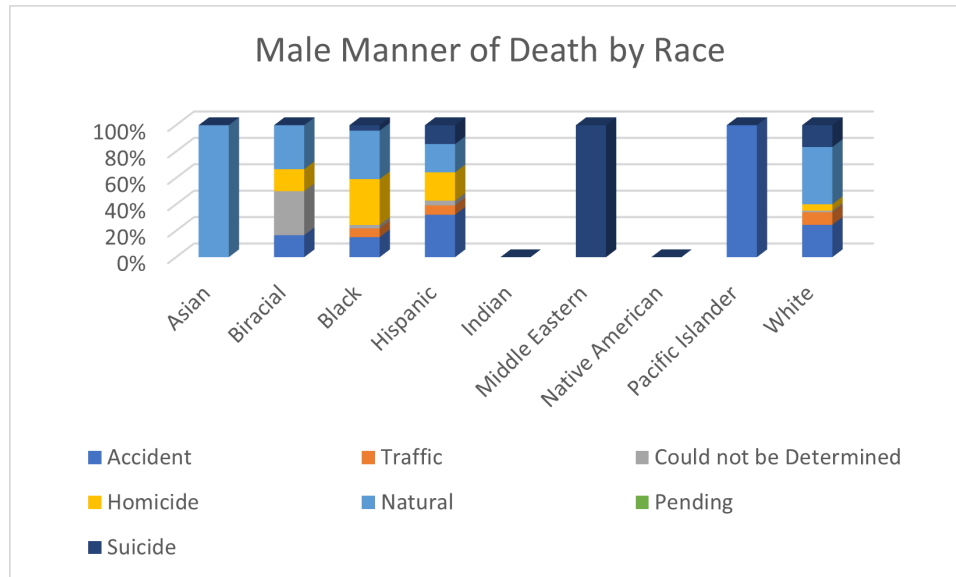
Does the office annually compile statistical data on manners of death?



*2 unknown M/F	Male	Female
Accident	216	115
Traffic	84	32
Could not be Determined	19	8
Homicide	148	33
Natural	406	186
Pending	0	0
Suicide	126	31



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	0	0	21	2	0	0	0	0	92
Traffic	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	15
Could not be Determined	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Homicide	2	1	18	0	0	0	0	1	11
Natural	1	0	63	2	0	0	0	3	117
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	1	24



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	0	1	48	9	0	0	0	1	157
Traffic	0	0	21	2	0	0	0	0	61
Could not be Determined	0	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	8
Homicide	0	1	110	6	0	0	0	0	31
Natural	4	2	116	6	0	0	0	0	278
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	13	4	0	1	0	0	106

**MOD - Suicide**

Firearms	90
Asphyxia	24
Combined Drug Intoxication	15
Hanging	14
Blunt Force Trauma	8
Exsanguination	2
Drowning	1
Sharp force injury to neck	1
Sodium nitrite toxicity	1
Thermal burn injury	1

**MOD - Natural**

Heart / Lung Related	428
Alcohol Related	44
Brain Related	21
Cancer	19
Hemorrhage	15
Diabetes	14
Renal	13
Liver	11
Sepsis	5
Peritonitis	3
Complications of morbid obesity	1
Complications of sickle cell/alpha thalassemia	1
Complications of small bowel obstruction	1
Extreme prematurity	1
Failure to thrive	1
Pancreatitis	1
Sequela of multiple congenital anomalies	1

**MOD - Accident**

Alcohol / Drug Related	146
Fall / Fracture	40
Hemorrhage / Hematoma	35
Asphyxia	19
Blunt Force Trauma	19
Heart / Lung Related	18
Thermal / CO / Smoke	16
Drowning	15
Brain Related	11
Extreme prematurity	2
Firearm Related	2
Hypothermia	2
Stillbirth	2
Complications of facial burns	1
Complications of metastatic breast cancer	1
Electrocution	1
Fatal midline herniation	1
Multisystem organ failure	1
Sepsis	1

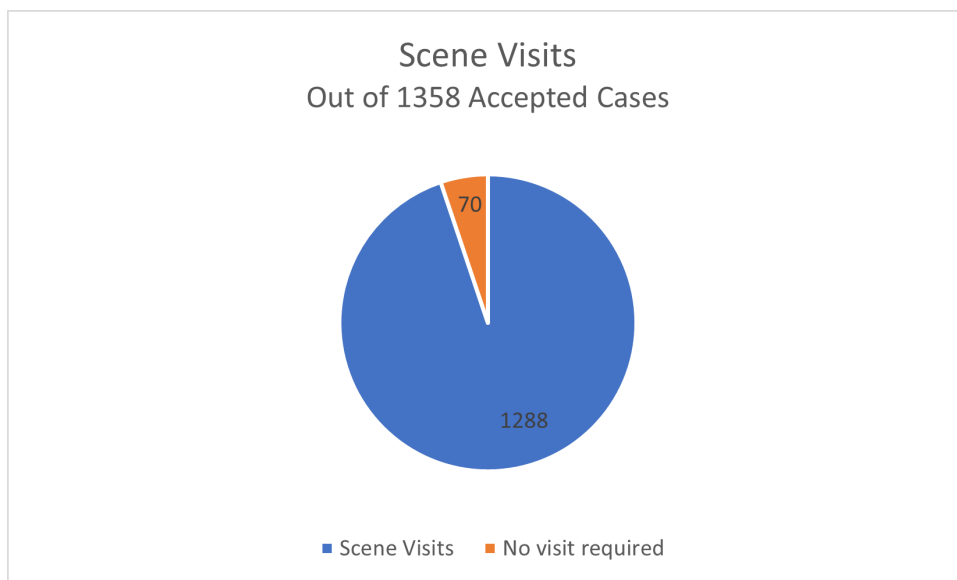
**MOD - Traffic**

Blunt Force Trauma	108
Complications of quadriplegia	3
Anoxic brain injury	1
Atlanto-occipital dislocation	1
Intracranial hemorrhage	1
Intrauterine fetal demise	1
Peritonitis	1

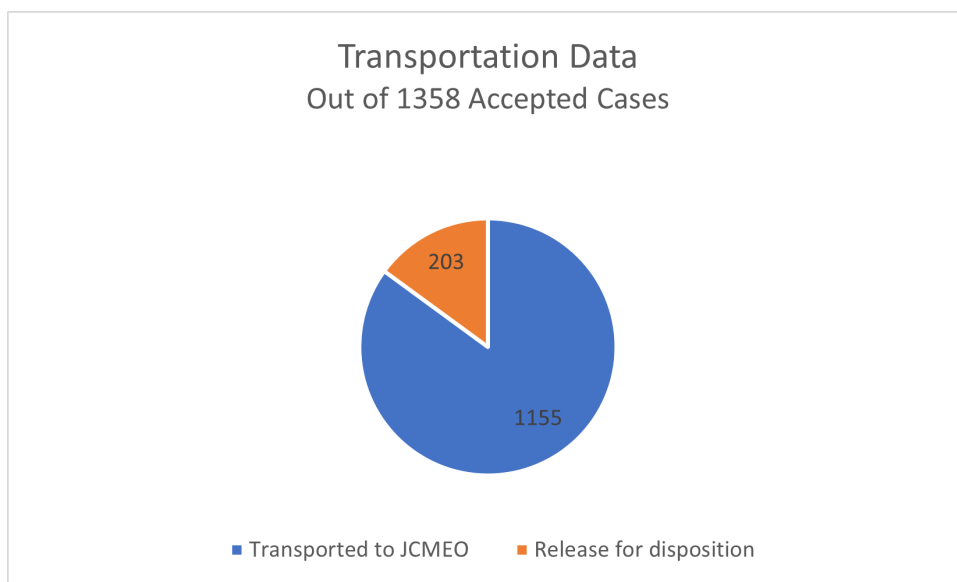
**MOD - Homicide**

Firearm	162
Piercing Wounds	7
Blunt Force Trauma	9
Arrhythmia	1
Complications of prematurity	1
Exsanguination	1

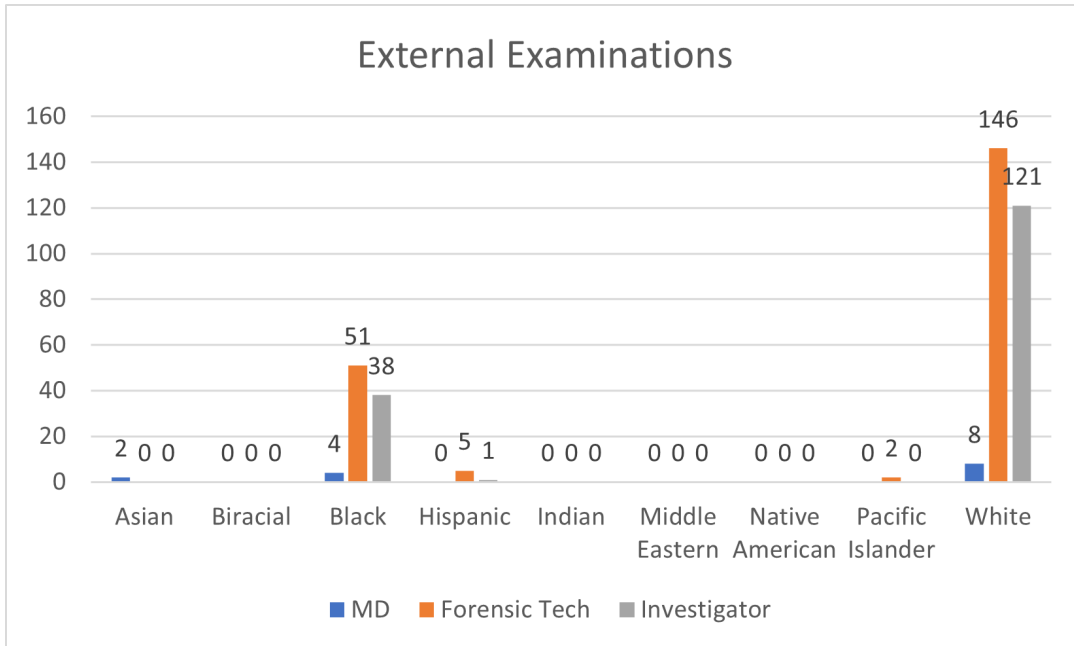
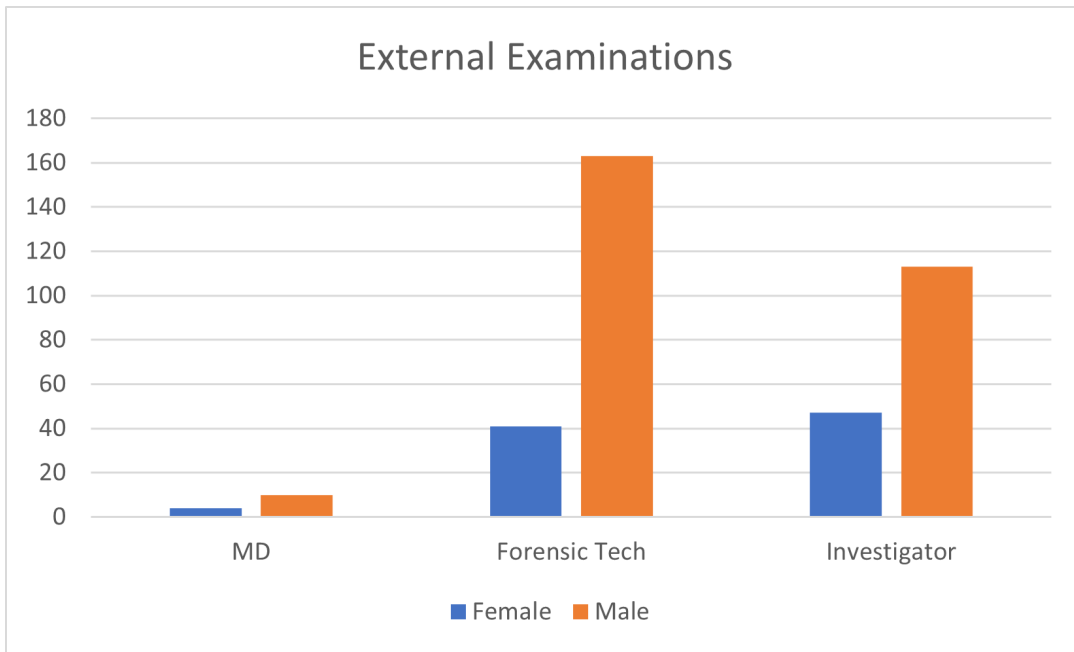
Does the office annually compile statistical data on scene visits by medical examiners or medical examiner investigators?



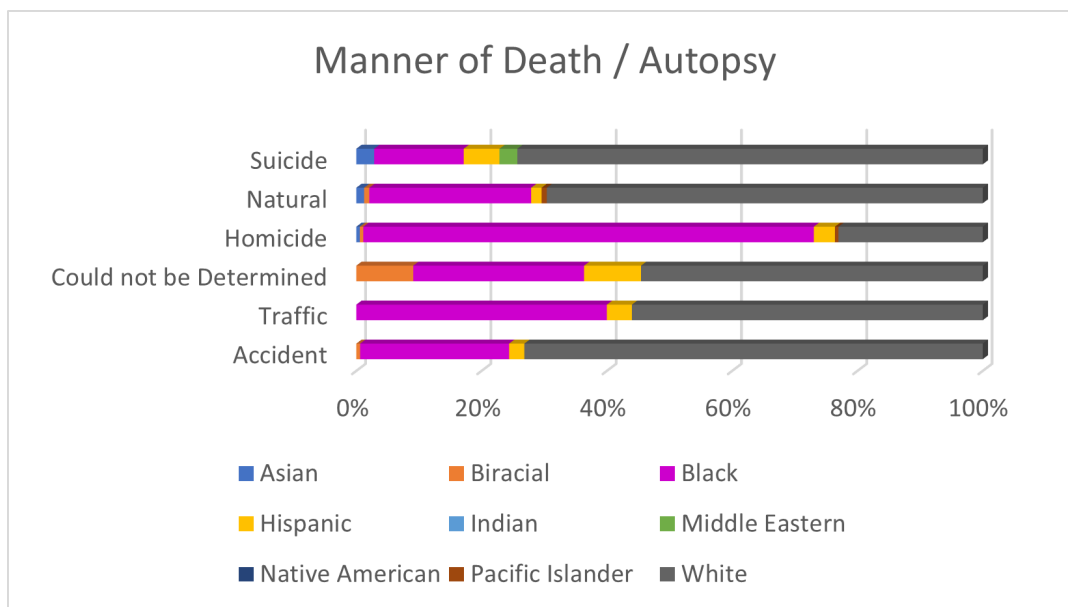
Does the office annually compile statistical data on bodies transported by office or by order of the office?



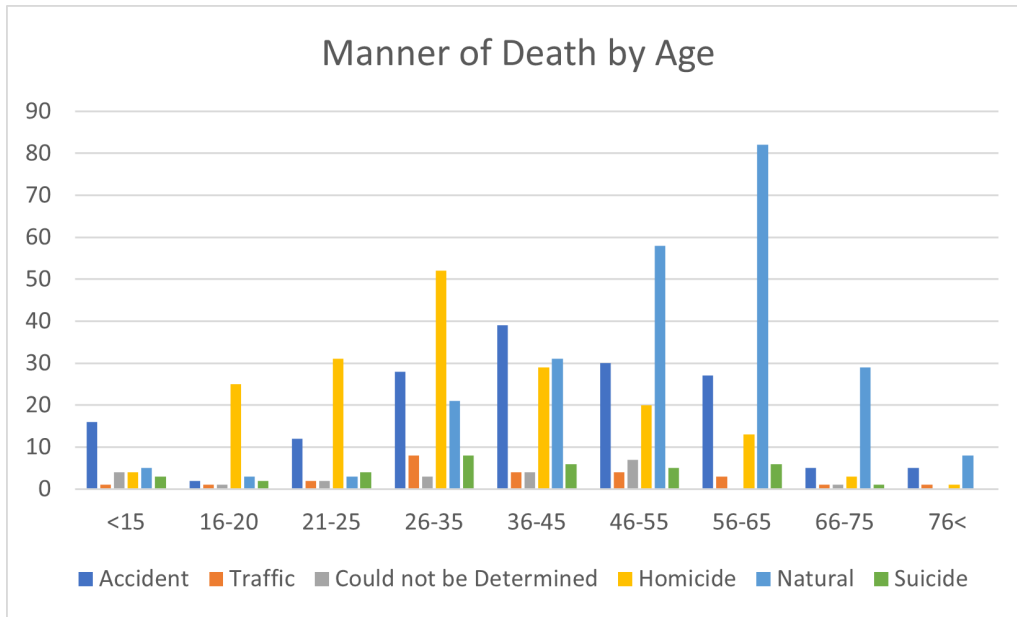
Does the office annually compile statistical data on external examinations?



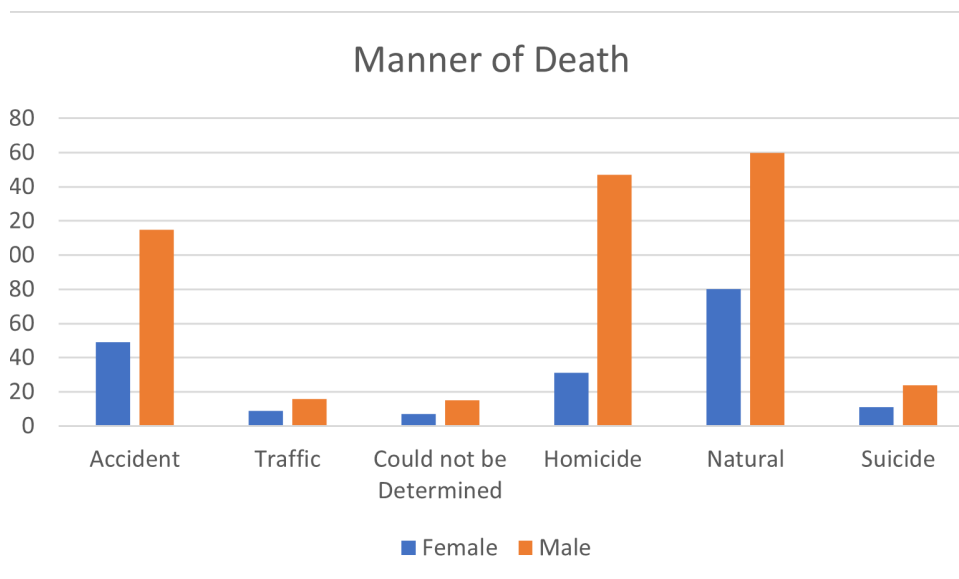
Does the office annually compile statistical data on complete autopsies?



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	0	1	39	4	0	0	0	0	120
Traffic	0	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	14
Could not be Determined	0	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
Homicide	1	1	128	6	0	0	0	1	41
Natural	3	2	62	4	0	0	0	2	167
Suicide	1	0	5	2	0	1	0	0	26

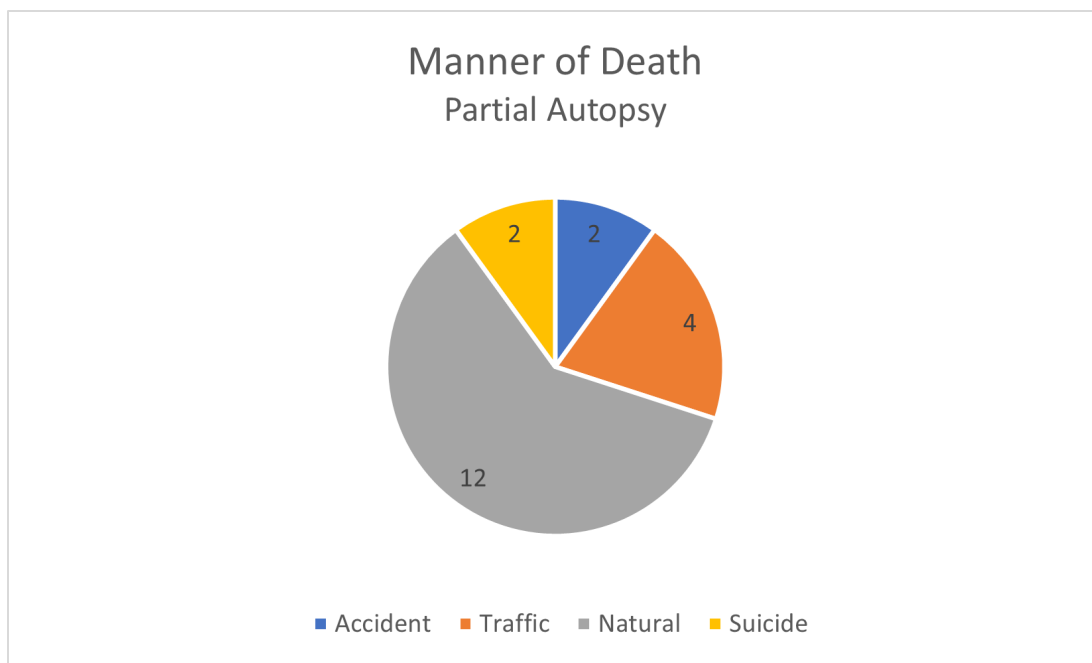
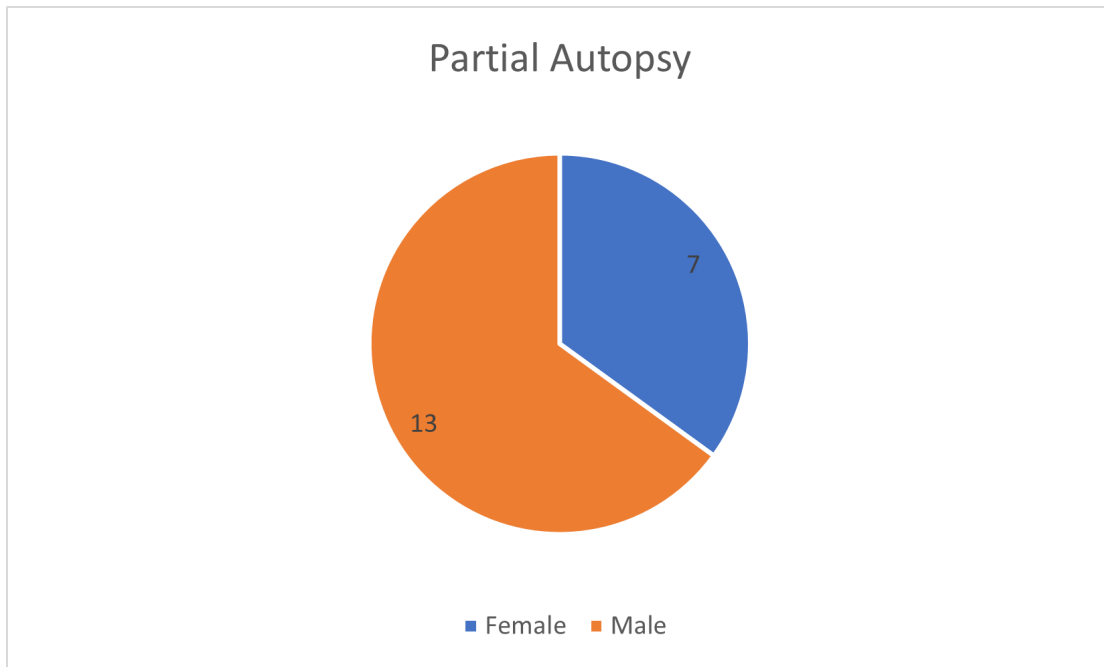


	<15	16-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76<
Accident	16	2	12	28	39	30	27	5	5
Traffic	1	1	2	8	4	4	3	1	1
Could not be Determined	4	1	2	3	4	7	0	1	0
Homicide	4	25	31	52	29	20	13	3	1
Natural	5	3	3	21	31	58	82	29	8
Suicide	3	2	4	8	6	5	6	1	0





Does the office annually compile statistical data on partial autopsies?



Does the office annually compile statistical data on hospital autopsies retained under ME jurisdiction?

*The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office does not conduct nor take jurisdiction of hospital autopsies.  
All autopsy activity takes place in our own facility.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on cases where toxicology is performed?

*All cases where jurisdiction is accepted are submitted to toxicological studies in accordance with the  
"Specimen and Evidence Procurement and Handling and Disposal" policy.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on bodies unidentified after examination?

*In 2019, two bodies handled remained unidentified after examination.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on organ and tissue donations?

2019 Referrals		
Month Totals	Hospital & JCME Case/Recovered	JCME Referrals/Recovered
Jan 38/17	15/10	23/7
Feb 41/19	23/15	18/4
Mar 38/16	23/11	15/5
Apr 45/18	24/11	21/7
May 32/12	19/9	13/3
June 45/15	33/13	12/2
July 33/12	20/9	13/3
Aug 39/13	25/9	14/4
Sep 29/10	22/9	7/1
Oct 24/9	15/7	9/2
Nov 37/13	31/12	6/1
Dec 17/7	17/7	0/0

Does the office annually compile statistical data on unclaimed bodies?

*In 2019, 27 bodies were unclaimed and processed for indigent cremation, two bodies handled remained unidentified after examination and are therefor unclaimed.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on exhumations?

*Exhumation requests are submitted by interested parties and stored in the file room at the medical examiner's office.*

Does the office annually compile statistical data on bodies transported to the office?

*See page 13*

Does the office maintain a cross index of categories of cause and manner of death for statistical data retrieval?

*See pages 9-12*

“The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are  
many dark places; but still there is much that is fair,  
and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief,  
it grows perhaps the greater.”

– J.R.R. Tolkien