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COVID-19– Associated Deaths in Working-Age Latino Adults

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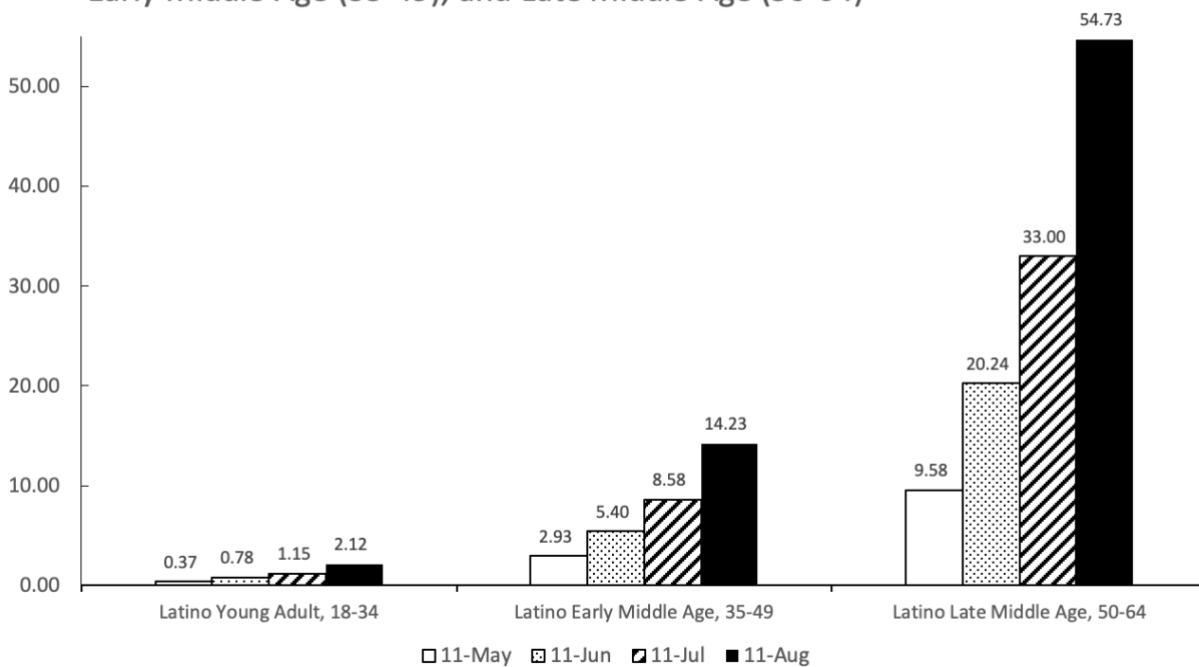
Since 1992, the UCLA Health Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC) has provided cutting-edge, fact-based research, education, and public information about Latinos, their health, their history, and their roles in California society and economy.

COVID-19– Associated Deaths in Working-Age Latino Adults

As the coronavirus works its deadly way into every nook and cranny of California’s population, its victims’ profiles become clearer and clearer: they are the unsung essential workers. Different from the high-profile essential workers such as physicians, nurses, first responders, etc., the unsung essential workers are farm workers who feed California, truck drivers who transport the state’s goods, meat and vegetable packers, the grocery industry’s shelf stockers and checkout clerks, construction workers, automobile mechanics, gardeners and landscapers, bus drivers, office cleaners, nursing home attendants, and others who toil day and night to keep California functioning.

In this report, we take a closer look at the progression of COVID-19–associated deaths in the Latino ethnic group, in three working-age populations: young adult (ages 18–34); early middle age (35–49); and late middle age (50–64.) We look at the growth of death rates in each age group between May 11 and August 11, 2020. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Increase in COVID-19–Associated Mortality Rate Between May 11 and August 11, 2020, by Age Group: Young Adult (18-34), Early Middle Age (35-49), and Late Middle Age (50-64)



Source: UCLA CESLAC Tabulations, CDPH, 05-11-2020 to 08-11-2020, Population: ACS 2018

Latino Young Adult (ages 18–34). Young adult Latinos include college students and recent graduates beginning their lifetime labor force participation. While the absolute number of deaths in this group—and hence also their death rate—was very low, its rate of growth is nonetheless alarming. In the three months from May 11 to August 11, the death rate for this group increased by 473%.

Latino Early Middle Age (ages 35–49). Early middle-aged Latinos are consolidating their place in the labor force and are in the process of forming families and households. During the three months between May and August, the death rate in this age group grew just as alarmingly, by 386%.

Latino Late Middle Age (ages 50–69). Late middle-aged Latinos, like most late middle-aged persons, are in their peak earning years. Death rates were far higher for this age group to start with, and during the same three-month period they grew by 471%.

COVID-19–associated deaths are burning their way through the entire Latino working-age population. Over the three months from May 11 to August 11, 2020, there was a nearly five-fold increase in death rates in all three age groups: young adult, early middle age, and late middle age.

The death rate is highest for late middle-aged Latinos. At 54.73 deaths per 100,000, it is nearly 25 times higher than the young adult rate (2.12), and nearly four times higher than the early middle-aged rate (14.23). COVID-19 is taking a high toll on Latino adults in their peak earning years.

Methods

Data on COVID-19 deaths, stratified by race/ethnicity and by age group, were furnished by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) between May 11 and August 11, 2020. Population denominators to calculate the age-specific death rate per 100,000 were tabulated from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), the latest available.

For more information, or to arrange a telephone interview with the Center’s Director, David E. Hayes-Bautista, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Medicine, please contact Adriana Valdez, at (310) 794-0663 or cesla@ucla.edu.