

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

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



950 E. 21ST STREET KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI



2020 Annual Report

Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office

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What is the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office?

The Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office (JCMEO) is a 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) and was reaccredited in 2020.

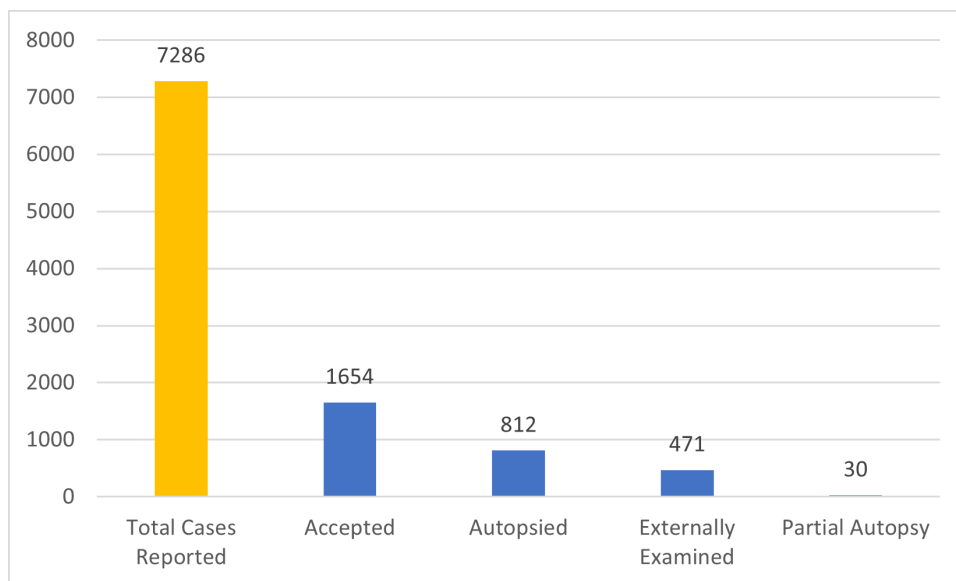
2020 Executive Summary

The Medical Examiner's Office 2020 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 7,286 deaths were reported to our office in 2020. 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 3,195 of those reported.

The Medical Examiner's Office performed a complete autopsy on 812 cases. The manner of death on those 812 cases were determined as: 212 Homicides, 50 Suicides, 27 Traffic Deaths, 202 Accidental Deaths, 291 Natural Deaths, and 24 deaths due to undetermined causes. 6 cases still remain pending at the time of this report.

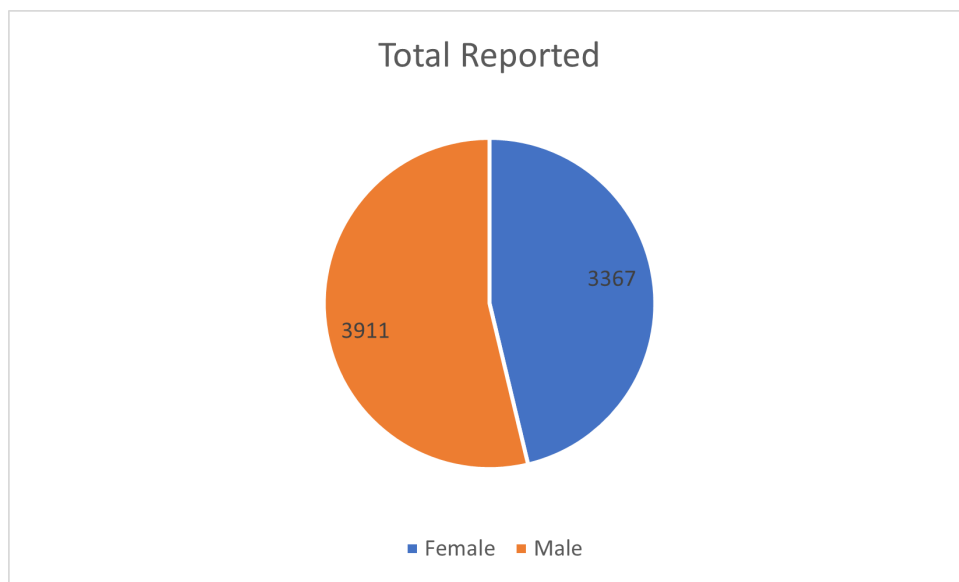
Does the office prepare an annual report tabulating total cases reported, accepted, examined, and autopsied, and the major causes of death sorted by each manner of death category?



Out of 7,286 cases reported, we accepted 1,654 into our jurisdiction.

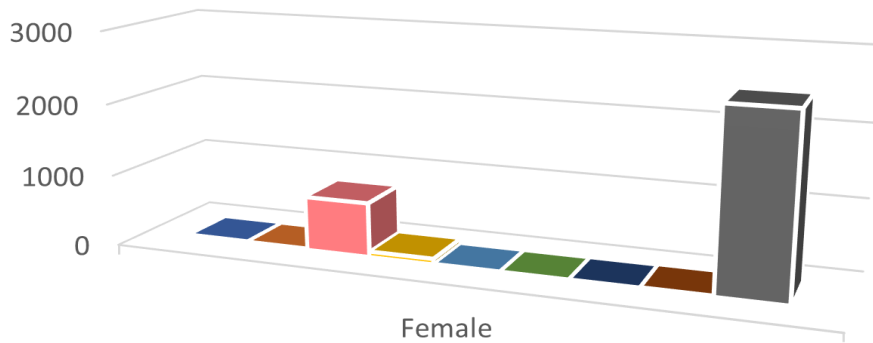
Of those cases: 812 were full autopsy, 471 were external examination, and 30 were partial autopsy.

Does the office annually compile statistical data on deaths reported?



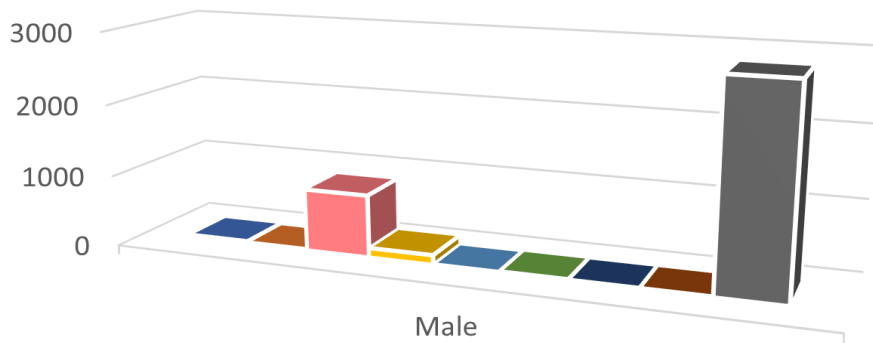
	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Female	18	12	755	75	3	2	4	10	2453
Male	28	11	871	133	4	13	7	6	2815

Total Reported Female



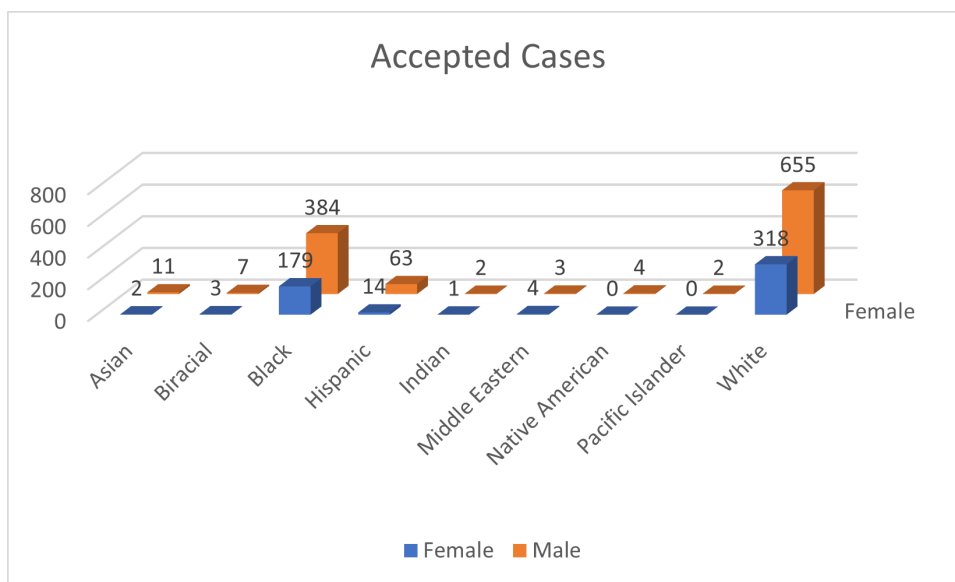
■ Asian ■ Biracial ■ Black
 ■ Hispanic ■ Indian ■ Middle Eastern
 ■ Native American ■ Pacific Islander ■ White

Total Reported Male

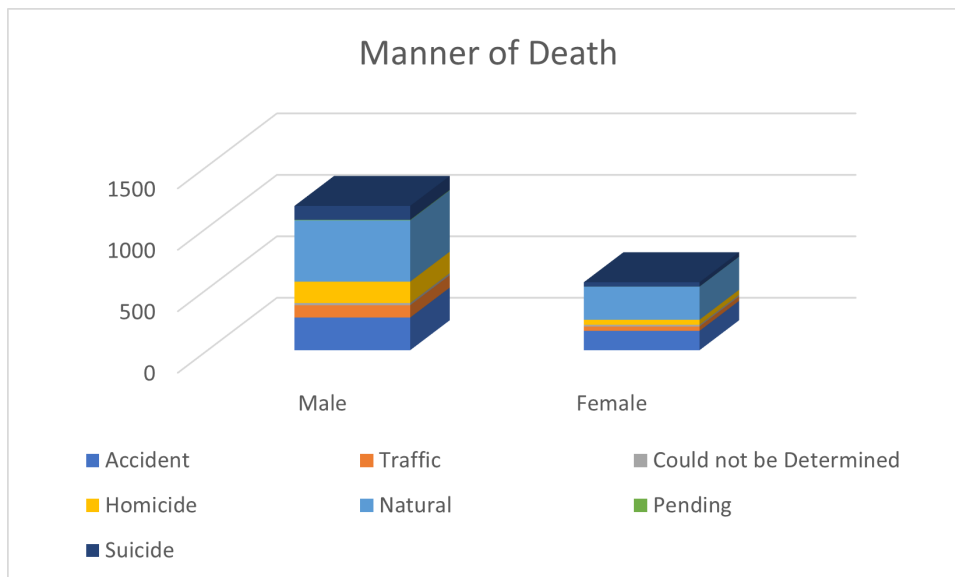


■ Asian ■ Biracial ■ Black
 ■ Hispanic ■ Indian ■ Middle Eastern
 ■ Native American ■ Pacific Islander ■ White

Does the office annually compile statistical data on cases accepted?

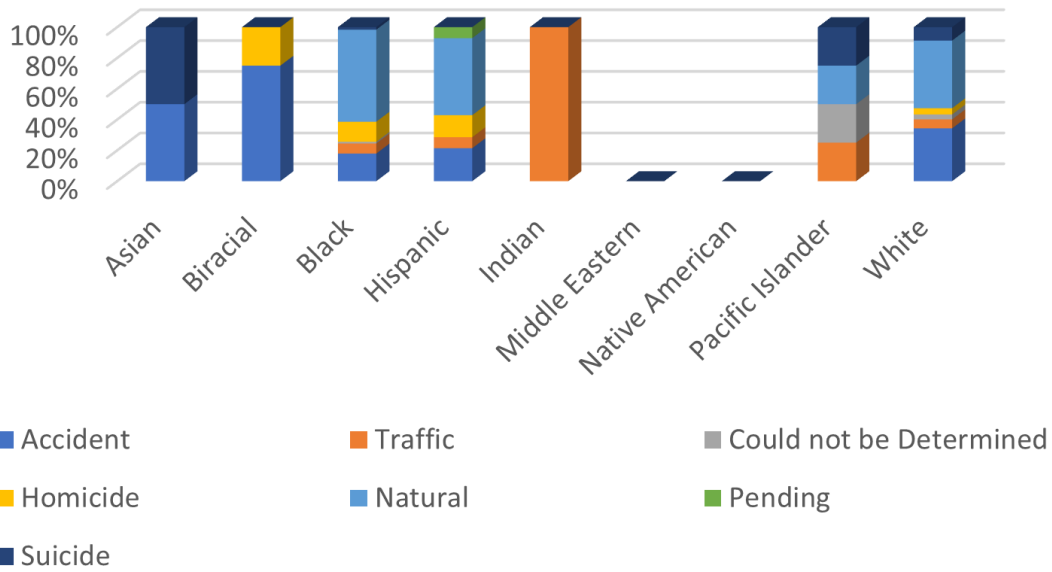


Does the office annually compile statistical data on manners of death?



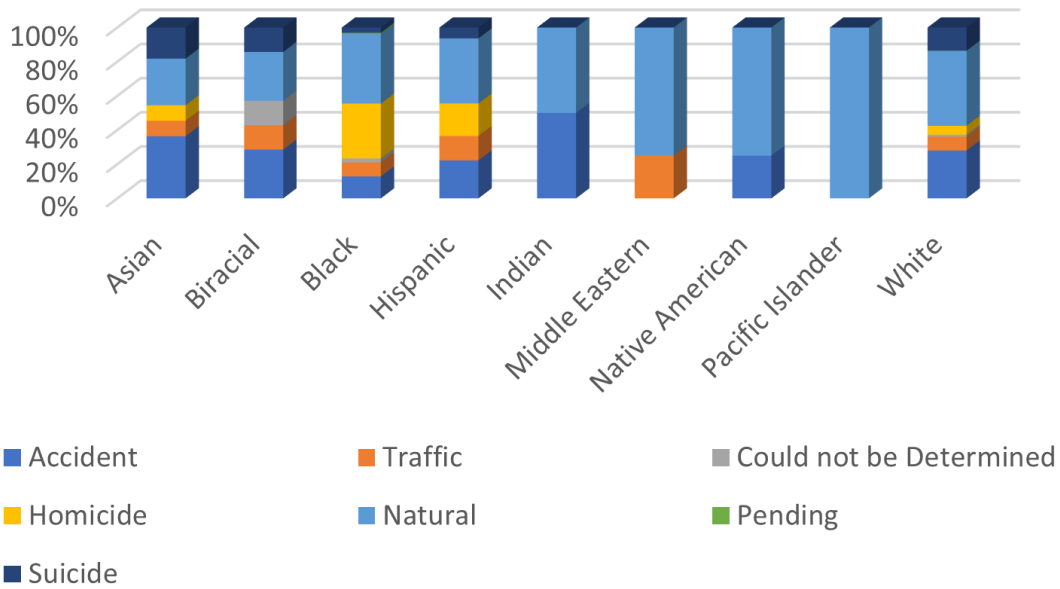
*2 pending unknown M/F	Male	Female
Accident	266	158
Traffic	100	35
Could not be Determined	18	14
Homicide	174	41
Natural	499	269
Pending*	4	1
Suicide	113	35

Female Manner of Death by Race



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	1	3	33	3	0	0	0	0	118
Traffic	0	0	12	1	1	0	0	1	20
Could not be Determined	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	11
Homicide	0	1	24	2	0	0	0	0	14
Natural	0	0	110	7	0	0	0	1	151
Pending	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	30

Male Manner of Death by Race



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	4	2	50	14	1	0	1	0	194
Traffic	1	1	32	9	0	1	0	0	56
Could not be Determined	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	8
Homicide	1	0	125	12	0	0	0	0	36
Natural	3	2	158	24	1	3	3	2	303
Pending	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Suicide	2	1	12	4	0	0	0	0	94

MOD - Natural

Heart / Lung related	528
Alcohol related	57
Cancer	26
Brain related	22
Diabetes	20
Hemorrhage	19
Renal	16
Liver	13
COVID-19	9
Organ Failure	9
Sepsis	9
Peritonitis	4
Hemoperitoneum	2
Obesity	2
Pancreatitis	2
Sarcoidosis	2
Acute on chronic pyelonephritis	1
Complications of crohn's disease	1
Complications of gangrenous necrosis of the left lower extremity	1
Complications of left foot surgery for nonhealing ulcer, abscess and osteomyelitis	1
Complications of obstructive sleep apnea	1
Complications of severe malnutrition	1
Complications of systemic sclerosis	1
Complications of vocal cord paralysis of unknown etiology	1
Exsanguination	1
Megacolon	1
Myelodysplastic syndrome	1
Spontaneous esophageal perforation following forceful vomiting (Boerhaave syndrome)	1
Stillbirth	1

MOD - Homicide

Firearm	187
Piercing Wounds	12
Trauma	9
Complications of paraplegia	2
Bronchopneumonia	1
Homicidal violence by unspecified means	1

MOD - Traffic

Blunt Force Trauma	122
Thermal / CO / Smoke	4
Heart / Lung related	2
Asphyxia	1
Brain related	1
Hemorrhage	1
Placental abruption	1

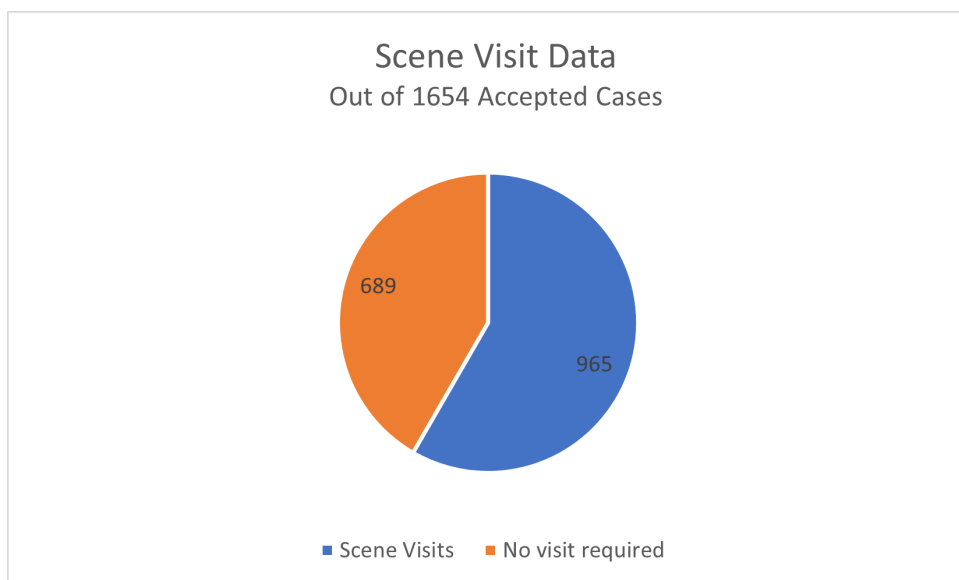
MOD- Suicide

Asphyxia	197
Firearm	85
Hanging	11
Alcohol / Drug Related	10
Blunt Force Trauma	5
Drowning	2
Exsanguination	1
Methemoglobinemia	1
Organ failure	1

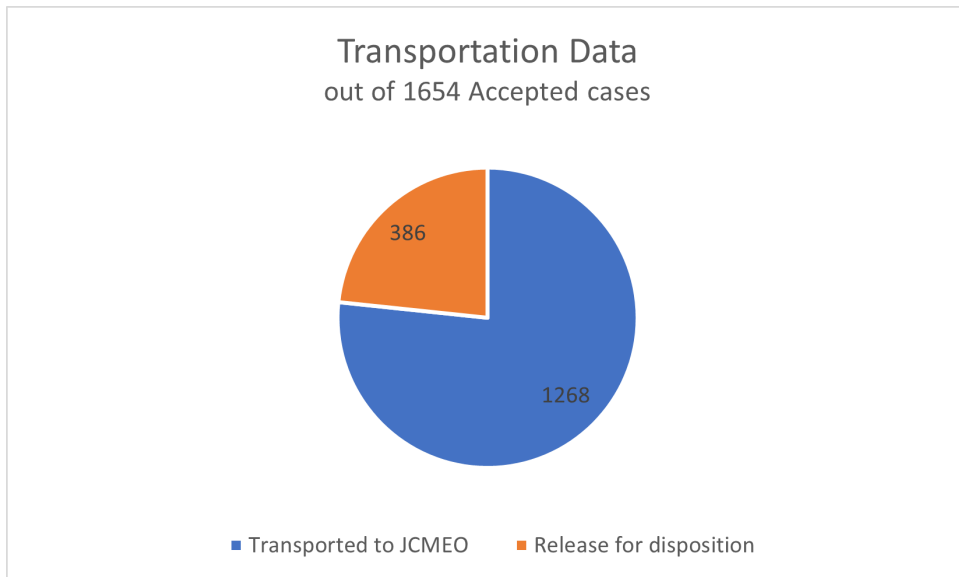
MOD - Accident

Alcohol / Drug Related	183
Fall / Fracture	54
Hemorrhage	45
Heart / Lung related	29
Asphyxia	25
Blunt Force Trauma	23
Thermal / CO / Smoke	19
Drowning	9
Brain related	8
Hypothermia	4
Organ Failure	3
Sepsis	3
Complications of Down's syndrome and quadriplegia	1
Failure to thrive	1
Incised wound of the left hand and wrist	1
Probable anaphylactic reaction to gadolinium contrast solution	1

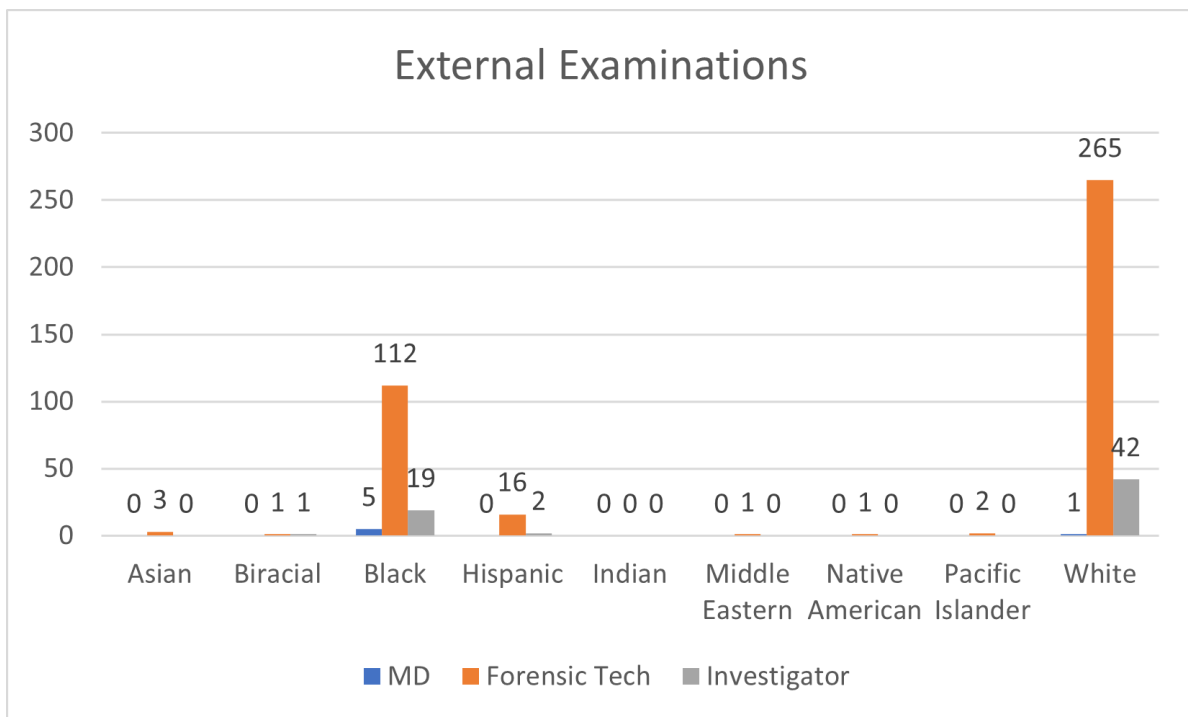
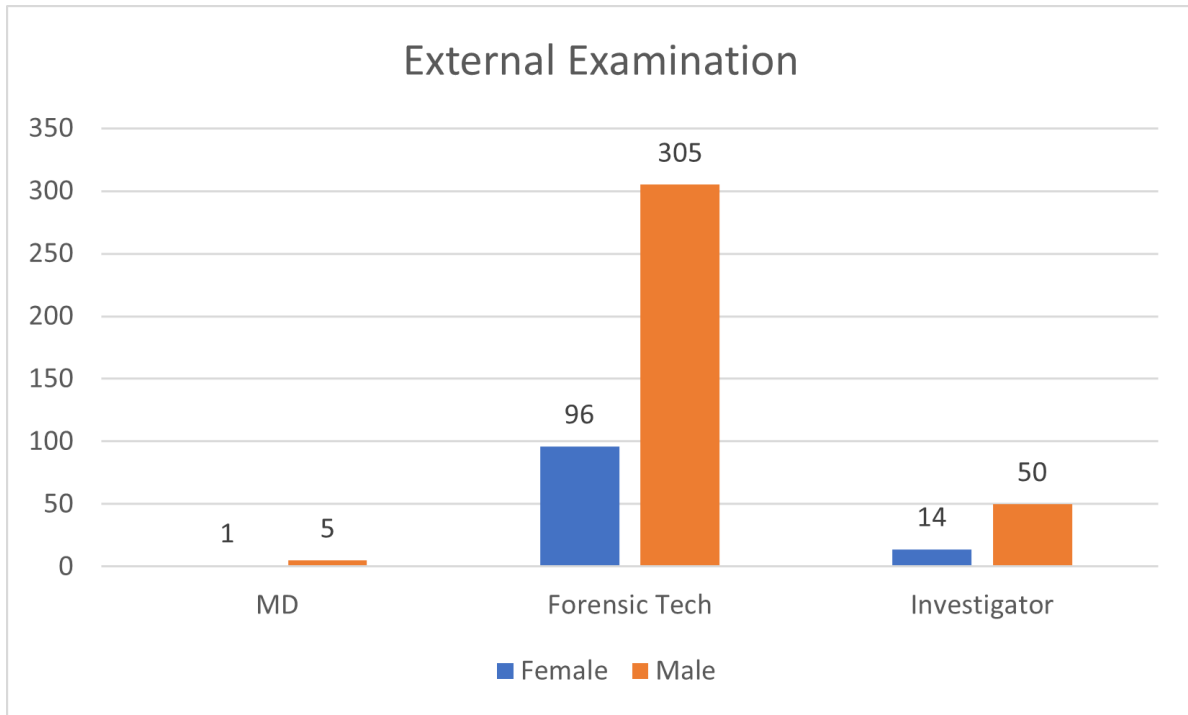
Does the office annually compile statistical data on scene visits by medical examiners or medical examiner investigators?



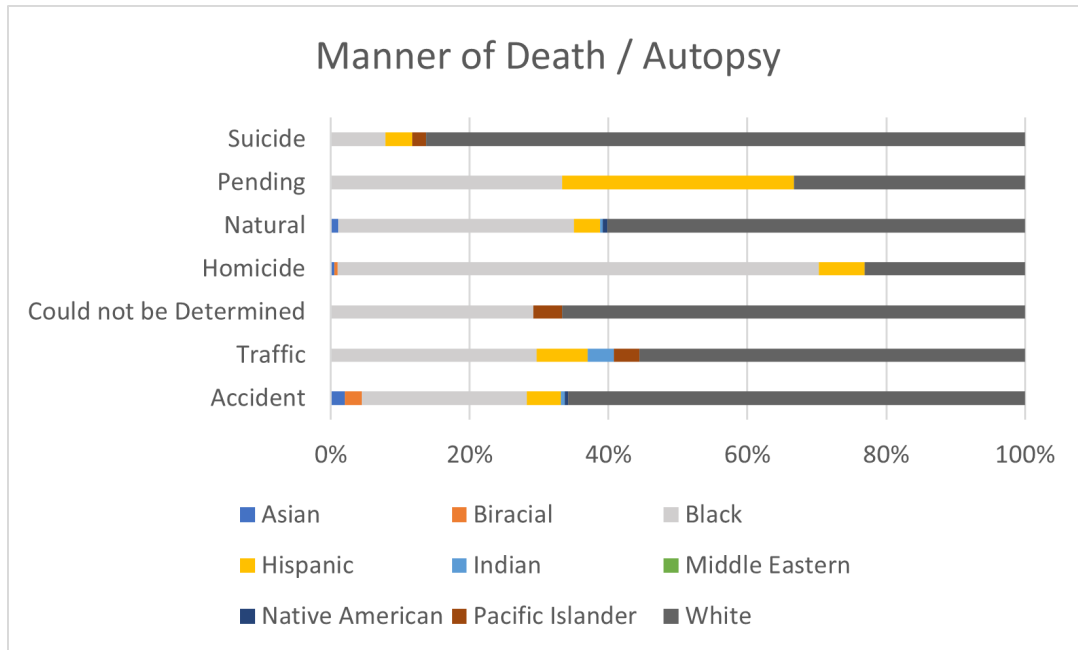
Does the office annually compile statistical data on bodies transported by office or by order of the office?



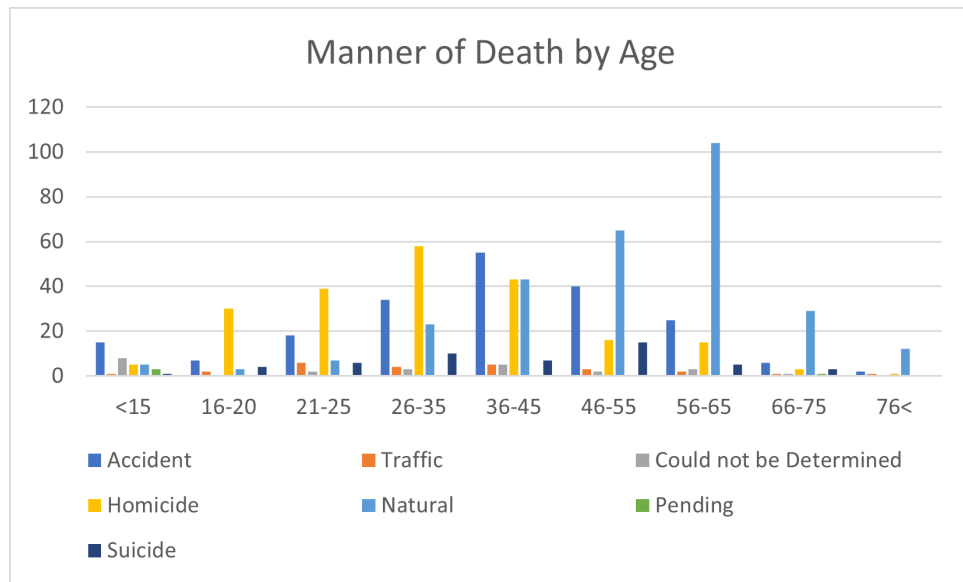
Does the office annually compile statistical data on external examinations?



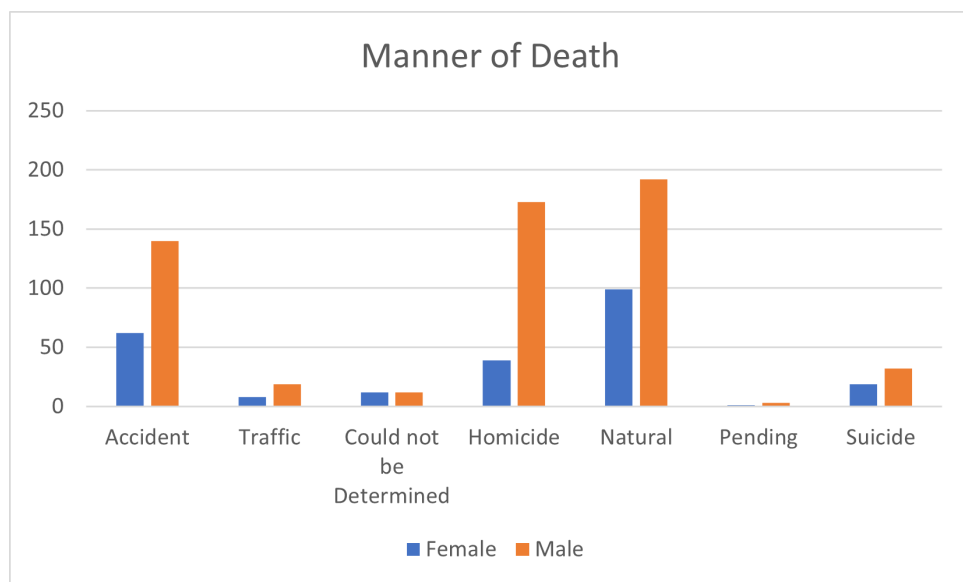
Does the office annually compile statistical data on complete autopsies?



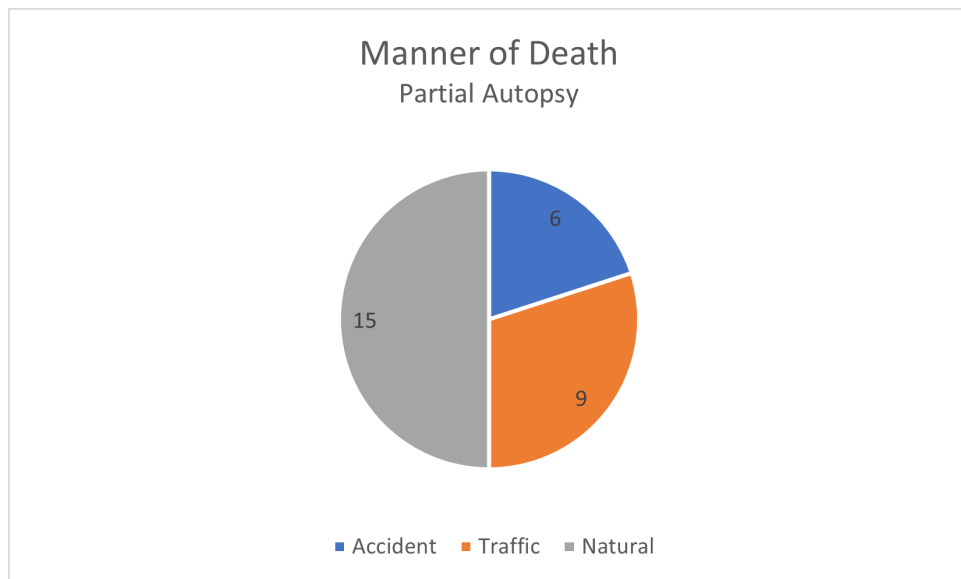
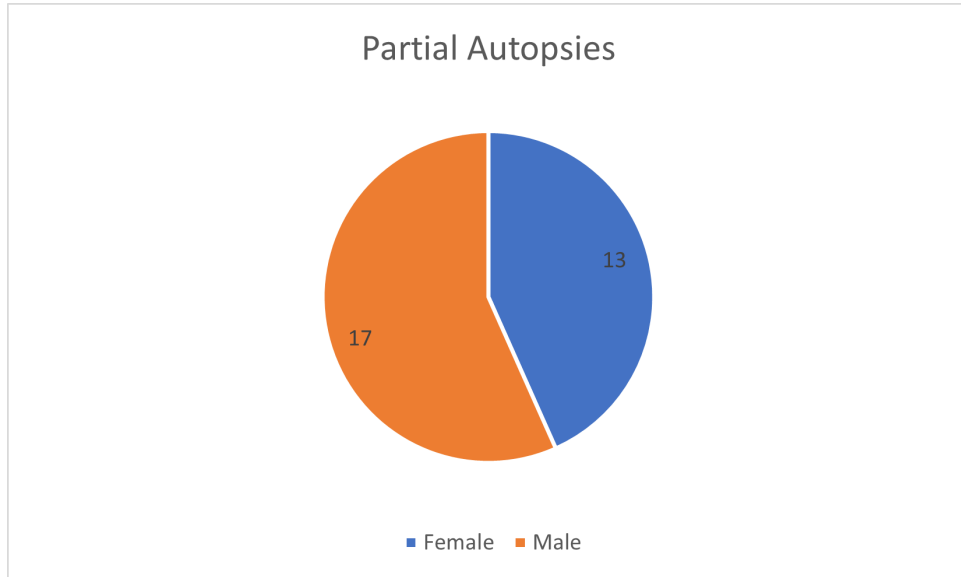
	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	4	5	48	10	1	0	1	0	133
Traffic	0	0	8	2	1	0	0	1	15
Could not be Determined	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	16
Homicide	1	1	147	14	0	0	0	0	49
Natural	3	0	99	11	1	0	2	0	175
Pending	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Suicide	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	1	44



	<15	16-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76<
Accident	15	7	18	34	55	40	25	6	2
Traffic	1	2	6	4	5	3	2	1	1
Could not be Determined	8	0	2	3	5	2	3	1	0
Homicide	5	30	39	58	43	16	15	3	1
Natural	5	3	7	23	43	65	104	29	12
Pending	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Suicide	1	4	6	10	7	15	5	3	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 2020, two bodies handled remained unidentified after examination.

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

2020 Referrals		
Month Totals	Hospital & JCME Case/Recovered	JCME Referrals/Recovered
Jan 26/5	26/5	0/0
Feb 35/15	34/14	1/1
Mar 20/4	20/4	0/0
Apr 17/4	16/3	1/1
May 31/14	31/14	0/0
June 53/16	41/14	12/2
July 32/9	28/8	4/1
Aug 31/16	28/14	3/2
Sep 36/12	33/12	3/0
Oct 34/9	32/9	2/0
Nov 33/15	33/15	0/0
Dec 31/10	31/10	0/0

Does the office annually compile statistical data on unclaimed bodies?

In 2020, 38 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

”To have been loved so deeply,
even though the person who loved us is gone,
will give us some protection forever.”

— J.K. Rowling