

JACKSON COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



2021 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.

Medical Examiner Office Receives New Technology in 2021



With the help of new technology, the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office plans to save hours working on cases. The nearly half million-dollar x-ray machine was recently installed and is already making a difference.

Chief Investigator Tom Hensley said the machine was used last while investigating a double homicide. "We went from spending 45 minutes to 45 seconds," he said of the x-ray process.

The new equipment does a full-body, low-radiation x-ray in less than a minute, making it safer and easier for staff. Before receiving the new equipment Jackson County investigators used two portable machines to x-ray bodies one area at a time.

According to equipment manufacturer Lodox, "Full-body images present a comprehensive clinical picture, reducing guesswork, offering peace of mind and better guiding cause-of-death determination. The full-body image replaces a number of smaller views, making it easier to locate and identify injuries, foreign bodies and identifying features."

The mission of the Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office 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 the Medical Examiner's Office in 2020. A complete autopsy was performed on 812 of those cases.

Published on April 08, 2021

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:**

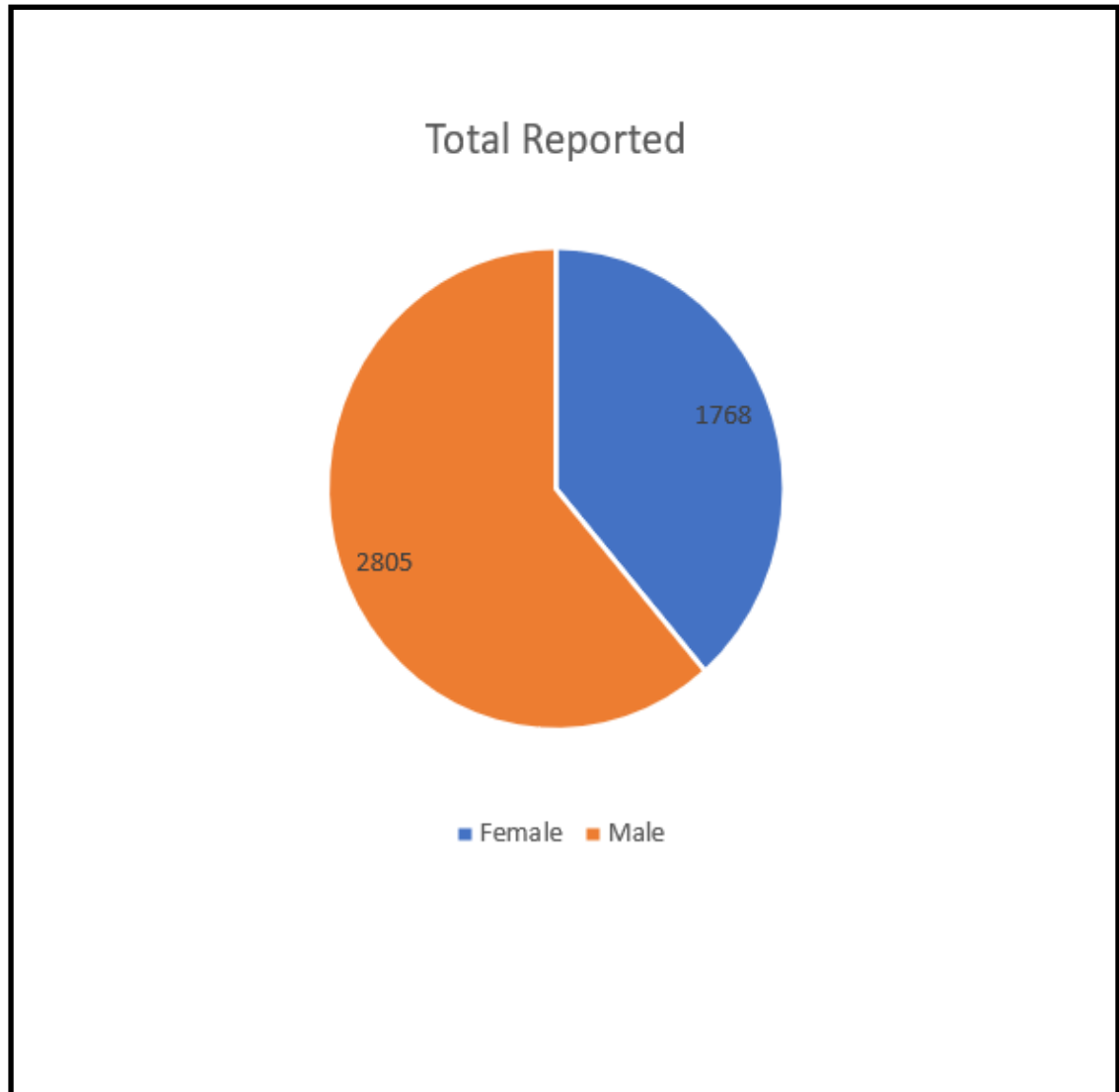
- (1) Full Time Board Certified Chief Medical Examiner
- (1) Full Time Board Certified Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
- (2) Full Time Board Certified Deputy Medical Examiners
 - (1) Chief of Forensic Operations and Investigations
 - (1) Deputy Chief Investigator
 - (10) Full Time Medicolegal Death Investigators
 - (4) 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 2021.

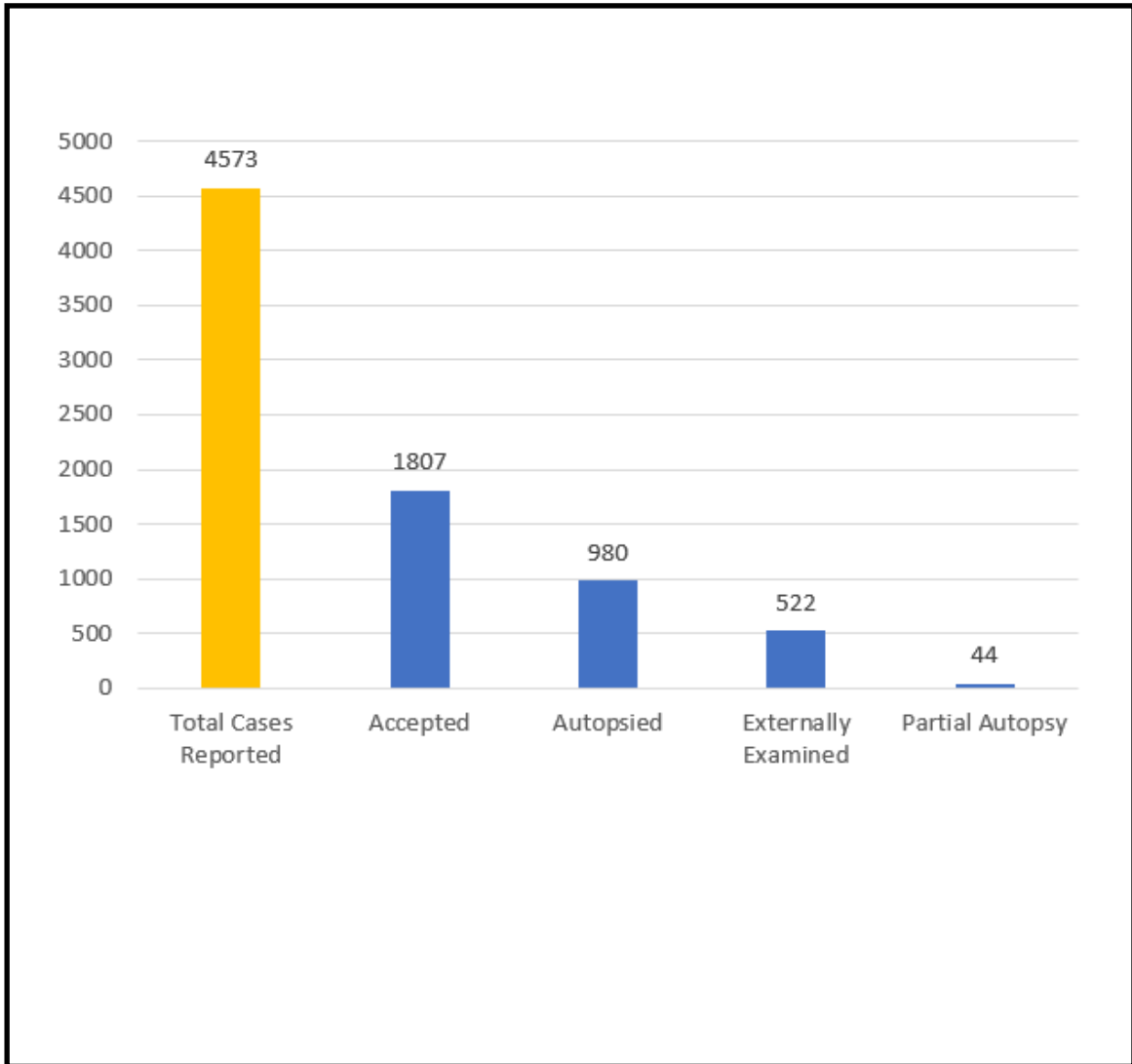
* Accreditation Standard

- * Does the office annually compile statistical data on deaths reported?

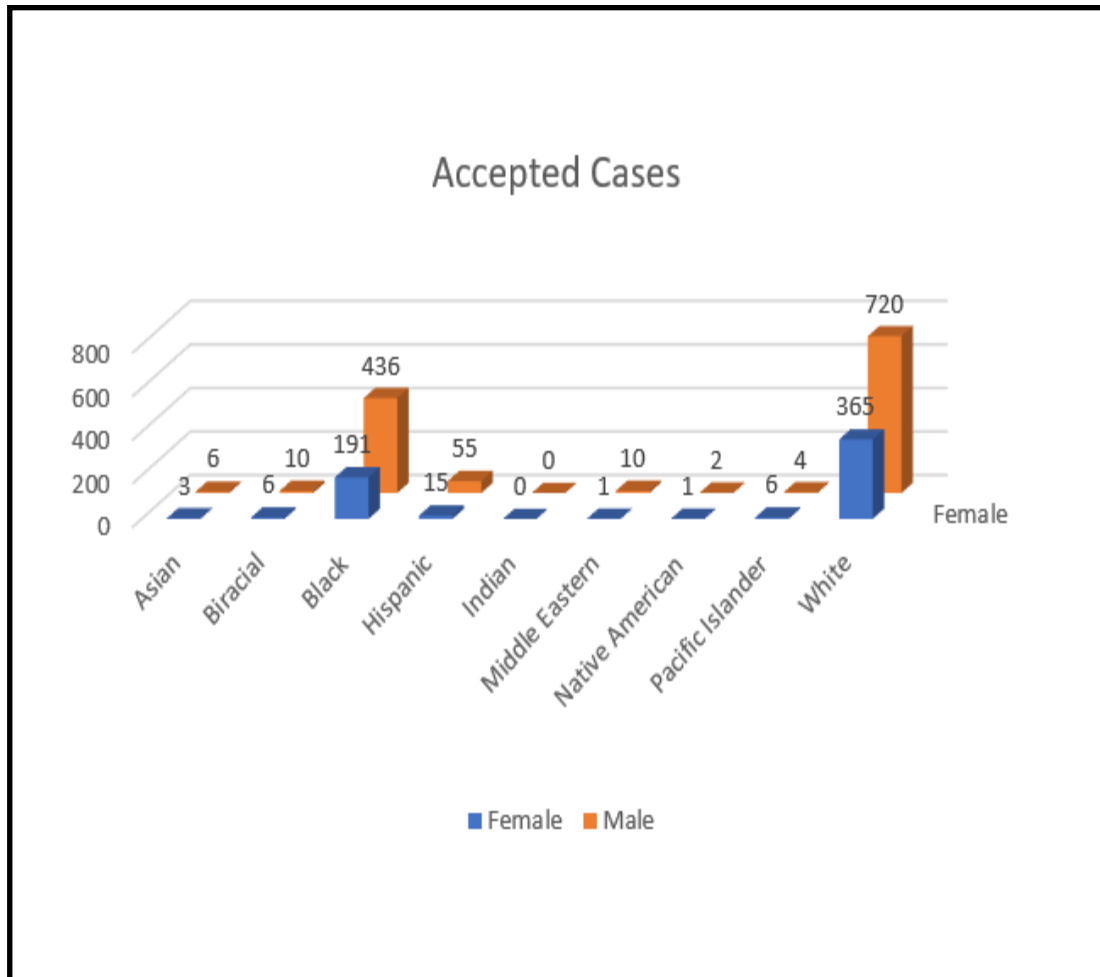


Also reported to our office: 3230 Hospice/Nursing Home Deaths

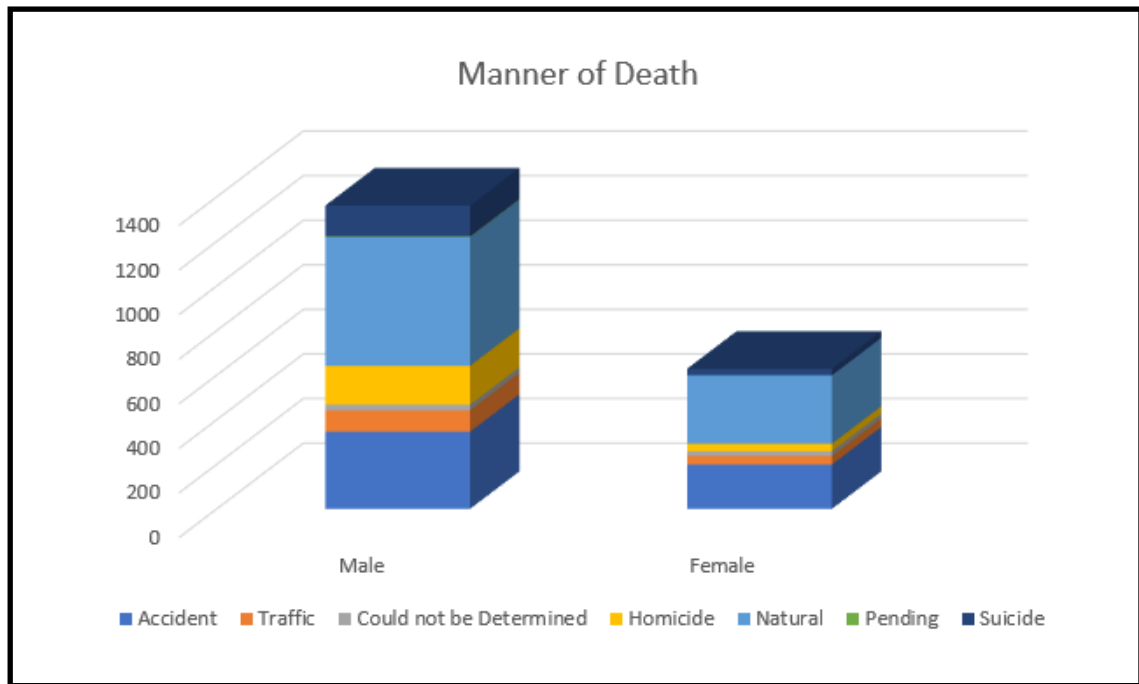
- * Does the office prepare an annual report tabulating total cases reported, accepted, examined, and autopsied, and the major causes of death sorted by each manner of death category?



* Does the office annually compile statistical data on cases accepted?



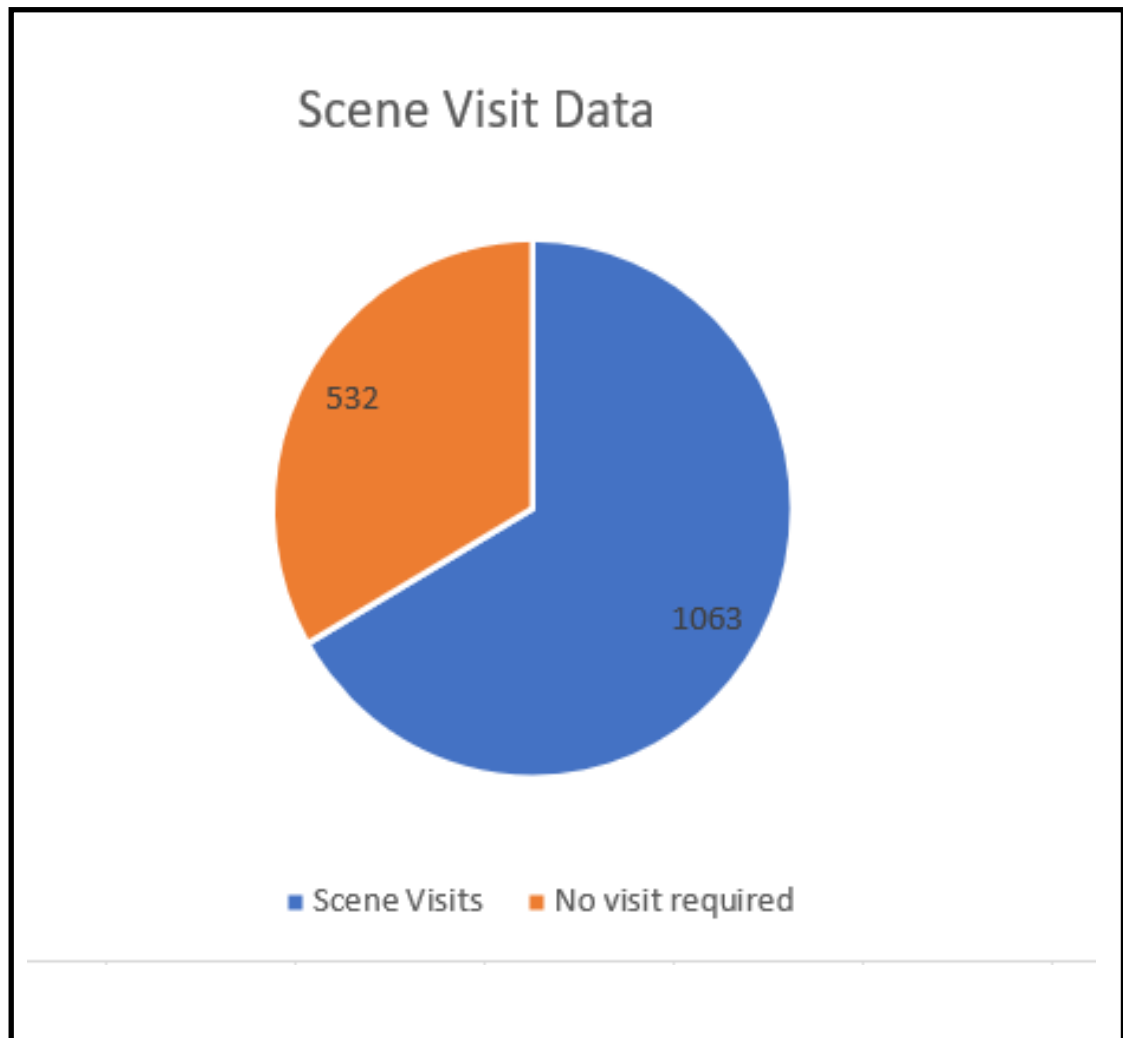
- * Does the office annually compile statistical data on manners of death?



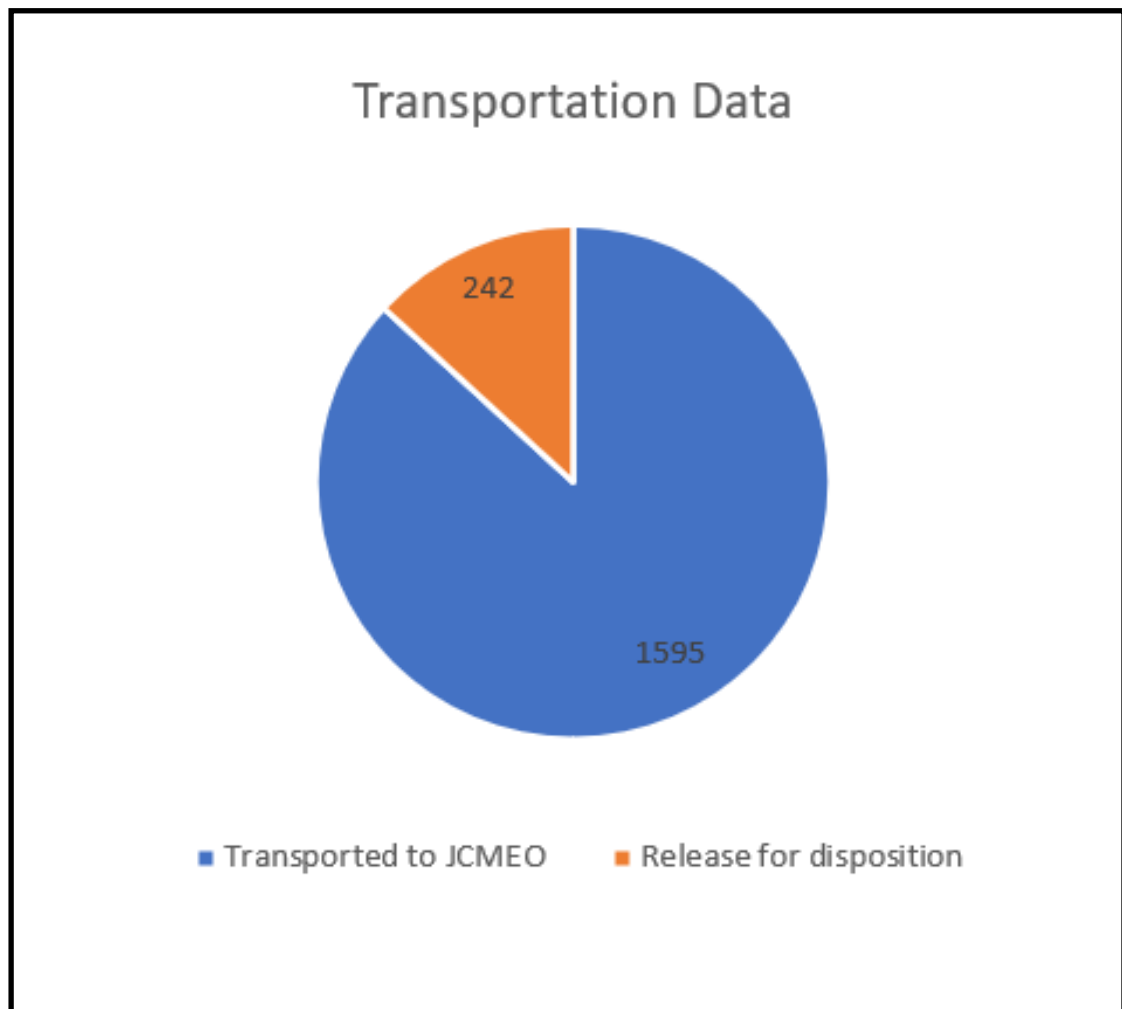
	Male	Female
Accident	346	199
Traffic	96	39
Could not be Determined	25	21
Homicide	175	33
Natural	577	307
Pending	3	0
Suicide	139	30

Referral County's MOD included

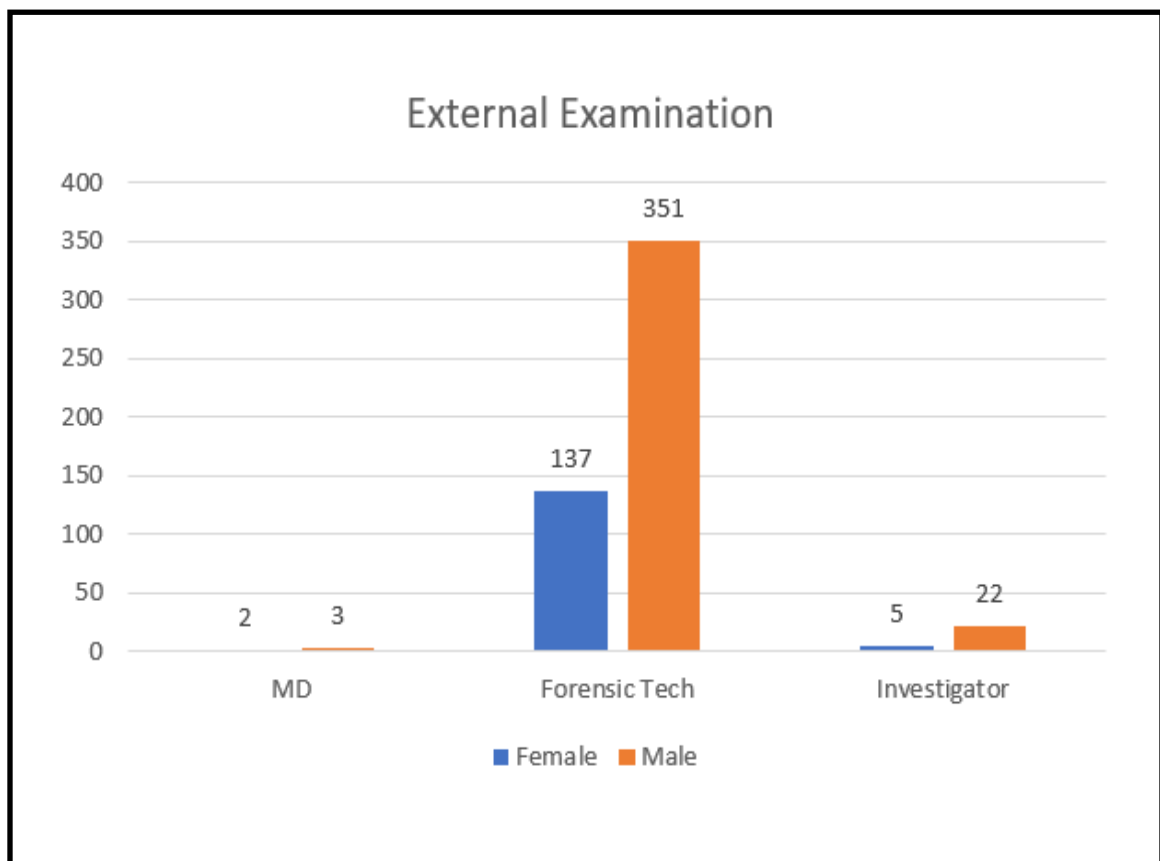
- * Does the office annually compile statistical data on scene visits by medical examiners or medical examiner investigators?



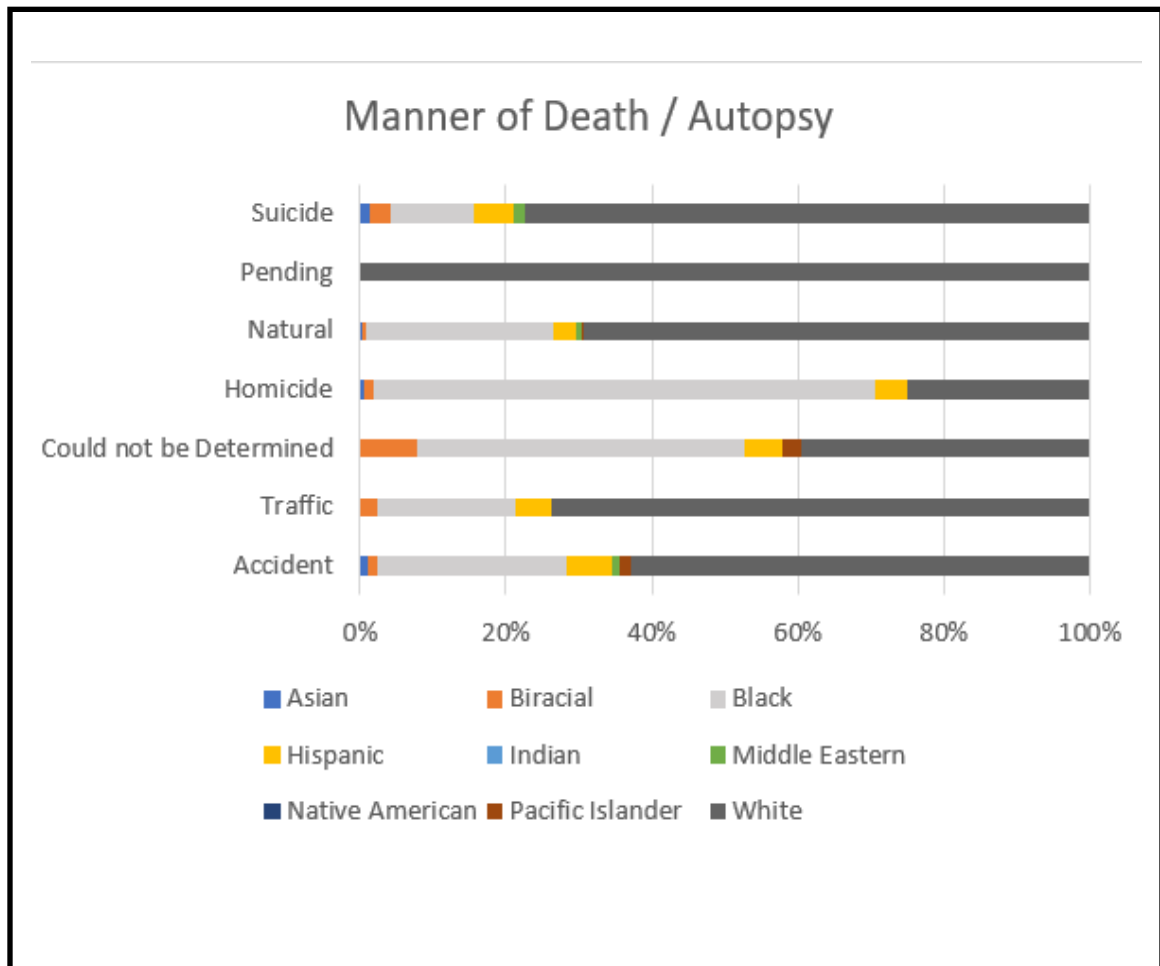
- * Does the office annually compile statistical data on bodies transported by office or by order of the office?



* Does the office annually compile statistical data on external examinations?

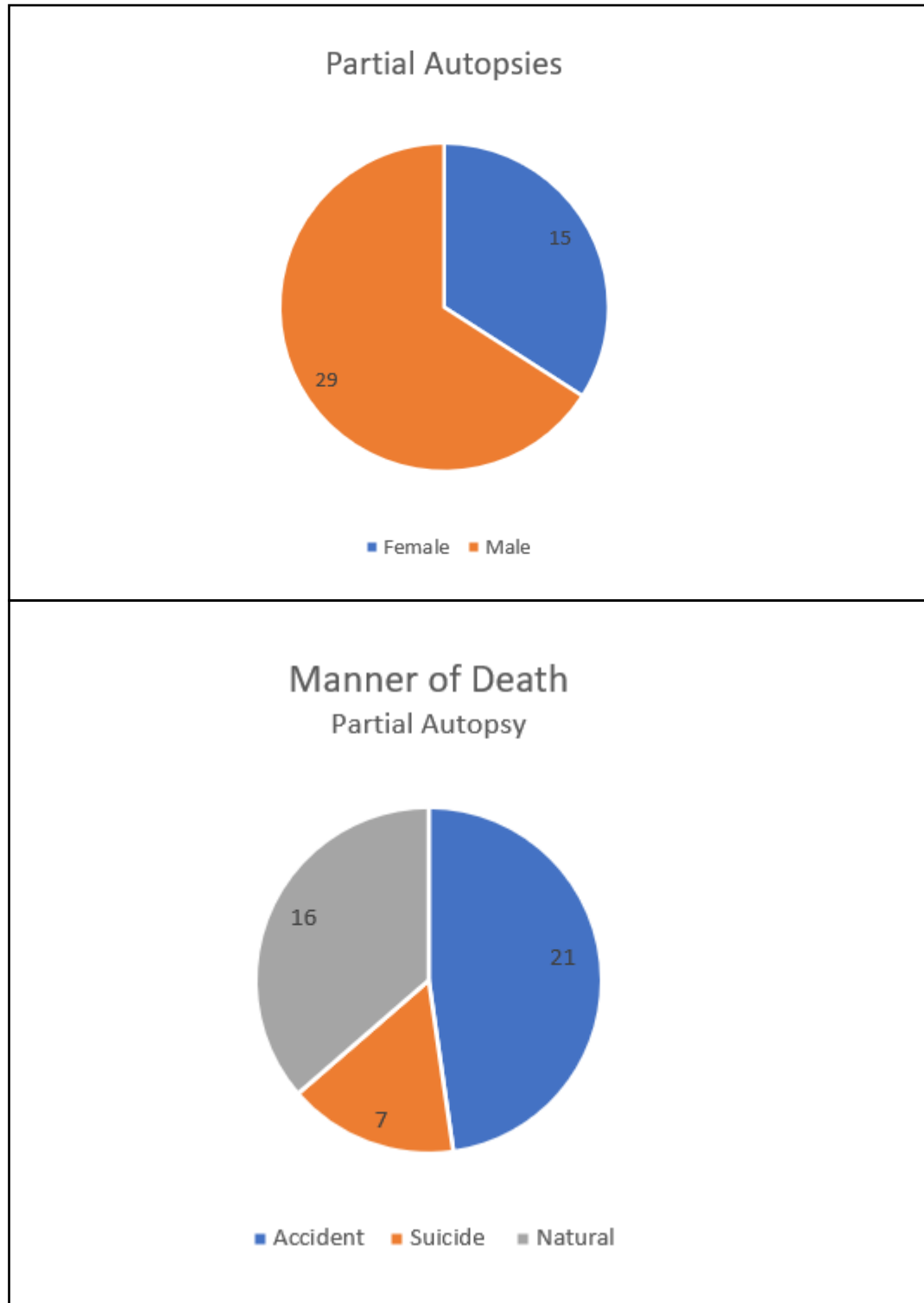


* Does the office annually compile statistical data on complete autopsies?



	Asian	Biracial	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Middle Eastern	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Accident	3	4	73	18	0	3	0	4	178
Traffic	0	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	31
Could not be Determined	0	3	17	2	0	0	0	1	15
Homicide	1	3	142	9	0	0	0	0	52
Natural	1	2	87	10	0	3	0	1	235
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Suicide	1	2	8	4	0	1	0	0	55

* 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 2021, no bodies handled remained unidentified after examination.

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

*In 2021,
Organ donation = 50
Corneal donations = 12
Tissue donations = 76*

*** Does the office annually compile statistical data on unclaimed bodies?**

In 2021, 39 bodies were unclaimed and processed for indigent cremation.

*** 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 11

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

ABOUT VertiQ

For over 37 years, VertiQ has been the leading provider of software and services for Coroners and Medical Examiners, (CME). CME, the core product name, provides Medical Examiners and Coroners with case management, death investigation workflow, task management, digital imaging, chain-of-custody through multiple death investigation, statistics and report development.



General Search	Case Number	<input type="text"/>
Text Search	Name Last	<input type="text"/>
Specimen Search	Name First	<input type="text"/>
Micro Search	Exam Type	<input type="text"/>
Organ Search	Staff Pathologist	<input type="text"/>
Histo Search	Investigator	<input type="text"/>
Daily Log	MOD	<input type="text"/>
Morgue Status Board	Gender	<input type="text"/>
	Race	<input type="text"/>
	Case Status	<input type="text"/>

SEARCH		
Notified Date	<input type="text"/>	To <input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>	To <input type="text"/>
Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>	To <input type="text"/>
Cause of Death	<input type="text"/>	
Incident City	<input type="text"/>	
Incident County	<input type="text"/>	
Death City	<input type="text"/>	
Resident City	<input type="text"/>	
Investigating Agency	<input type="text"/>	
Agency Report Num	<input type="text"/>	
AKA Name	<input type="text"/>	

- * Does the office annually compile statistical data on infant deaths (age live birth to one year) including numbers of infant deaths certified, number of infants autopsied and categories of cause and manner of death?**

Of the 165 reported infant deaths, 31 were full autopsy.

Manner Of Death	Cause Of Death
18 Accident	16 Asphyxia / Probable Asphyxia
	2 Complications of prematurity
2 Homicide	2 Blunt force head trauma
11 Could not be determined	1 Intrauterine fetal demise
	3 Sudden unexpected death in infancy
	7 Unknown
3 Natural	2 Intrauterine fetal demise
	1 Complications of PACS1-related syndrome

Grieving the loss of a loved one can be very difficult.

For an extensive list of resources please visit:

<https://childrengrieve.org/find-support/9-find-support/31-programs-in-missouri>

GRIEF IS THE PRICE
WE PAY FOR LOVE.

— QUEEN ELIZABETH II