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# Popcom: PH logs highest mortality rate in 2021 with 768,504 deaths — highest in a single year post-WWII

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FILE PHOTO A relative wails over the death of his loved one while being treated in the parking lot of Ospital ng Binan in Laguna province on August 14, 2021 as the hospital hit full bed capacity amid increasing COVID-19 cases. RICHARD A. REYES / INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has reported a total of 768,504 deaths in 2021, the highest mortality rate recorded in the country in 63 years, the Commission on Population and Development (Popcom) reported on Tuesday.

Popcom, citing the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), said in its report that the country’s mortality rate in the first 11 months of 2021 is at 6.98 per 1,000 Filipinos, a 25 percent increase — even with still a month-and-a-half worth of data still to be included — compared to 5.8 in a thousand in 2020.

The total number of registered deaths within this period last year was at 768,504, which is higher by 154,562 than the entire 2020, according to the commission.

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still a month-and-a-half worth of data to **INQUIRER.NET** a record in the number of Filipinos dying in a year since post-World War 2,” Popcom executive director Juan Perez III said in a statement.

Perez also estimated that once the entire year was recorded, the 2021 number of deaths would indicate the highest annual death statistic in the country’s recorded medical history.

“In 2019 and 2020, the mortality rate was about the same at 5.8 per 1,000 Filipinos. By the end of 2021, I believe it reached 7.5 or 8 per 1,000 — not the highest mortality rate ever in the country, but certainly the highest number of Filipinos dying in a single year,” Perez added.

“We are expecting more numbers from November and December of last year. We can presume that there were about 800,000 deaths or more then,” he added.

The executive director also noted that the last time the country experienced the same level of mortality rates was in 1958 to 1959, where it reached between 7.3 and 8.4, but at that time only 218,816 Filipinos had been registered as dead.

### **Heart disease leading cause of death; COVID-19 second**

Popcom also said that ischemic heart disease is the leading cause of death in the country, while COVID-19 — both “identified” or “unidentified” — is the second leading cause of death in the country.

There were 110,332 deaths caused by ischemic heart disease in most parts of 2021, compared to 86,164 in 2020.

COVID-19, on the other hand, is the second most cause of death for 75,285 Filipinos according to available data last year, higher than the 30,140 deaths from March to December 2020.

“Thus, the statistics above elevated COVID-19 as the second-deadliest killer of Filipinos in 2021,” Perez further stated.

According to the latest available data, the PSA reported 51,514 deaths from COVID-19 “identified” and 23,771 and COVID-19 “unidentified,” for a total of 75,285.

Perez said that there are two classification of COVID-19 affecting the country: “identified,” or those that can be confirmed via RT-PCR tests, and “unidentified,” with laboratory tests or clinical findings by a doctor which indicated symptoms of the new coronavirus, but without a confirmatory test up to the time of death.

The classification is considered valid and the methods accepted by the World Health Organization to report the disease, according to Popcom.

leading cause of fatalities in 2020.

“The increasing number of deaths indicate a health system severely challenged by the pandemic and its consequences,” Perez pointed out.

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