

Five causes explain most fetal deaths from 2018 to 2020

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Five selected causes of death accounted for 89.8 percent of fetal deaths in a reporting area of 41 states and the District of Columbia for 2018 to 2020, according to a report published online Oct. 19 in *National Vital Statistics Reports*.

Donna L. Hoyert, Ph.D., and Elizabeth C.W. Gregory, M.P.H., from the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland, presented data on [fetal deaths](#) occurring at 20 weeks of gestation or more for 2018 to 2020 in a reporting area of 41 states and the District of Columbia, in which less than half of the deaths were attributed to fetal death of unspecified cause.

The researchers found that in the reporting area, five selected causes accounted for 89.8 percent of fetal deaths: fetal death of unspecified cause; fetus affected by complications of placenta, cord, and membranes; fetus affected by maternal complications of pregnancy; fetus affected by maternal conditions that might have been unrelated to the current pregnancy; and [congenital malformations](#), deformations, and [chromosomal abnormalities](#) (31.1, 25.1, 12.7, 10.5, and 10.5 percent, respectively).

"With so many deaths concentrated in a few broad causes, including unspecified, these same five causes are among the selected causes for most of the characteristics studied (that is, maternal age, race and Hispanic origin, sex of [fetus](#), and plurality)," the authors write.

More information: [National Vital Statistics Reports](#)

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