

Annual Report

2016

Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office



Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office

1515 6th Avenue South, Suite 220

Birmingham, Alabama 35233

Office: 205-930-3603

Fax: 205-930-3595

Email: Coroner@jccal.org

Webpage: www.jccal.org/coroner

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Introduction

The Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) is notified by law enforcement agencies and medical facilities to investigate approximately 33% of the deaths occurring in Jefferson County. Pursuant to State of Alabama, Act No. 79-454, notification is made when there is suspicion of criminal violence or criminal neglect, when death occurs in suspicious or unusual circumstances, when deaths are thought to result from trauma or violence, in any prison or penal institution, when in police custody, or deaths due to disease constituting a hazard to public health when requested in writing by the County Health Officer.

The Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office is fully accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners. www.thename.org

Mission

The mission of the Coroner/Medical Examiner office is to establish the identity of human remains and to determine the cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding death in all sudden and unexpected deaths occurring within Jefferson County, Alabama.

Death Statistics

This report contains aggregate data of the cases investigated by this office. This report does not contain data on all deaths that occurred within Jefferson County, but rather only those deaths that were investigated by the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office.

You can visit the Alabama Department of Public Health website to obtain data on all deaths that occurred within Jefferson County, Alabama: www.adph.org/healthstats

Death Certificates

The Coroner's Office cannot provide copies of death certificates; death certificates must be obtained through the Jefferson County Department of Health or the State of Alabama Vital Records office.

Jefferson County Department of Health
1400 6th Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35233
(205) 933-9110
www.jcdh.org/CommunityServices/VitalRecords

State of Alabama Vital Records
P.O. Box 5625
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5625
(334) 206-5418
www.adph.org/vitalrecords

History

Jefferson County operated under an elected coroner system since the county's inception in 1819 until 1931. In a coroner system the County Coroner was elected to office by the citizens of Jefferson County and was typically a lay person with no formal training in medicolegal death investigation.

On May 27, 1931, the office of County Coroner was abolished by Act of State Legislature. The office was subsequently reestablished with the position of County Coroner being an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and not an elected position by the citizens of the county. The Act referred to the coroner as the "Agent, County Commission, as Coroner".

In January 1977, by Act of State Legislature, the office of County Coroner and the coroner system in Jefferson County was abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) was established. This was the end of the coroner system and the beginning of the medical examiner system in Jefferson County. The new law required the Coroner/Medical Examiner of Jefferson County to be a board certified forensic pathologist.

On July 26, 1979, pursuant to State of Alabama Act 79-454, the office of County Coroner in Jefferson County was once again abolished and the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office (JCCMEO) as it is known today was established. As with the previous Act, the new Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner Act set forth that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be an appointed position by the Jefferson County Commission and that the Coroner/Medical Examiner shall be a board certified forensic pathologist. The act also established a new regulatory commission, the "Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Commission", to promulgate rules and regulations governing the reviews and investigations of the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office and the conditions upon which such investigations shall be conducted. The act also retained in the office all the authority vested in coroners by the state laws of Alabama.

The Coroner retained a physical office on the second floor of the [Jefferson County Courthouse](#) and at the [Bessemer Courthouse](#) until 1977, when at that time both offices were consolidated and moved to its current location at [Cooper Green Mercy Health Services](#).

Medicolegal Death Investigation

A medicolegal death investigation is an official investigation or inquest into the manner, cause, and circumstances surrounding death. As it applies a medicolegal death investigation is a combination of medicine and law, with a purpose to answer the questions of death. The answers obtained in these investigations can assist with criminal and civil litigation, insurance claims, the distribution of estates, and the health and safety of the public. These investigations are performed by trained medicolegal death investigators (MDIs) and can represent multiple different disciplines. The MDI investigators can be a coroner, deputy coroner, forensic pathologist, morgue technologist, forensic odontologist, forensic anthropologist, forensic toxicologist, or a criminalist.

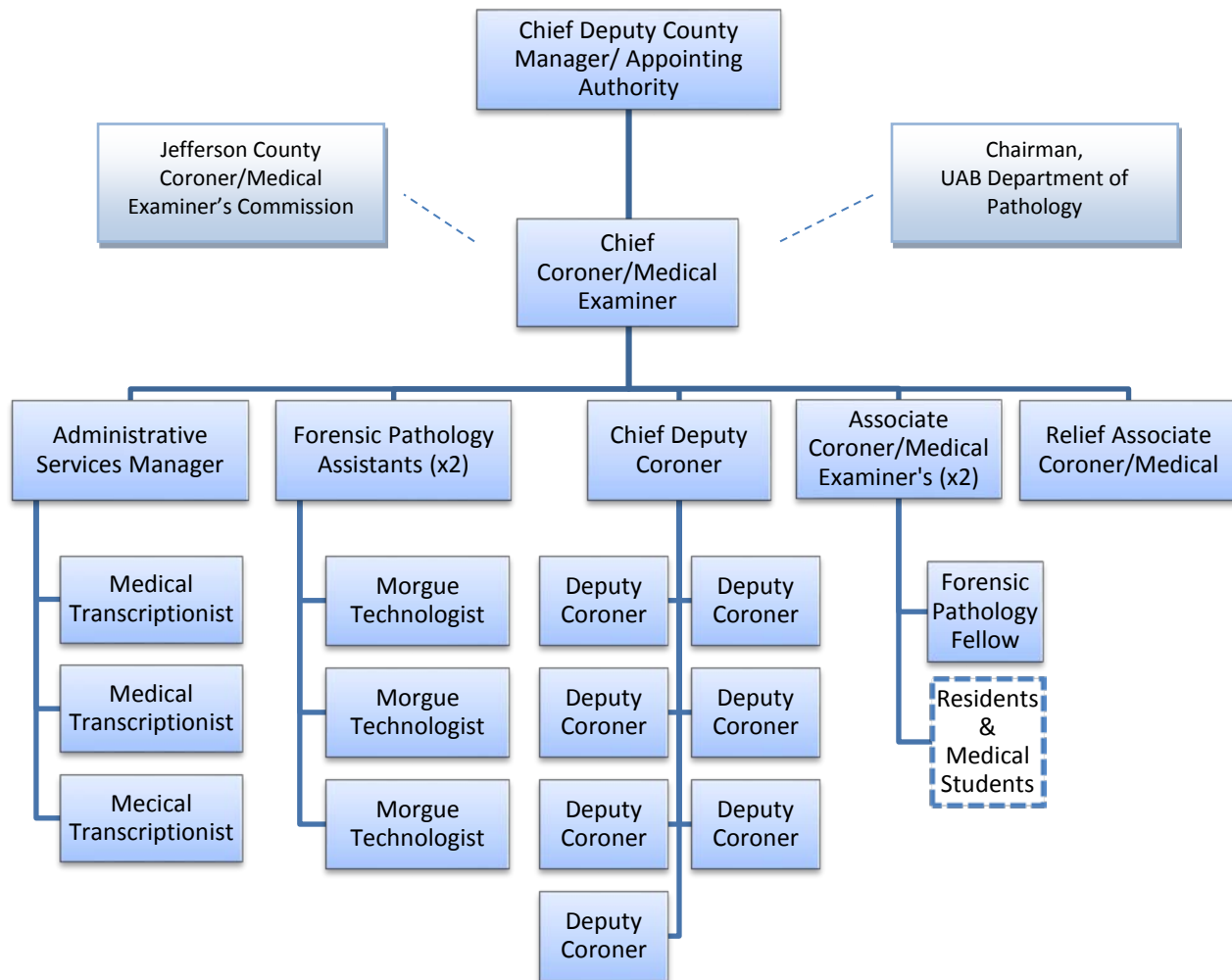
At the JCCMEO these investigations are begun by deputy coroners who are formally trained MDIs. When a death is reported to the JCCMEO it is the responsibility of the deputy coroner to determine if the death falls under the statutory jurisdiction of the JCCMEO and if so, will jurisdiction be assumed or declined. Pursuant to State of Alabama Code 11-5-35 (*Act 2006-581, p. 1527, §6.*) the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office only has the authority to certify a death if the offense, occurrence, or incident that ultimately resulted in the death occurred within the geographical boundaries of Jefferson County, Alabama. Therefore, if the sequence of events that ultimately resulted in the death began in a county or state other than Jefferson County, Alabama then the coroner's office of that county should be notified of the death.

Declined Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction is declined if investigators (i.e. law enforcement, paramedics, and/or medical staff, and the deputy coroner) find no signs of foul play, injury, and/or evidence of current substance abuse associated with the death and; if the decedent has a documented significant medical history and is currently under the care of a primary care physician.

Assumed Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction is assumed if there is suspicion of criminal violence or criminal neglect, when death occurs in suspicious or unusual circumstances, when deaths are thought to result from trauma or violence, in any prison or penal institution, when in police custody, or a death due to disease constituting a hazard to public health when requested in writing by the County Health Officer.

If jurisdiction is to be assumed a deputy coroner in most cases responds to the scene of the death to begin the investigation. The decedent is transported from the scene to the JCCMEO for examination, which is usually completed within 24 hours from the time of death by one of the forensic pathologist on staff. An examination/autopsy is necessary to accurately determine cause, manner, and circumstances surrounding the death, so to satisfy statutory requirements, for the good of public health, and to assist with potential civil and criminal litigation. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the death and the evidence that is needed to substantiate the death an autopsy may not be performed in every case, but rather a less invasive external examination is performed. The final examination/autopsy report is usually available 4-6 weeks after the date of death.

Organizational Chart



Section 1: Summary Data

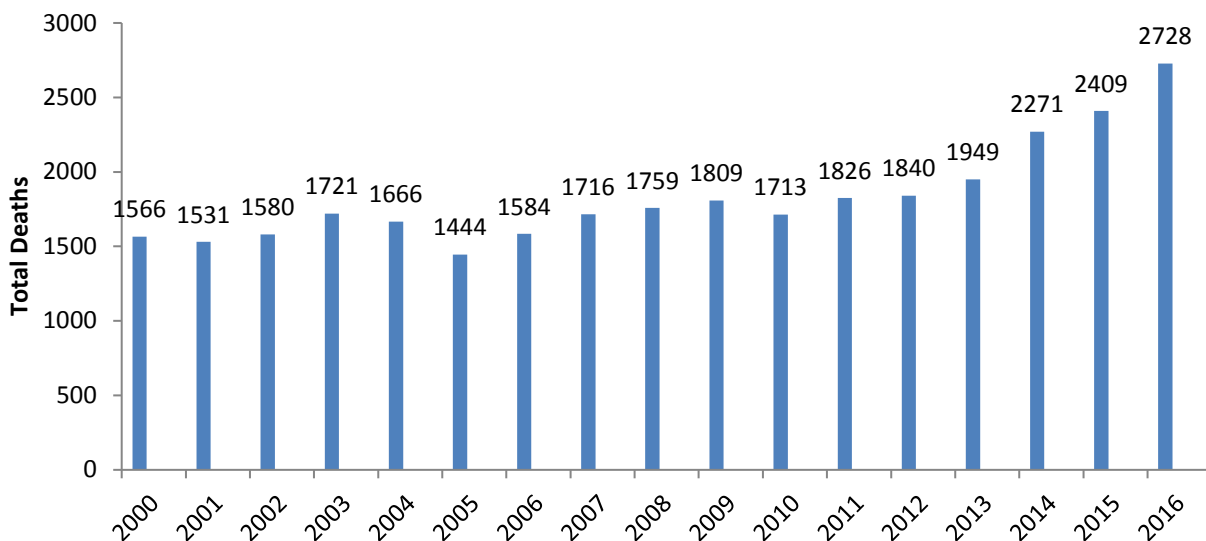
2015-2016 Comparison

Table 1.1: previous year comparison data.

	2015	2016
Total cases reported to the JCCMEO:	2,409	2,728
Jurisdiction Assumed:	906	924
Accident	370	436
Homicide	143	152
Natural	268	238
Suicide	95	76
Undetermined	30	19
Stillborn	0	3
Jurisdiction Declined:	1,503	1,804
Natural	775	828
Cremation	330	445
Hospice	303	422
Safekeeping	95	105
Non-human	0	4
Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases:	155	196
Total bodies transported by JCCMEO:	1,001	1,029
Examination	906	924
Safekeeping	95	105
Total Examinations:	906	924
Autopsies	660	662
Externals	246	261
No examination performed	0	1
Organ/Tissue procurements:		
Organs/tissues	12	25
Corneas	14	27
Toxicology performed:		
Yes	885	886
No	21	38
Total scenes visited by investigators:	675	653
Unclaimed bodies (county burials):	37	38
Exhumations:	8	0
Unidentified remains (cumulative total):	51	50

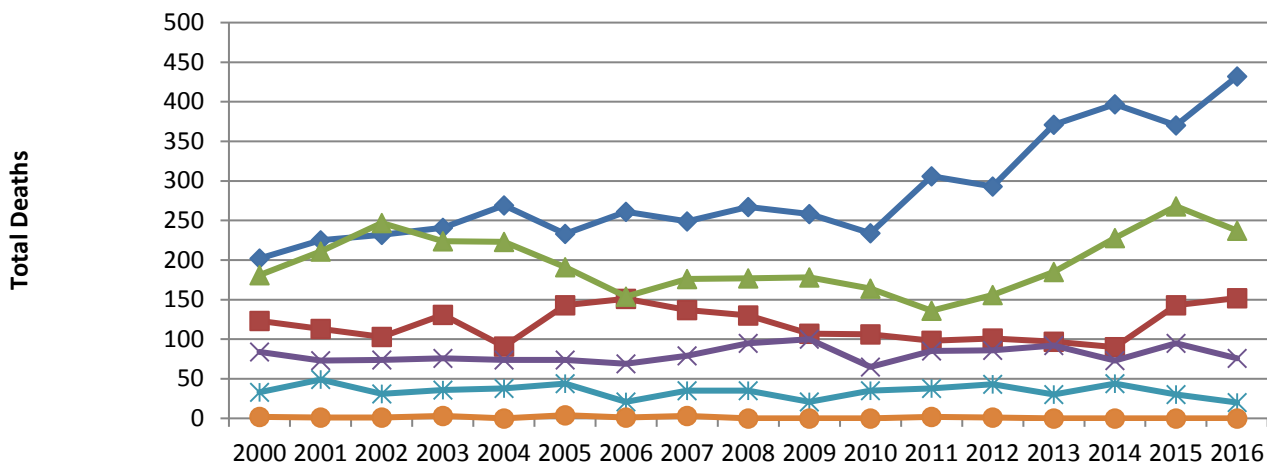
Historical Summary: Year of Death, 2000-2016

Figure 1.1: represents the total number of cases reported to the JCCMEO by year of death.



Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2000-2016

Figure 1.2: represents the total number of cases by manner of death, includes only Assumed cases.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
◆ Accident	202	225	232	241	269	233	261	249	267	258	234	306	293	371	397	370	432
■ Homicide	123	113	103	131	91	143	151	137	130	107	106	98	101	97	90	143	152
▲ Natural	181	211	247	224	223	191	154	176	177	178	164	136	156	185	228	268	237
× Suicide	84	73	74	76	74	74	69	79	95	100	65	85	86	92	73	95	76
* Undetermined	33	49	31	36	38	44	21	35	35	21	35	38	43	30	44	30	20
● Pending	2	1	1	3	0	4	1	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0

Section 2: 2016 Total Case Data

General Statistics and Notable Trends

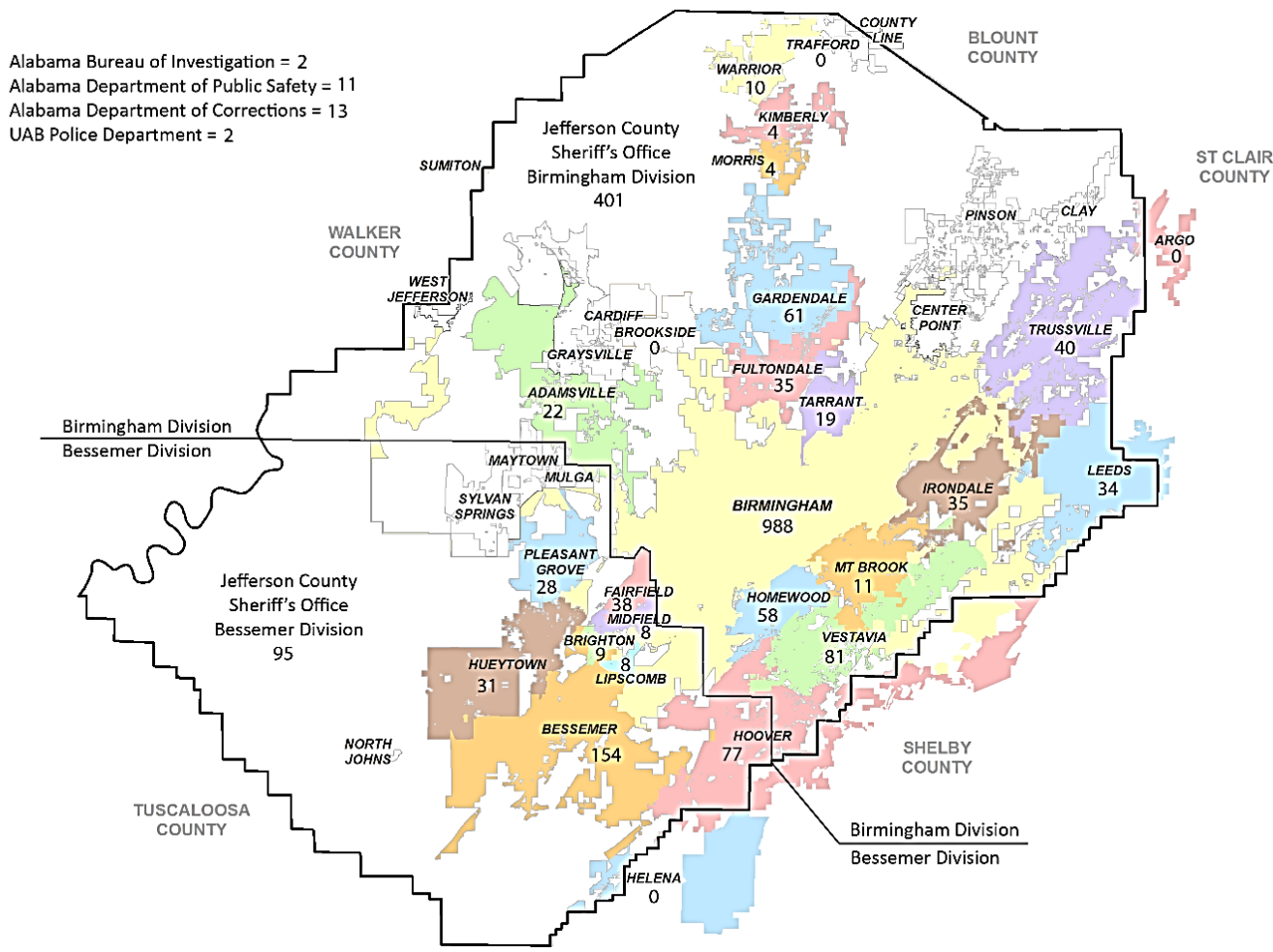
There was a 13.2% increase in the total number of deaths reported to the JCCMEO this past year, from 2,409 deaths in 2015 to 2,728 deaths in 2016.

There was a 1.9% increase in the total number of deaths where jurisdiction was assumed, from 906 cases in 2015 to 924 cases in 2016; resulting in a proportional 1.8% increase in the number of examinations and the number of bodies transported.

The total number of homicide and accidental deaths increased in 2016 compared to 2015; while natural, suicide, and undetermined deaths all decreased in 2016.

Map: Total Deaths Reported by Law Enforcement Agency and Jurisdiction, 2016

Figure 2.1: N=2,279, represents total deaths reported, by law enforcement jurisdiction; includes Assumed, Declined, Hospice, and Safekeeping cases.



Total Deaths Reported by Law Enforcement Agency and Jurisdiction, 2016

Table 2.1: N=2,279, represents the total deaths reported to the JCCMEO. Table includes Assumed, Declined, Hospice, Safekeeping, and Non-human cases and, excludes Cremations which are reported to the JCCMEO by funeral homes, crematories, and mortuaries.

<u>Law Enforcement Agency</u>	<u>Assumed</u>	<u>Declined</u>	<u>Hospice</u>	<u>Safekeeping</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alabama Bureau of Investigation	2	0	0	0	2
Alabama Dept. of Public Safety	11	0	0	0	11
Alabama Dept. of Corrections	13	0	0	0	13
Adamsville Police Department	10	7	5	0	22
Argo Police Department	0	0	0	0	0
Bessemer Police Department	53	59	33	9	154
Birmingham Police Department	394	380	157	57	988
Brighton Police Department	6	3	0	0	9
Brookside Police Department	0	0	0	0	0
Fairfield Police Department	20	11	7	0	38
Fultondale Police Department	20	7	8	0	35
Gardendale Police Department	18	14	27	2	61
Helena Police Department	0	0	0	0	0
Homewood Police Department	21	25	10	2	58
Hoover Police Department	40	23	12	2	77
Hueytown Police Department	12	11	7	1	31
Irondale Police Department	15	12	3	5	35
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	196	177	111	12	496
Kimberly Police Department	1	2	1	0	4
Leeds Police Department	6	15	13	0	34
Lipscomb Police Department	4	3	0	1	8
Midfield Police Department	6	1	0	1	8
Morris Police Department	3	1	0	0	4
Mountain Brook Police Department	5	5	1	0	11
Pleasant Grove Police Department	9	12	5	2	28
Tarrant Police Department	10	9	0	0	19
Trafford Police Department	0	0	0	0	0
Trussville Police Department	18	16	6	0	40
UAB Police Department	1	0	0	1	2
Vestavia Hills Police Department	24	35	13	9	81
Warrior Police Department	6	0	3	1	10
Totals:	924	828	422	105	2,279

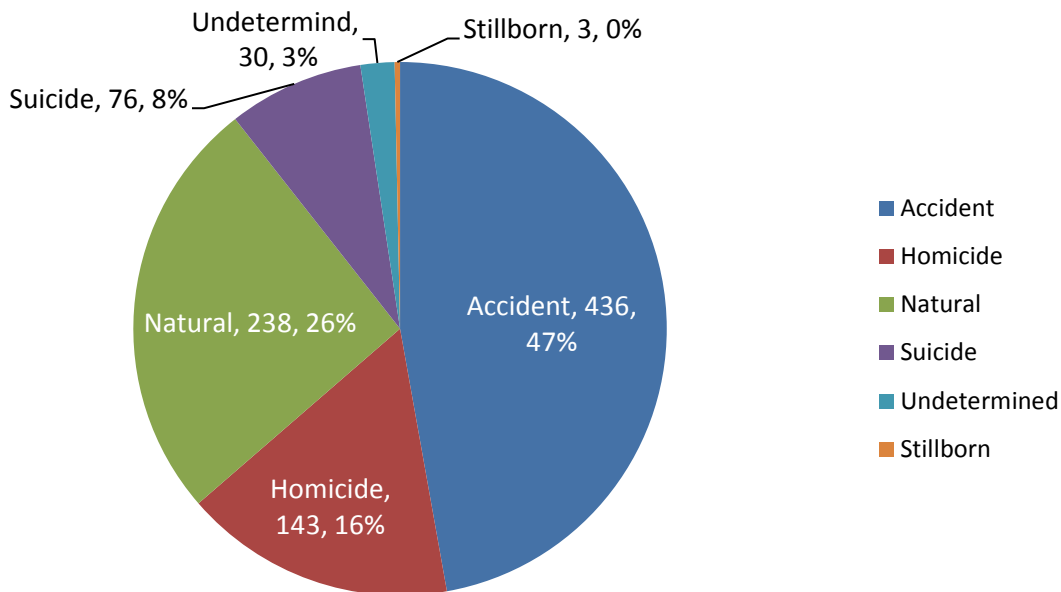
Total Assumed Cases by Law Enforcement Agency and Manner of Death, 2016

Table 2.2: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by law enforcement agency and manner of death. Pursuant to the State of Alabama Vital Records laws, stillborn deaths are not assigned a manner of death.

<u>Law Enforcement Agency</u>	<u>Accident</u>	<u>Homicide</u>	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Suicide</u>	<u>Undetermined</u>	<u>Stillborn</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alabama Bureau of Investigation	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Alabama Dept. of Public Safety	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Alabama Dept. of Corrections	0	0	12	1	0	0	13
Adamsville Police Department	7	0	2	1	0	0	10
Argo Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bessemer Police Department	28	7	12	4	2	0	53
Birmingham Police Department	175	101	90	20	7	1	394
Brighton Police Department	3	1	1	0	1	0	6
Brookside Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairfield Police Department	5	10	3	1	1	0	20
Fultondale Police Department	12	2	6	0	0	0	20
Gardendale Police Department	7	1	8	1	1	0	18
Helena Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homewood Police Department	10	4	6	1	0	0	21
Hoover Police Department	21	2	12	4	0	1	40
Hueytown Police Department	6	1	2	3	0	0	12
Irondale Police Department	7	2	4	1	1	0	15
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	99	12	58	23	4	0	196
Kimberly Police Department	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Leeds Police Department	5	1	0	0	0	0	6
Lipscomb Police Department	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Midfield Police Department	3	1	2	0	0	0	6
Morris Police Department	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Mountain Brook Police Department	1	0	2	2	0	0	5
Pleasant Grove Police Department	4	1	0	3	0	1	9
Tarrant Police Department	3	2	3	1	1	0	10
Trafford Police Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trussville Police Department	9	1	3	5	0	0	18
UAB Police Department	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Vestavia Hills Police Department	15	0	7	2	0	0	24
Warrior Police Department	1	0	4	1	0	0	6
Totals:	436	152	238	76	19	3	924

Percentage of Assumed Cases by Manner of Death, 2016

Figure 2.2: N=924, represents number and percentage of cases by manner of death, includes only Assumed jurisdiction.



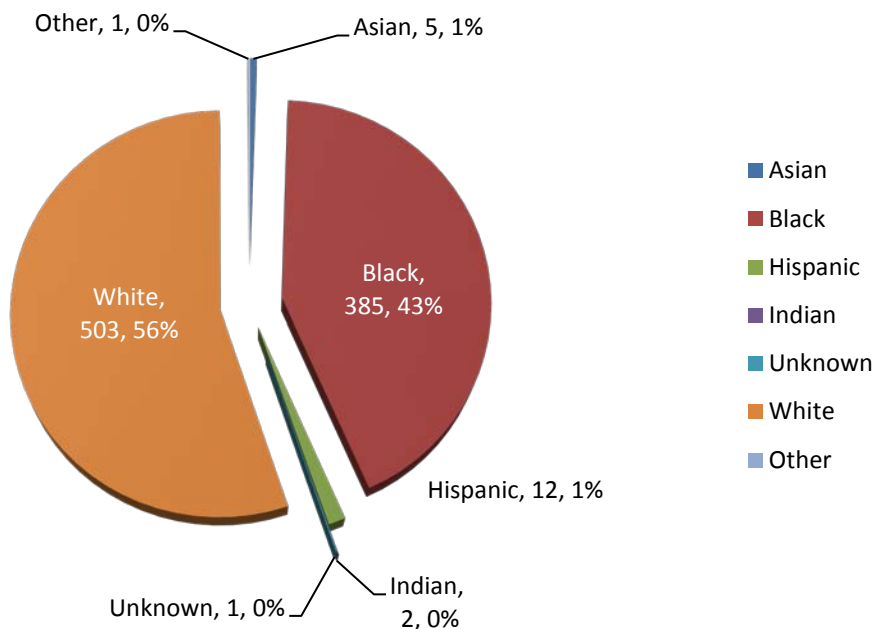
Total Assumed Cases by Manner of Death and Type of Examination, 2016

Table 2.3: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by manner of death and type of examination.

Examination	Accident / %	Homicide / %	Natural / %	Suicide / %	Undetermined / %	Stillborn / %	Total
Autopsy	323 / 74.0%	151 / 99.3%	156 / 65.5%	12 / 15.7%	17 / 93.3	3 / 100%	662
External	113 / 25.9%	1 / 0.6%	82 / 34.4%	63 / 82.8%	2 / 6.6%	0 / 0%	261
No Exam	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	1 / 1.3%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	1
Total	436	152	238	76	19	3	924

Total Assumed Cases by Race, 2016

Figure 2.3: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by race, with totals and percentages.



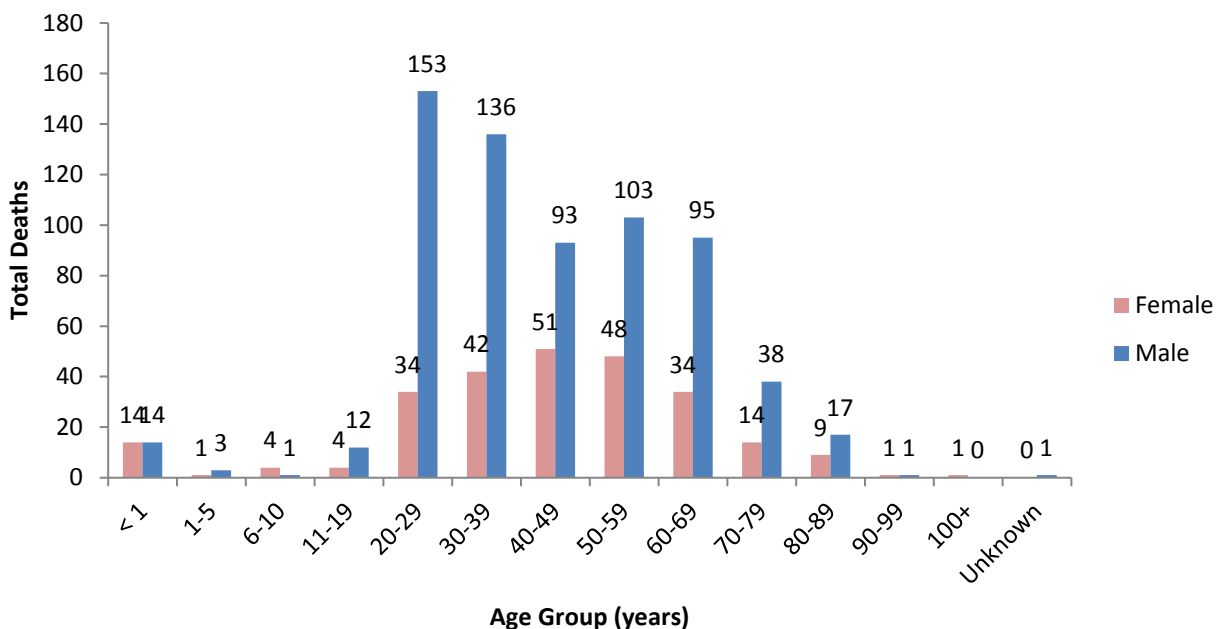
Total Assumed Cases by Race and Manner of Death, 2016

Table 2.4: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by race and manner of death.

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn	Total
Asian	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
Black	148	126	96	14	11	1	396
Hispanic	7	3	2	0	0	0	12
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
White	278	22	137	62	8	2	509
Total	436	152	238	76	19	3	924

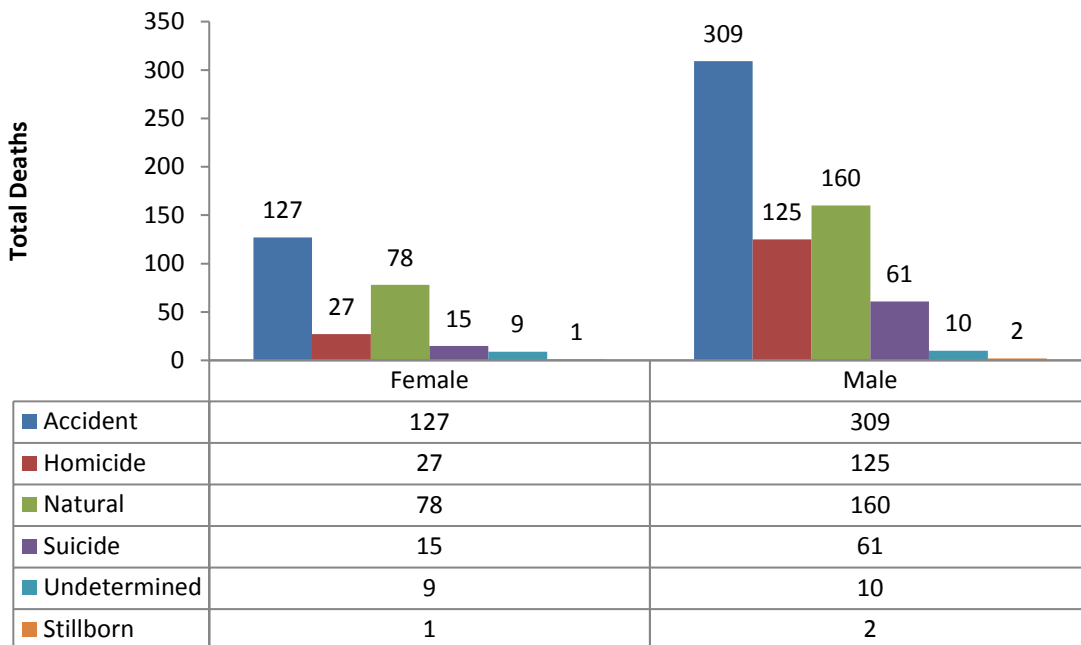
Total Assumed Cases by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 2.4: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by gender and age group.



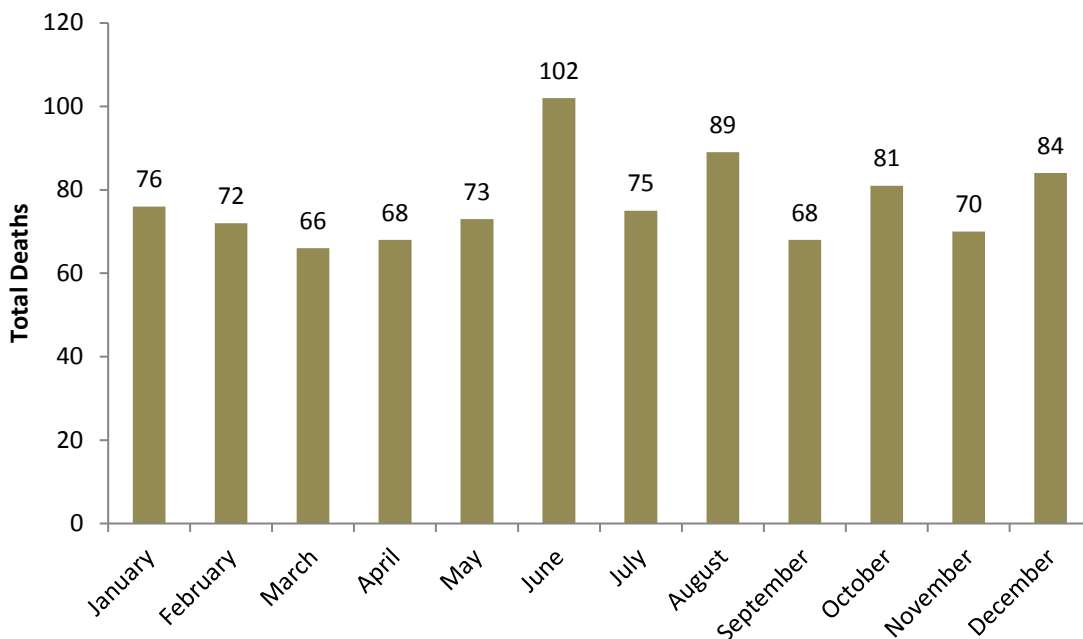
Total Assumed Cases by Gender and Manner of Death, 2016

Figure 2.5: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by gender and manner of death.



Total Assumed Cases by Month of Death, 2016

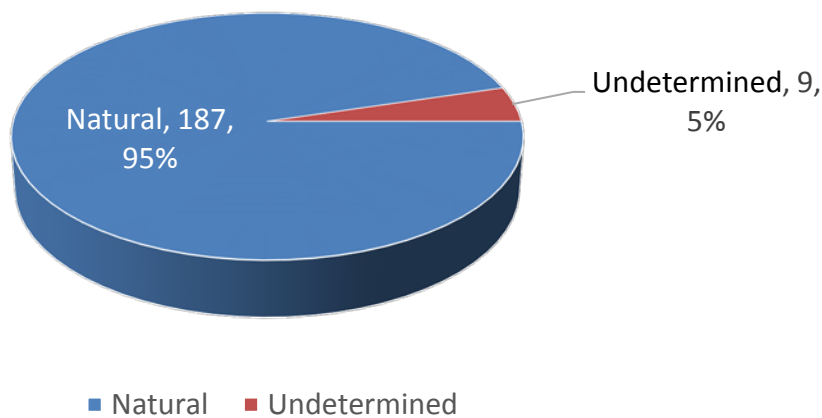
Figure 2.6: N=924, represents all Assumed cases by month of death.



Death Certificate Reviews of Declined Cases, 2016

Figure 2.7: N=196, represents all death certificate reviews (D.C.R.) of declined jurisdiction cases, by manner of death.

Death Certificate Reviews: Manners of Death



Section 3: Manner of Death

Accident

Accidental deaths accounted for 47.1% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016, and is the largest percentage of all manners of death.

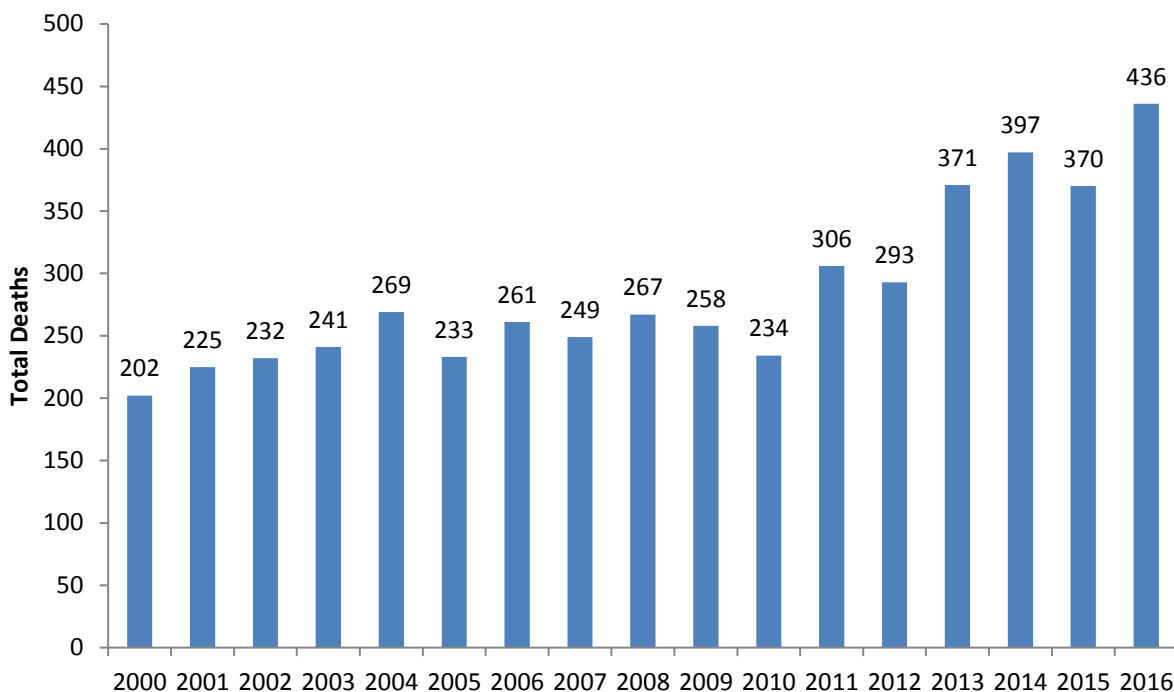
There was a 17.8% increase in the total number of accidental deaths, from 370 deaths in 2015 to 436 deaths in 2016, and is the highest year since 2000.

Drug deaths were the most common cause of accidental death in 2016 accounting for 54.8% of the deaths, followed by motor vehicle deaths at 27.9% of the deaths.

The most common race was white representing 63.7% of the accidental deaths, while male was the most common gender representing 70.8% of the accidental deaths.

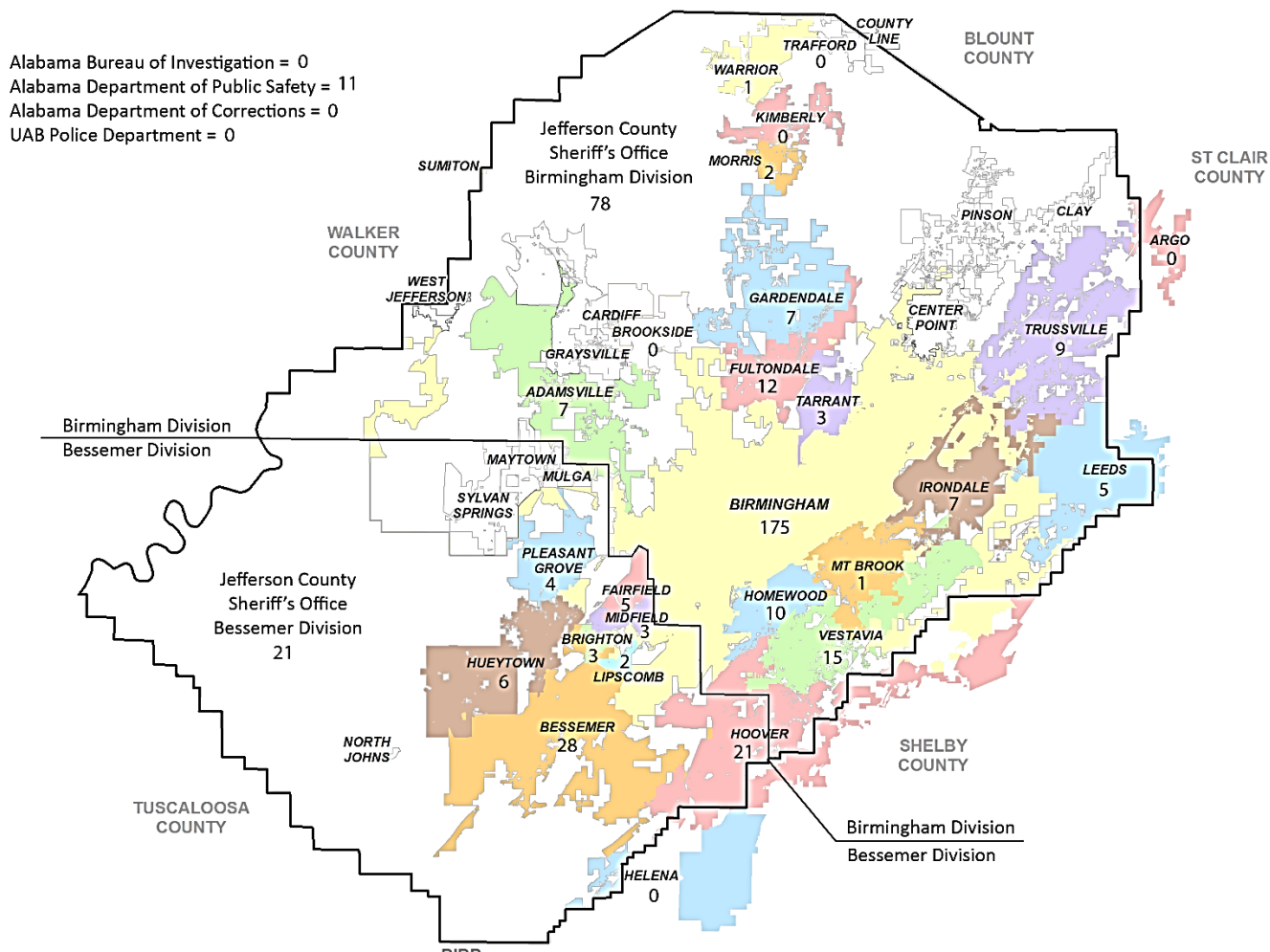
Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 3.1: represents all accidental deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



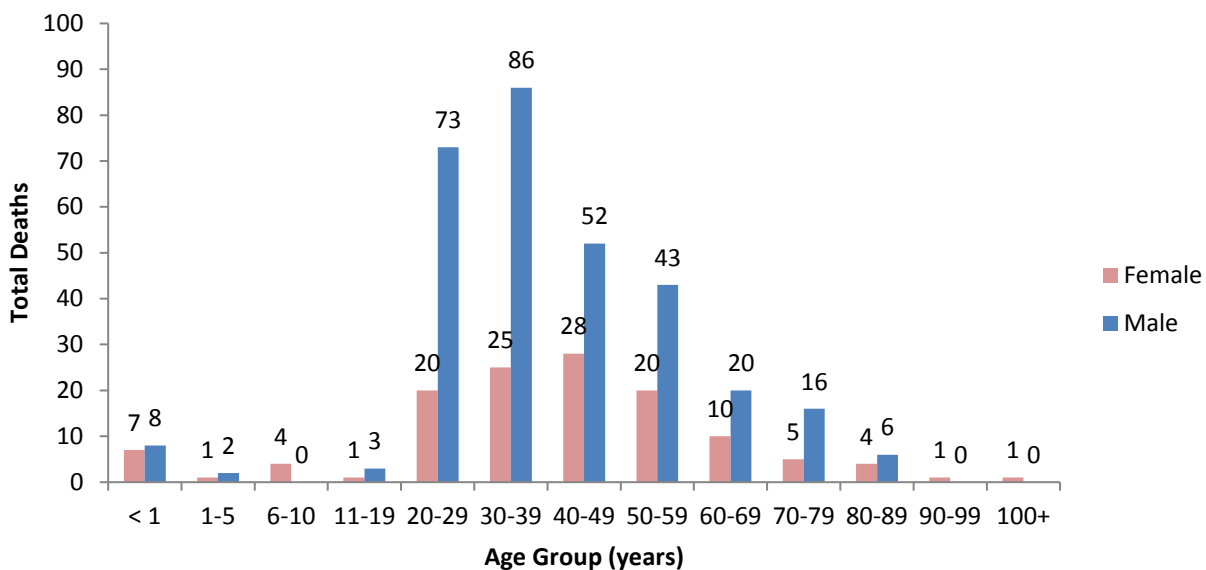
Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 3.2: N=436, represents all accidental deaths by law enforcement agency.



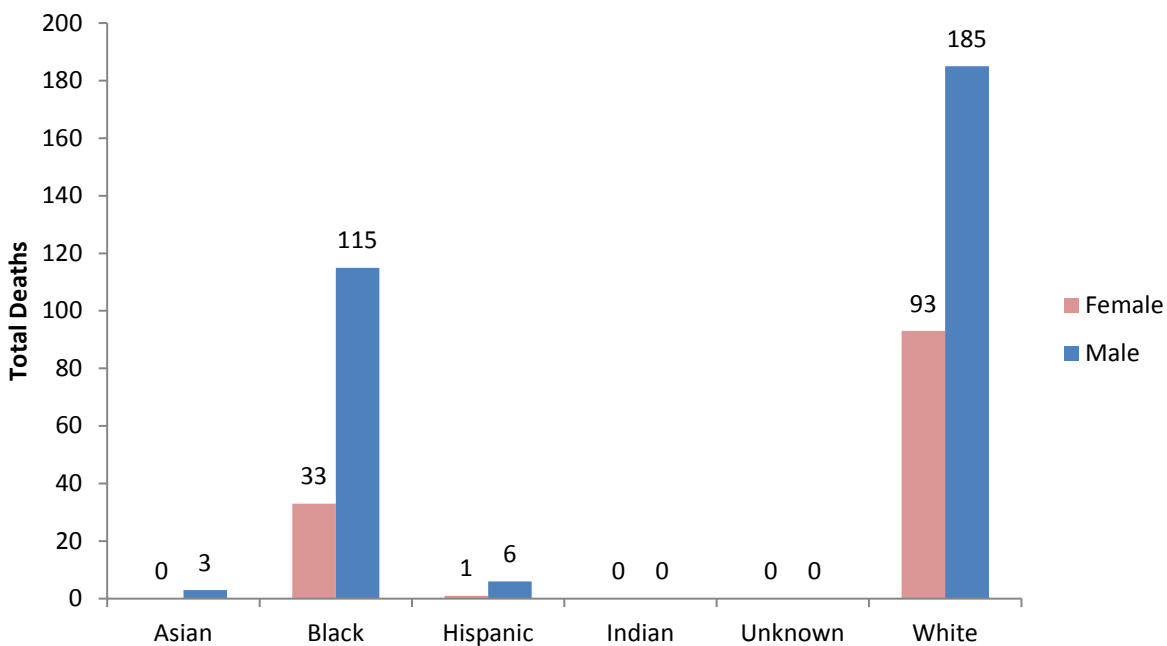
Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 3.3: N=436, represents all accidental deaths by gender and age group.



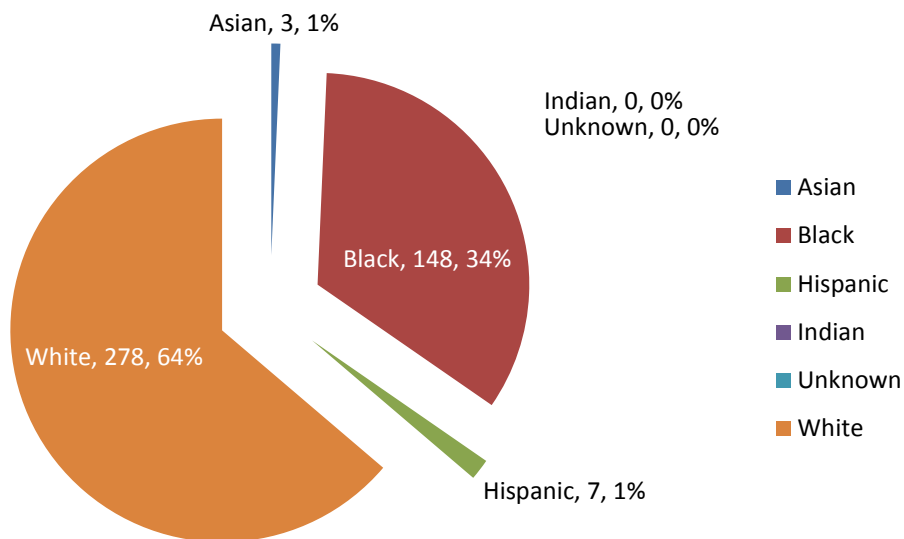
Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 3.4: N=436, represents all accidental deaths by gender and race.



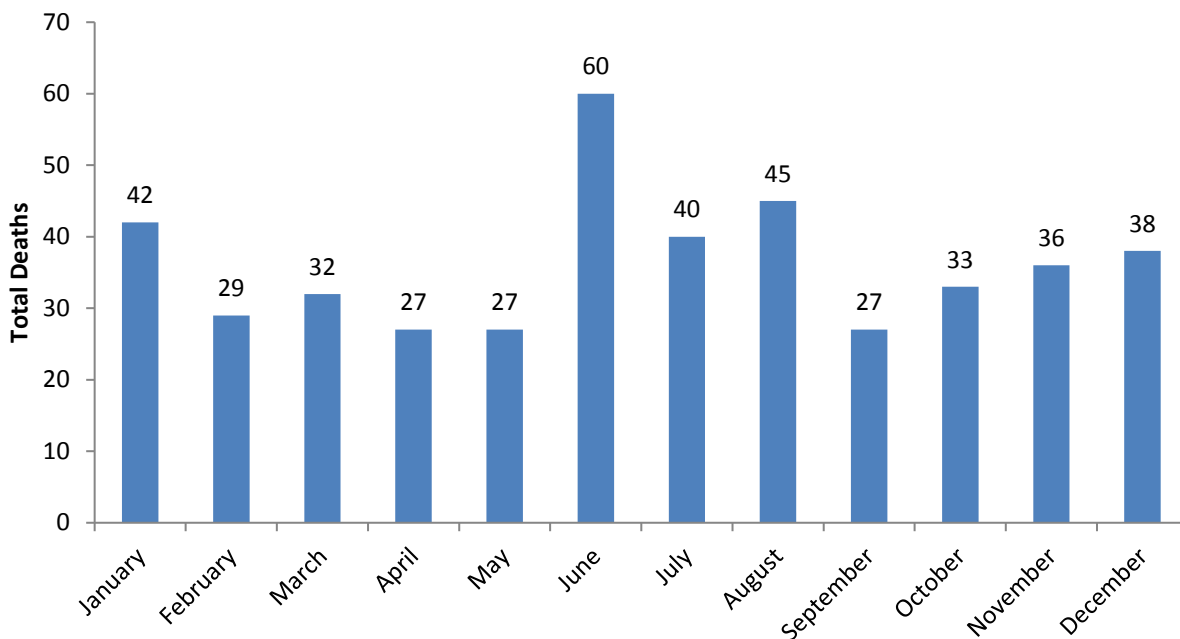
Percentage of Accidental Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 3.5: N=436, represents all accidental deaths by race.



Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 3.6: N=436, represents all Accidental deaths by month of death.



Total Number of Accidental Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 3.1: N=436, represents all Accidental deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Alcohol (ethanol)	5
Asphyxia:	
Air mattress	1
Bassinet	1
Cloth sleeve	1
Food	1
Machine	1
Mattress	1
Motor vehicle	2
Window	1
Blunt	
Stamp dye	1
Trash compactor	1
Unknown	2
Carbon Monoxide: Motor vehicle	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	10
Couch	2
Drowning:	
Bathtub	2
Creek	1
Pool	2
River	1
Drug:	
Illicit	174
Prescription medication	43
Prescription opioid	22
Fall:	
Couch	1
Driveway	1
Embankment	1
Floor	5
Ladder	1
Parking lot	1
Sidewalk	1
Stairs	3
Falling object: Tree	1
Fire:	
Apartment	2
Automobile	1
Home	15
Portable oxygen tank/open flame	1

Means of Death	Total
Firearm: Handgun	3
Motor vehicle:	
Bicycle	1
Single vehicle	56
Multiple vehicles	43
Train	3
Pedestrian:	
Motor vehicle	19
Train	0
Sharp: Glass	1
Total	436

Homicide

Homicides accounted for 16.45% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016.

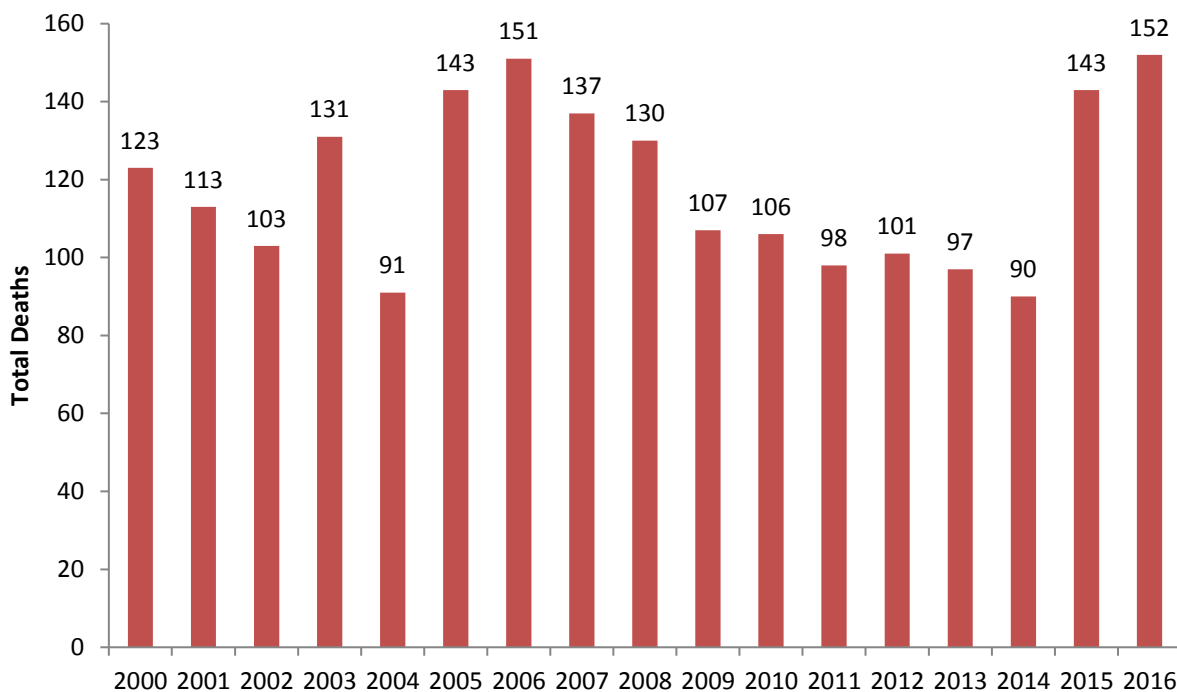
There was a 6.2% increase in the total number of homicides, from 143 deaths in 2015 to 152 deaths in 2016; and is the highest year since the year 2000.

Death due to firearms was the most common cause of homicide in 2016 accounting for 86.18% of the deaths, followed by sharp force at 4.60% and blunt force at 3.94% of the deaths.

The most common race was black representing 82.89% of the homicides, while males were the most common gender representing 82.23% of homicide deaths.

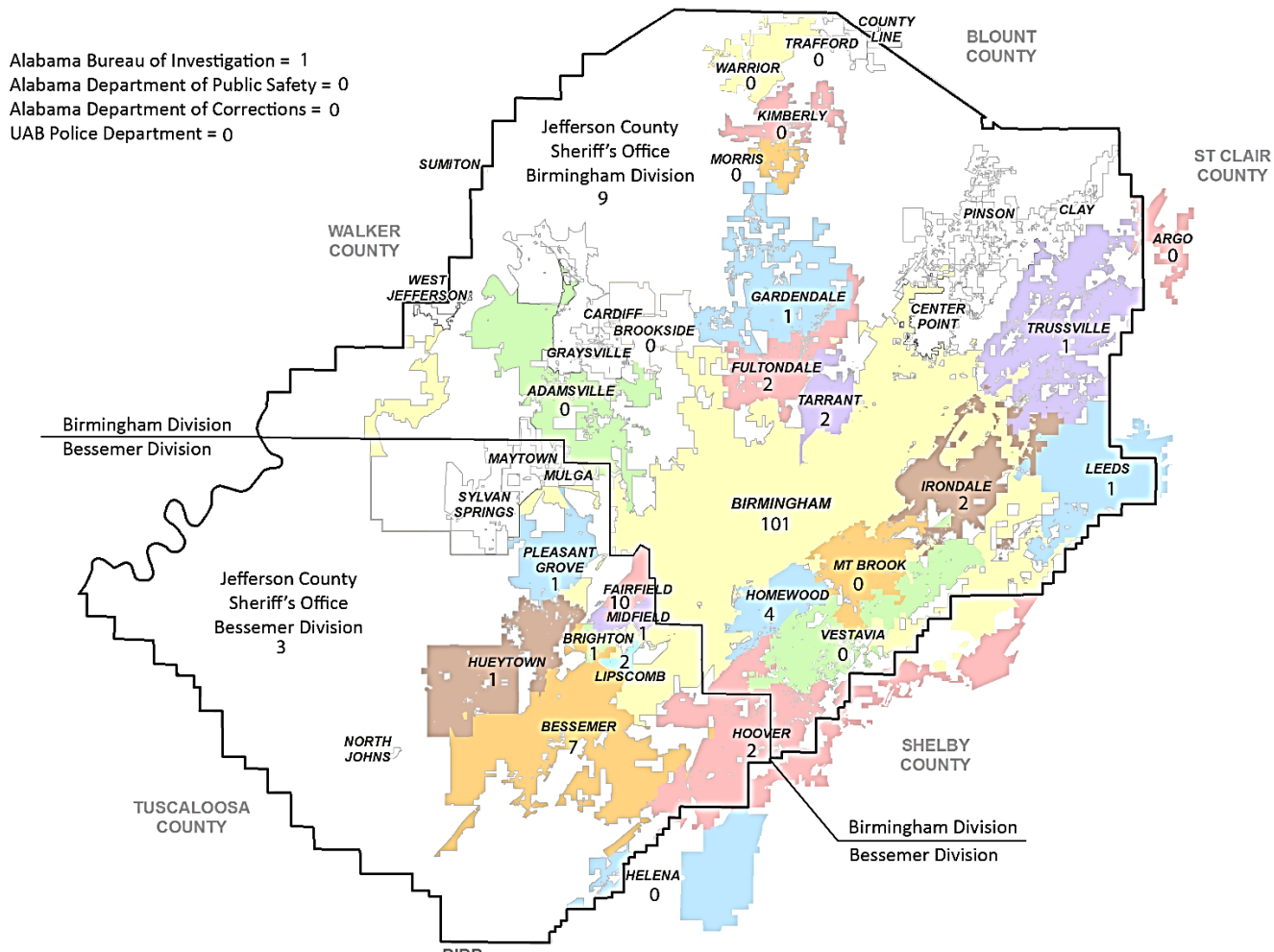
Total Number of Homicides by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 3.7: represents all homicides investigated by the JCCMEO.



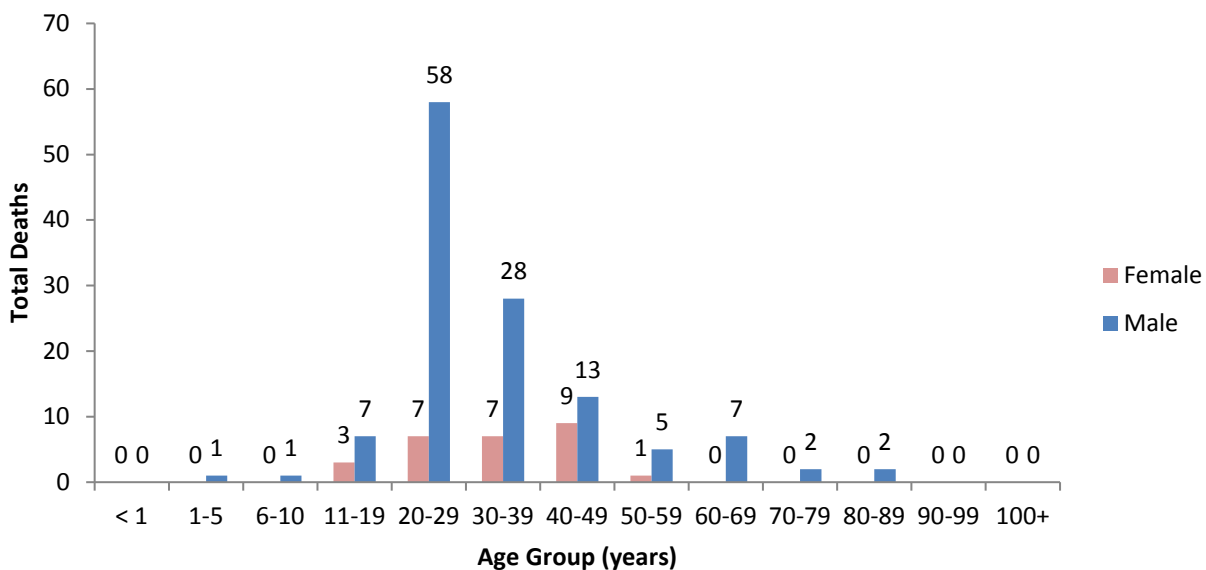
Total Number of Homicides by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 3.8: N=152, represents all homicide deaths by law enforcement agency.



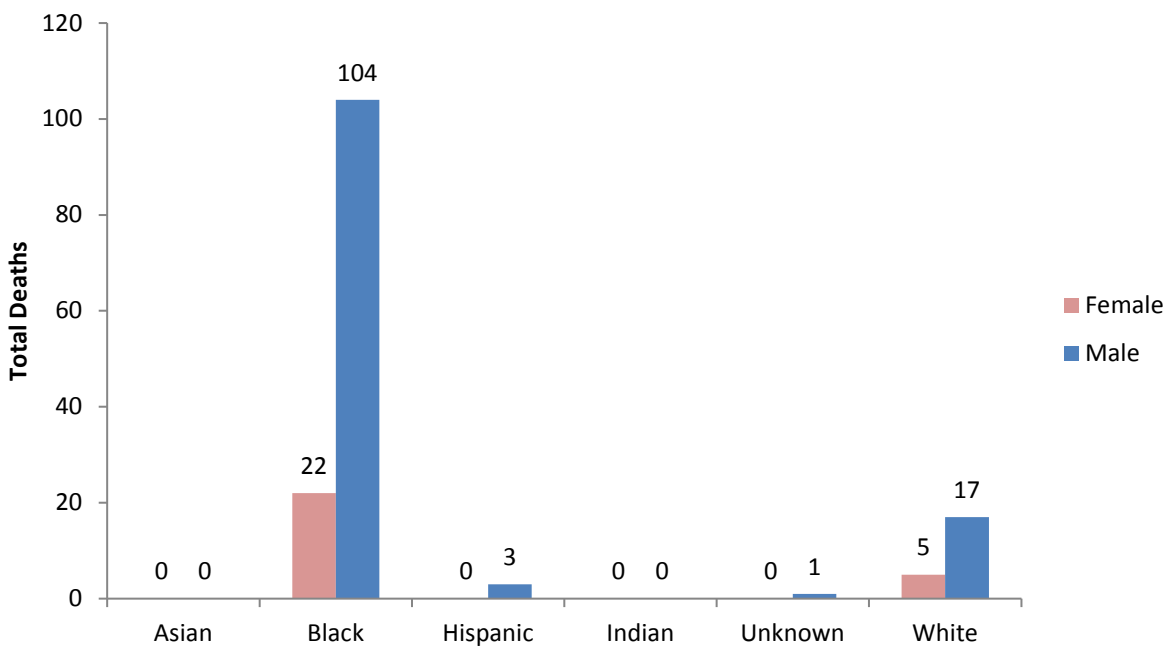
Total Number of Homicides by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 3.9: N=152, represents all homicides by gender and age group.



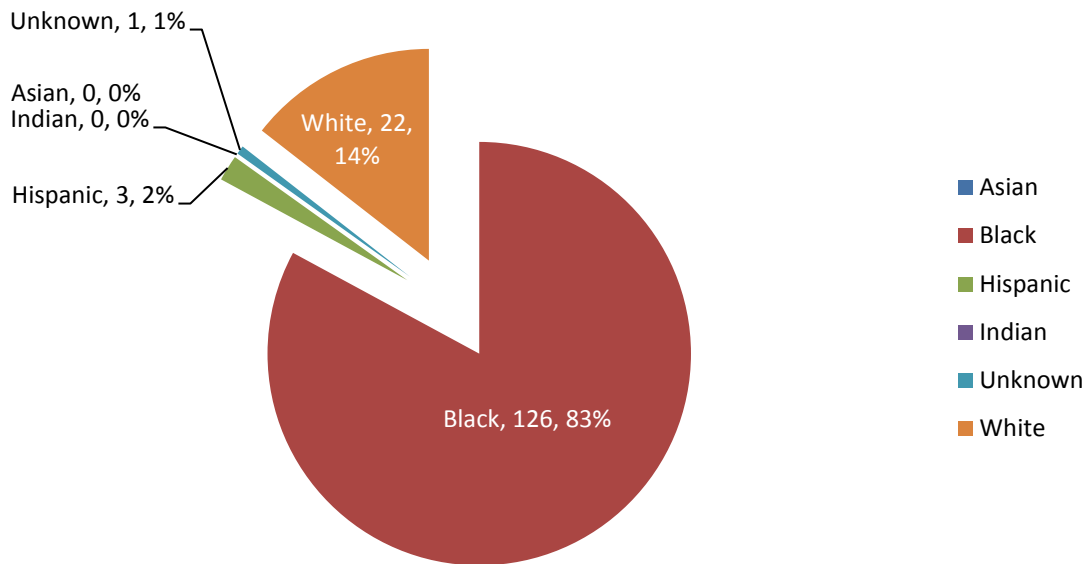
Total Number of Homicides by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 3.10: N=152, represents all homicides by gender and race.



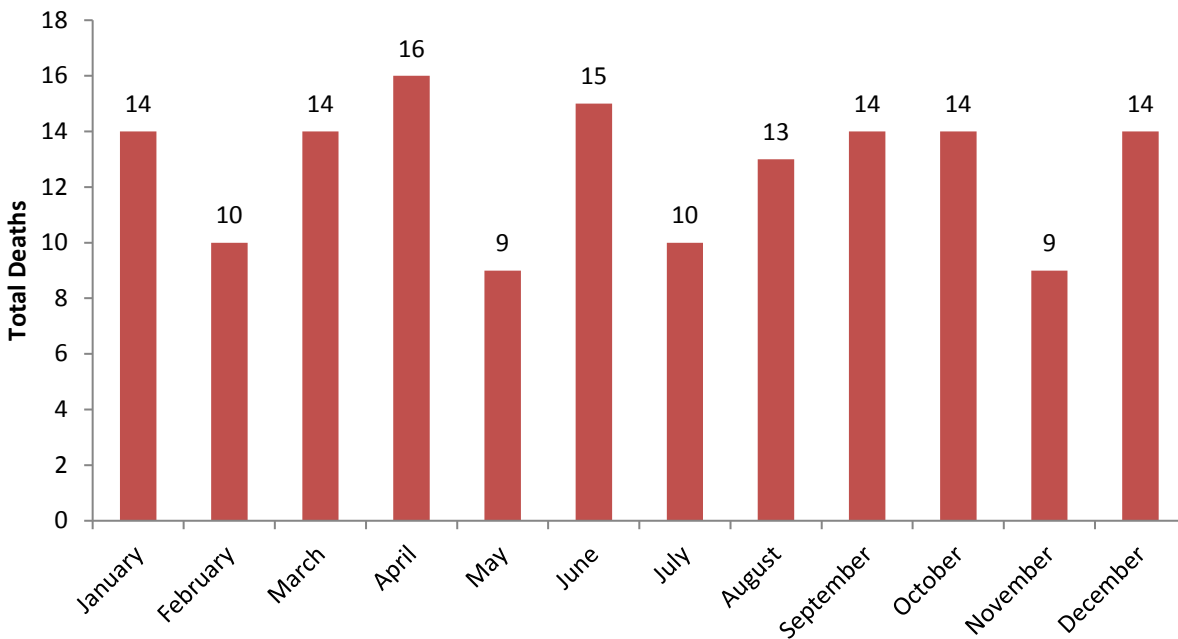
Percentage of Homicides by Race, 2016

Figure 3.11: N=152, represents all homicides by race.



Total Number of Homicides by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 3.12: N=152, represents all homicides by month of death.



Total Number of Homicides by Means of Death, 2016

Table 3.2: N=152, represents all Homicides by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Bandana/rope	1
Electrical cord	1
Unknown	2
Blunt:	
Fist	1
Stick	1
Unknown	3
Blunt/Sharp:	
Hammer/knife	1
Unknown	1
Physical exertion:	2
Fire:	1
Firearm:	
Handgun	59
Rifle	5
Shotgun	1
Unknown	66
Sharp:	
Knife	6
Unknown	1
Total	152

Natural

Natural deaths accounted for 25.7% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016.

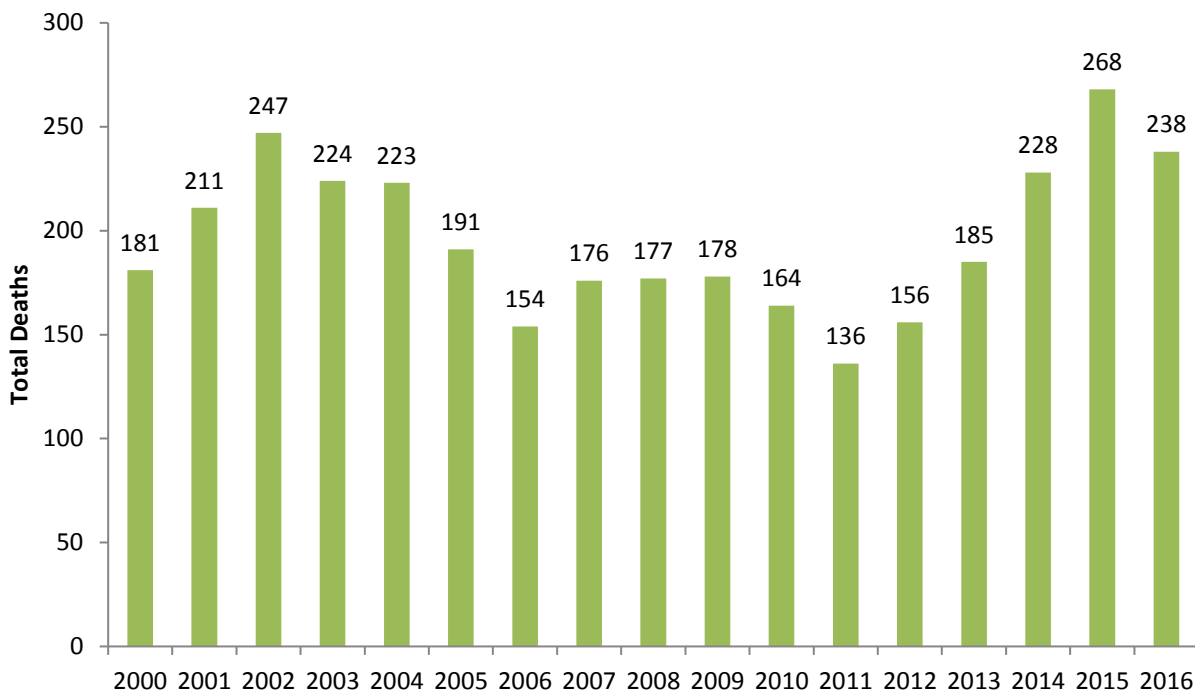
There was an 11.19% decrease in the total number of natural deaths, from 268 deaths in 2015 to 238 deaths in 2016; ending a four year increase in natural deaths that began in 2011 and, in the past 15 years 2016 is the second highest year.

Deaths due to heart disease were the most common cause of natural death in 2016 accounting for 56.3% of the deaths.

The most common race was white representing 57.5% of the natural deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 67.2% of natural deaths.

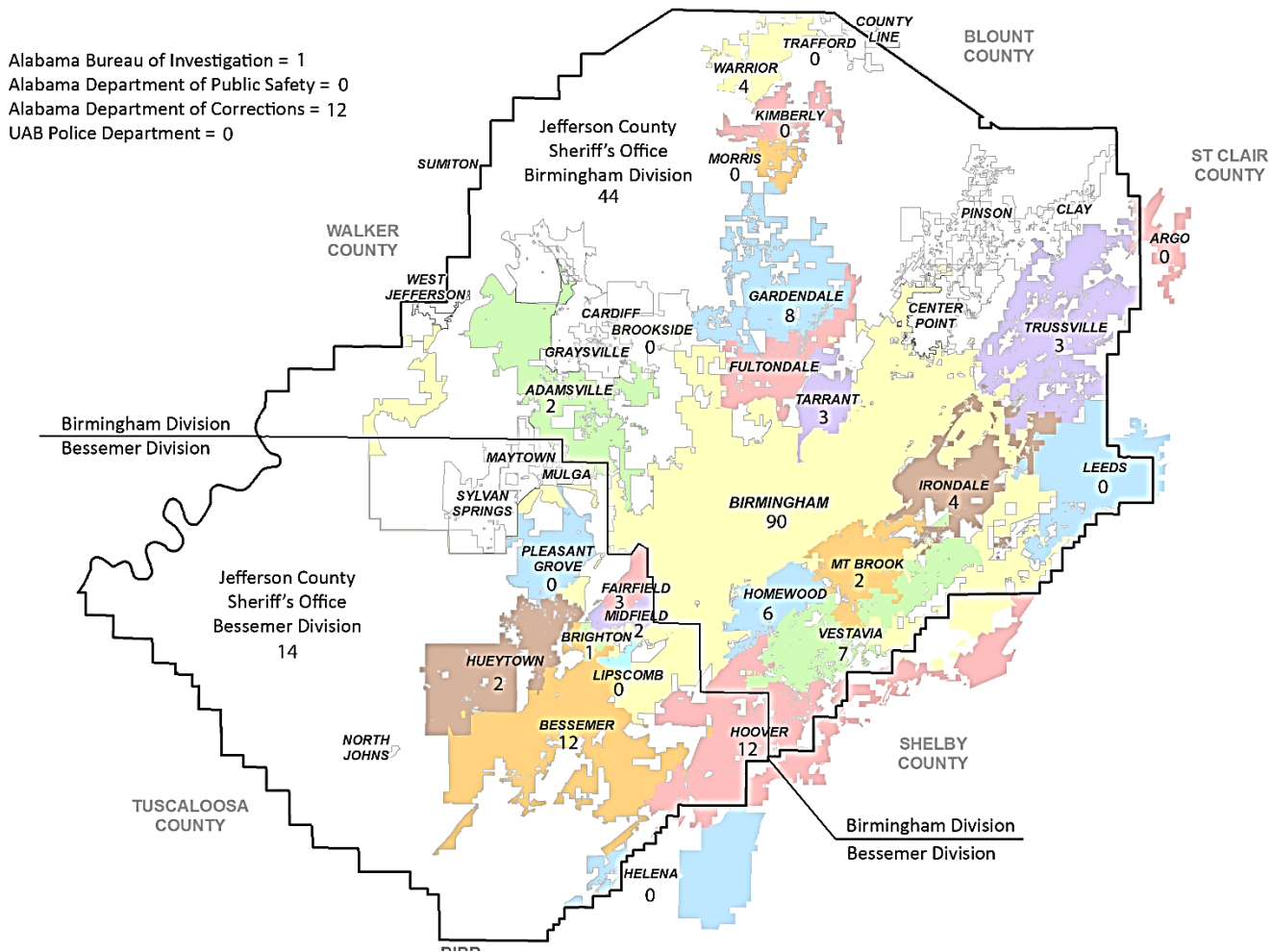
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 3.13: represents all natural deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



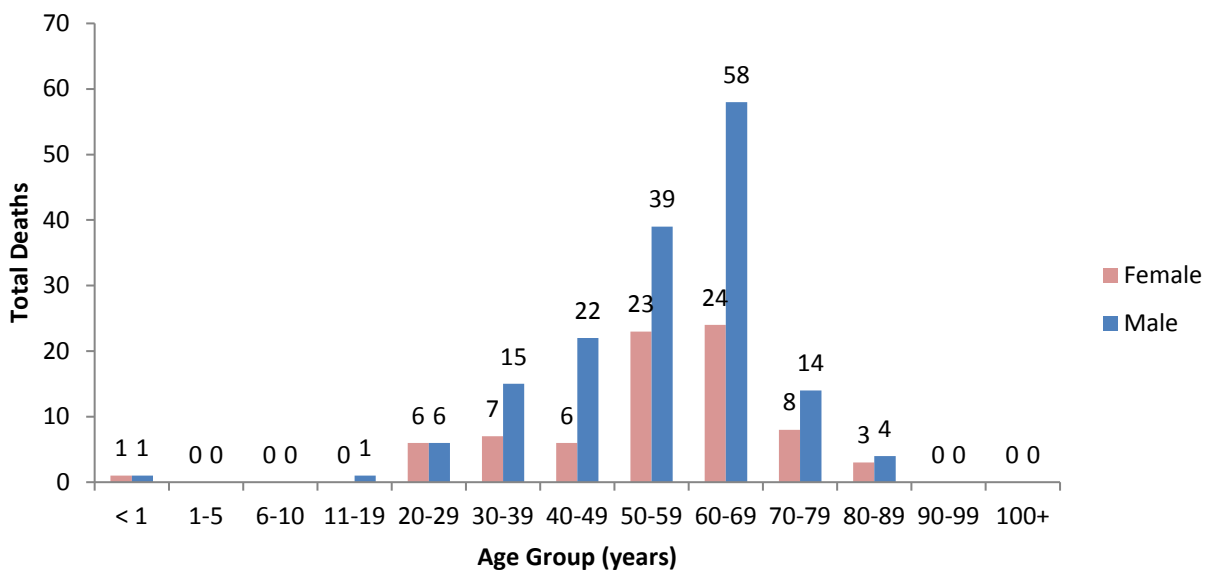
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 3.14: N=238, represents all natural deaths by law enforcement agency.



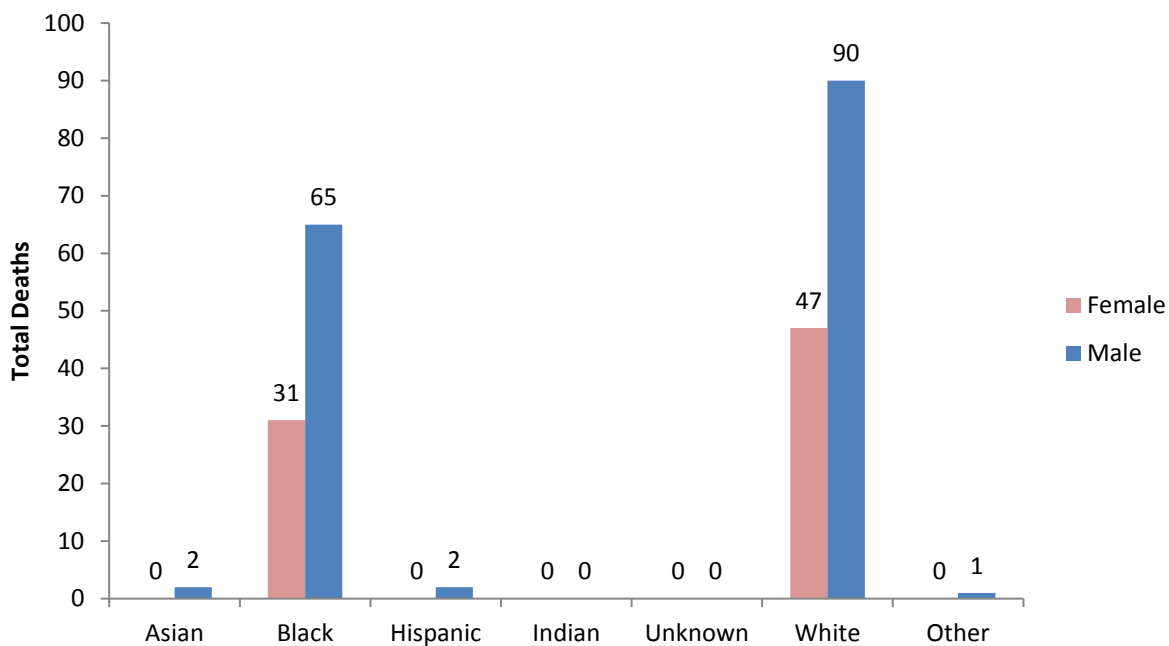
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 3.15: N=238, represents all natural deaths by gender and age group.



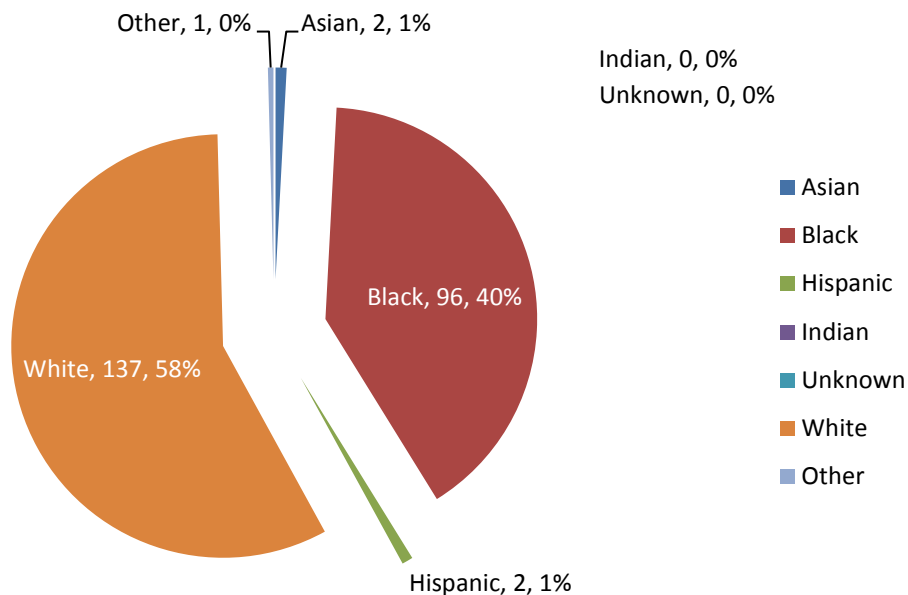
Total Number of Natural Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 3.16: N=238, represents all natural deaths by gender and race.



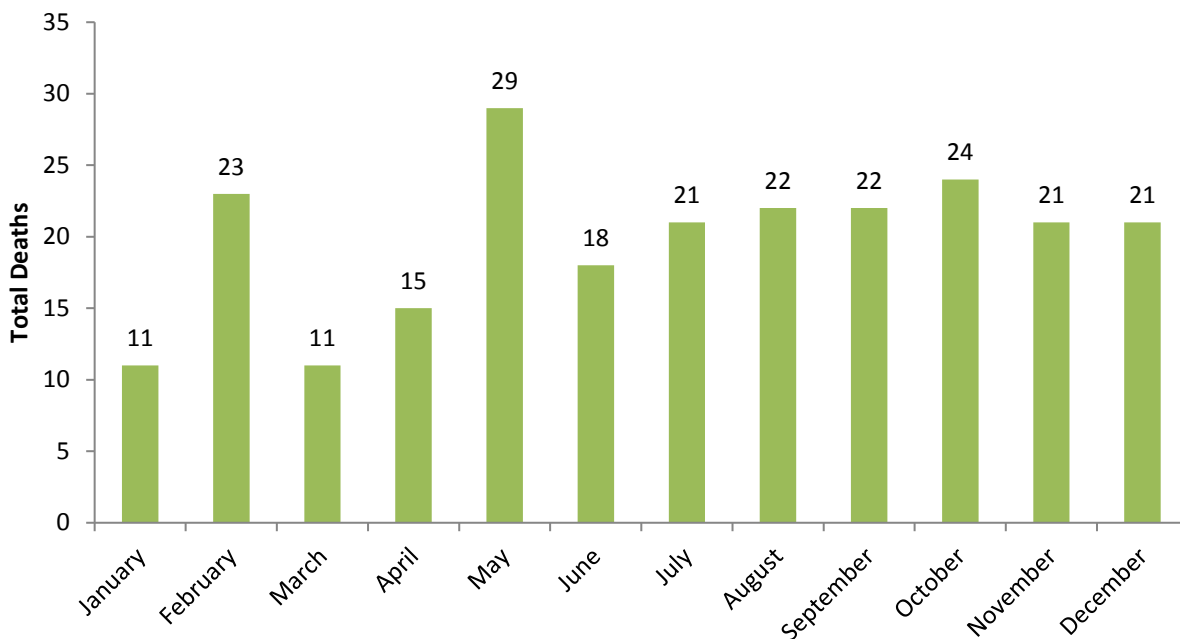
Percentage of Natural Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 3.17: N=238, represents all natural deaths by race.



Total Number of Natural Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 3.18: N=238, represents all natural deaths by month of death.



Total Number of Natural Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 3.3: N=238, represents all natural deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Heart:	
Coronary artery atherosclerosis	48
Hypertensive heart disease	36
Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease	28
Other heart disease	22
Lungs:	
Pneumonia	5
COPD / asthma	0
Pulmonary thromboembolism	6
Liver:	
Cirrhosis	0
Brain:	
Seizure disorder (epilepsy)	3
Meningitis	0
Nontraumatic intracranial hemorrhage	12
Malignancy NOS (includes all organ systems)	11
Chronic ethanol/drug use	23
Diabetes	4
Gastrointestinal bleeding	1
Other	39
Total	238

Suicide

Suicide deaths accounted for 8.2% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016.

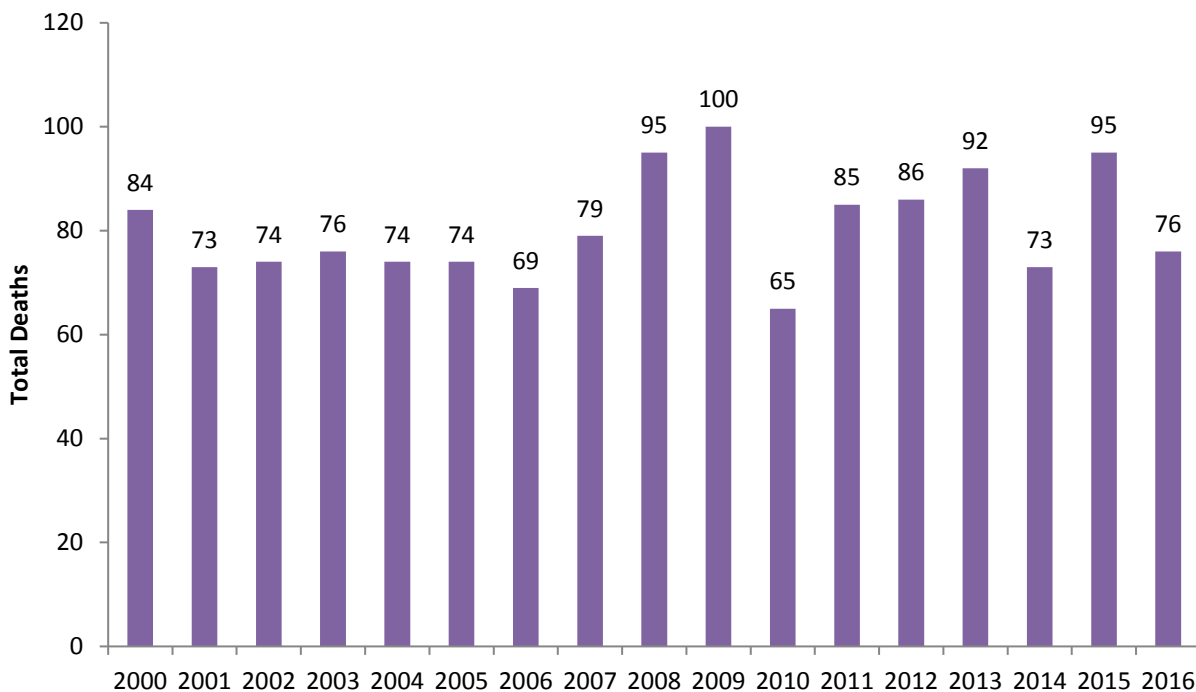
There was a 20.0% decrease in the total number of suicide deaths, from 95 deaths in 2015 to 76 deaths in 2016.

Deaths due to gunshot wounds were the most common cause of suicide death in 2016 accounting for 72.3% of the deaths and, followed by deaths due to hanging accounting for 14.4% of the suicide deaths.

The most common race was white representing 82% of the suicide deaths, while males were the most common gender representing 80.0% of suicide deaths.

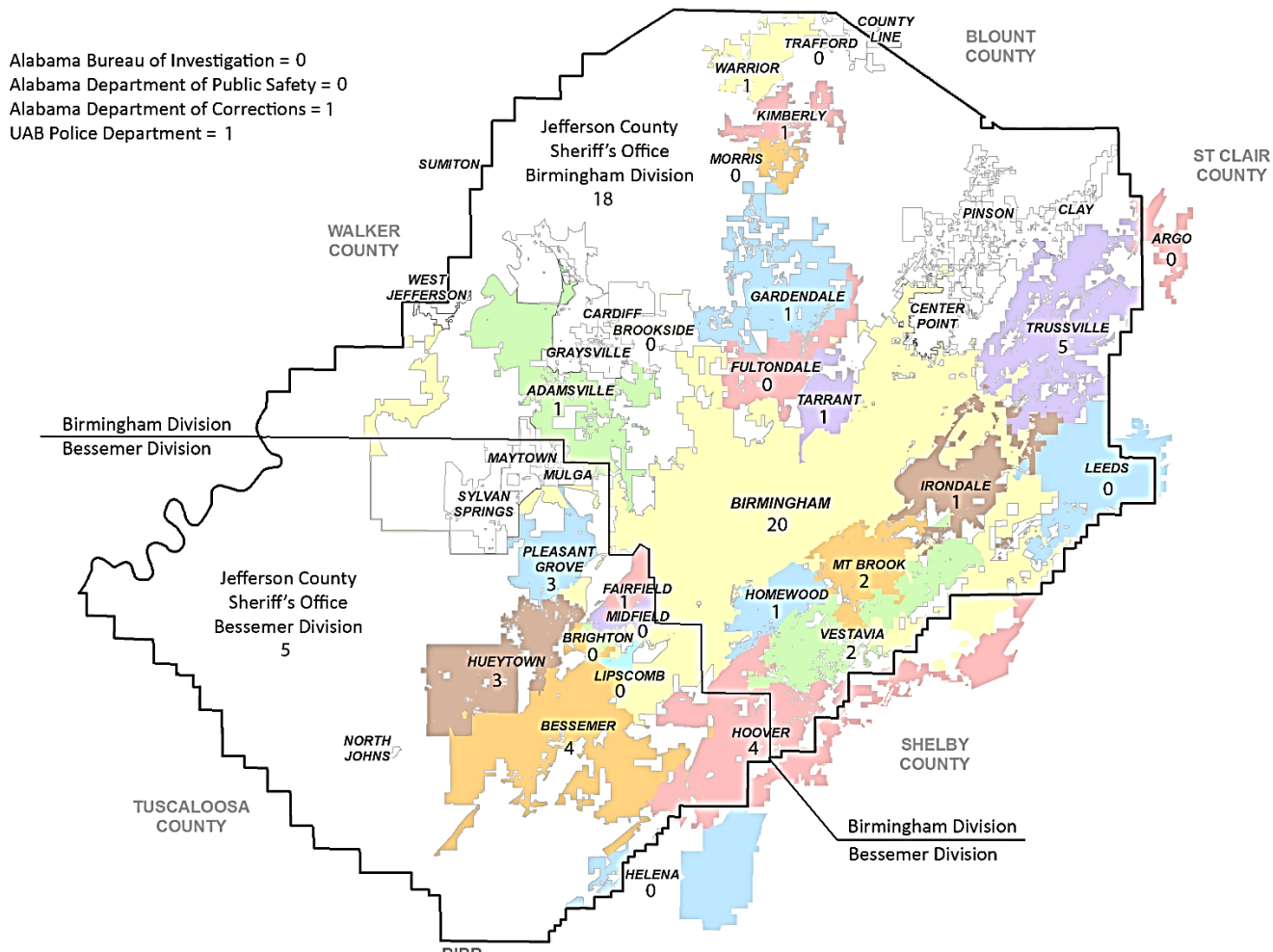
Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 3.19: represents all suicide deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



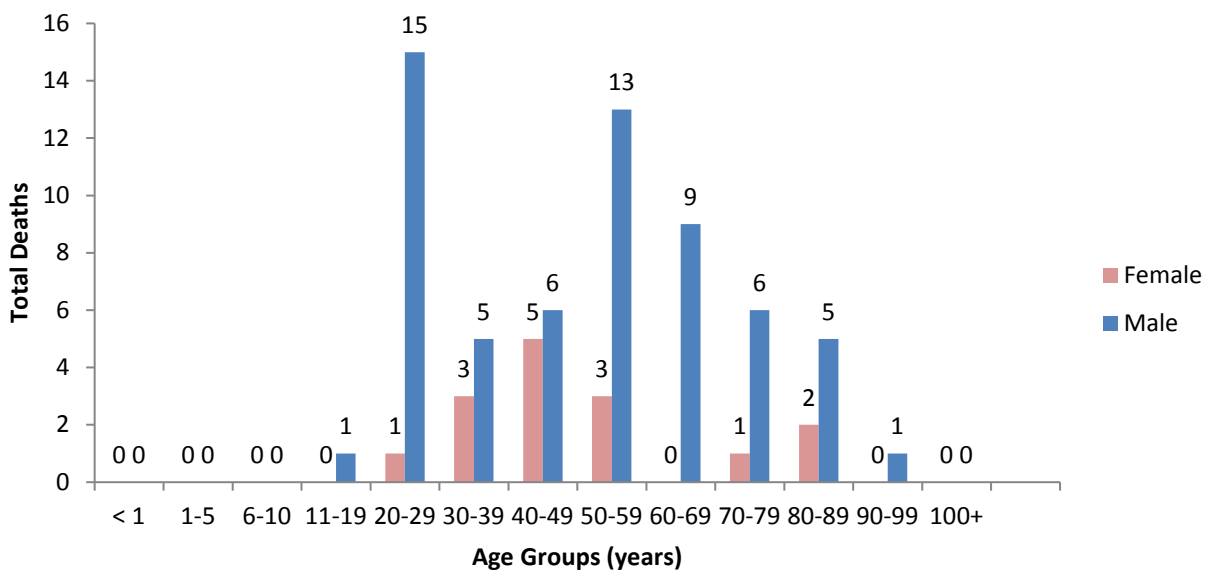
Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 3.20: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by law enforcement agency.



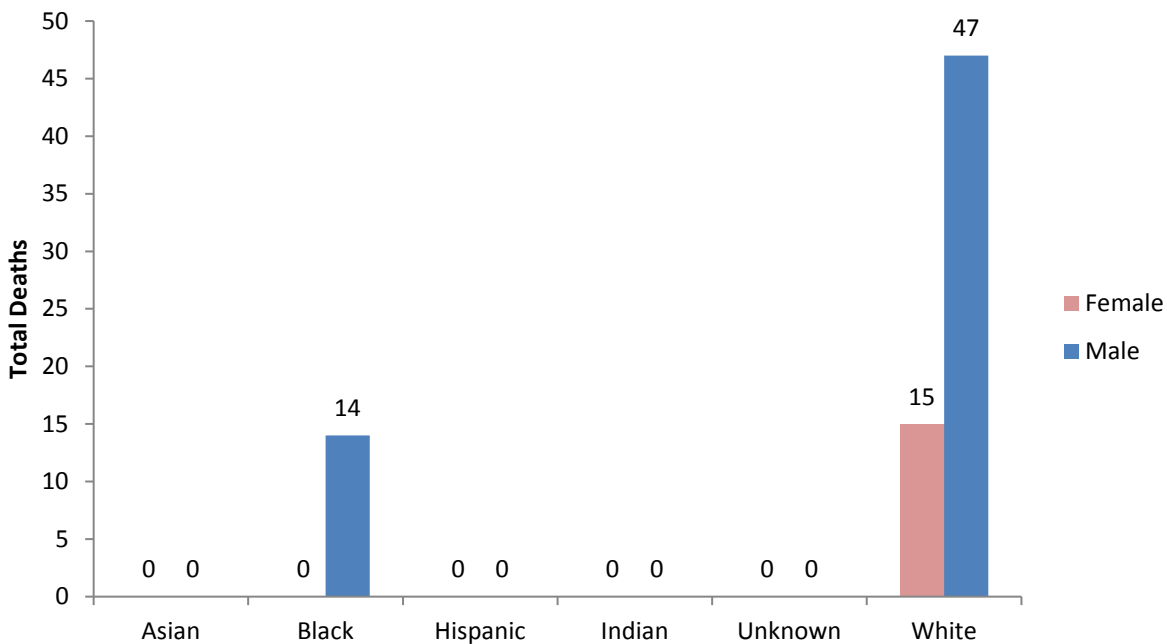
Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 3.21: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by gender and age group.



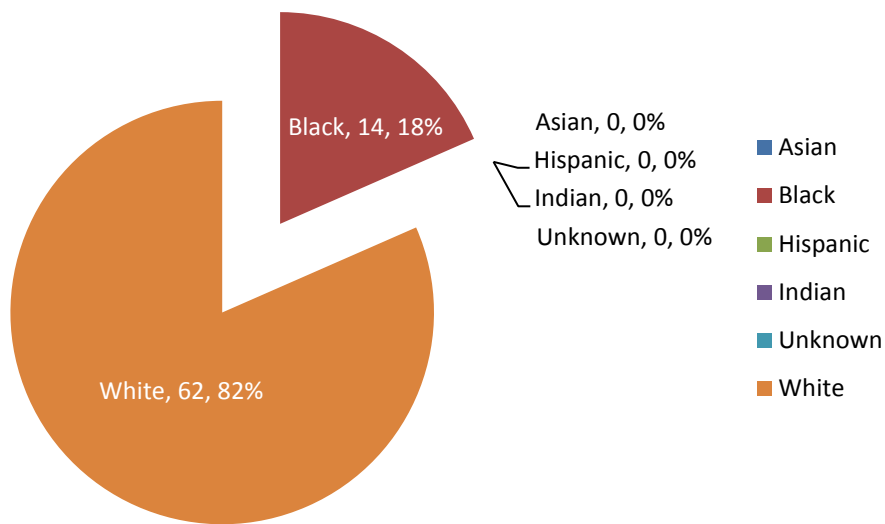
Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 3.22: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by gender and race.



Percentage of Suicide Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 3.23: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by race.



Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 3.24: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by month of death.



Total Number of Suicide Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 3.4: N=76, represents all suicide deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Belt	1
Carbon Monoxide:	
Charcoal grill	1
Drug:	
Prescription medications	5
Fall:	
Parking deck	1
Porch	1
Window	1
Firearm:	
Handgun	46
Rifle	6
Shotgun	3
Hanging:	
Belt	4
Nylon strap	2
Rope	2
Sheet	3
Total	76

Undetermined

Undetermined deaths accounted for 2.0% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016.

There was a 36.6% decrease in the total number of undetermined deaths, from 30 deaths in 2015 to 19 deaths in 2016 and, is the second consecutive year with a decrease of greater than 30%.

Undetermined was the most common means of Undetermined death, accounting for 47.3% of the deaths, followed by co-sleeping accounting for 26.3% of the deaths.

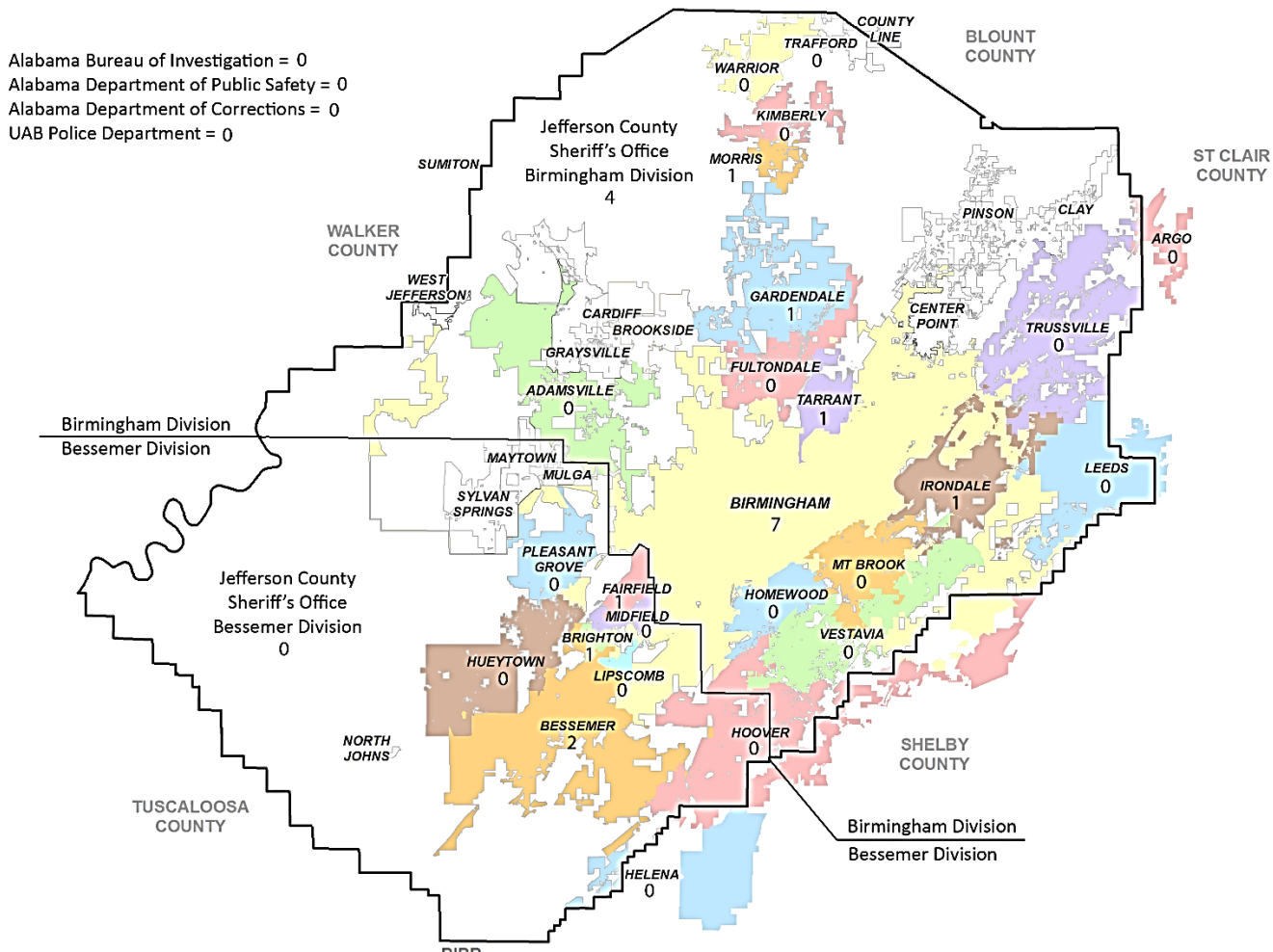
Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 3.25: represents all undetermined deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



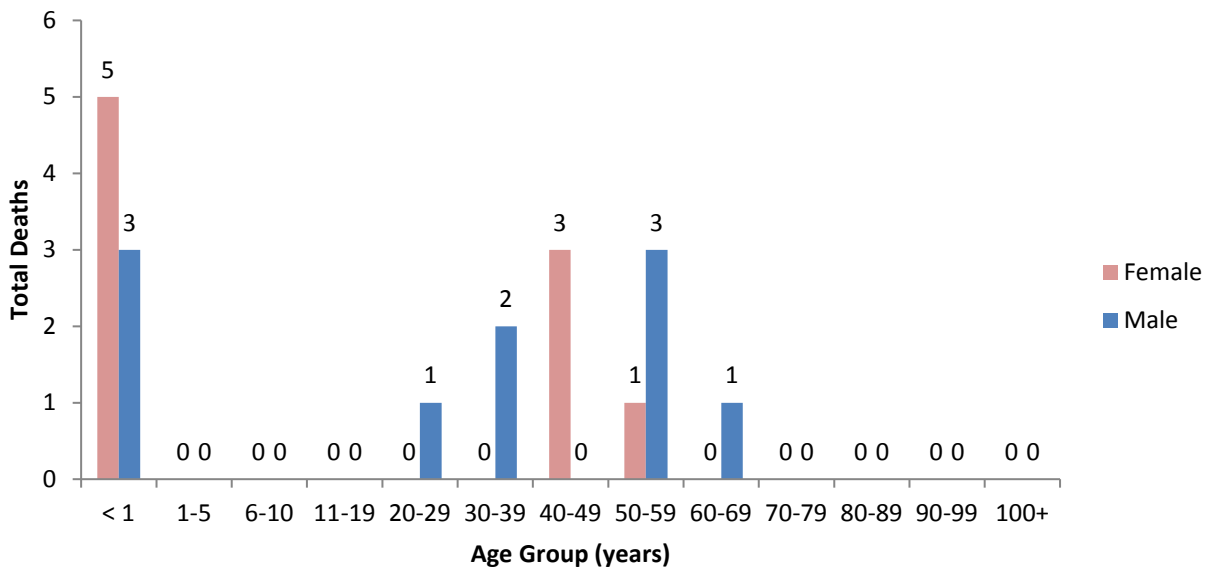
Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 3.26: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by law enforcement agency.



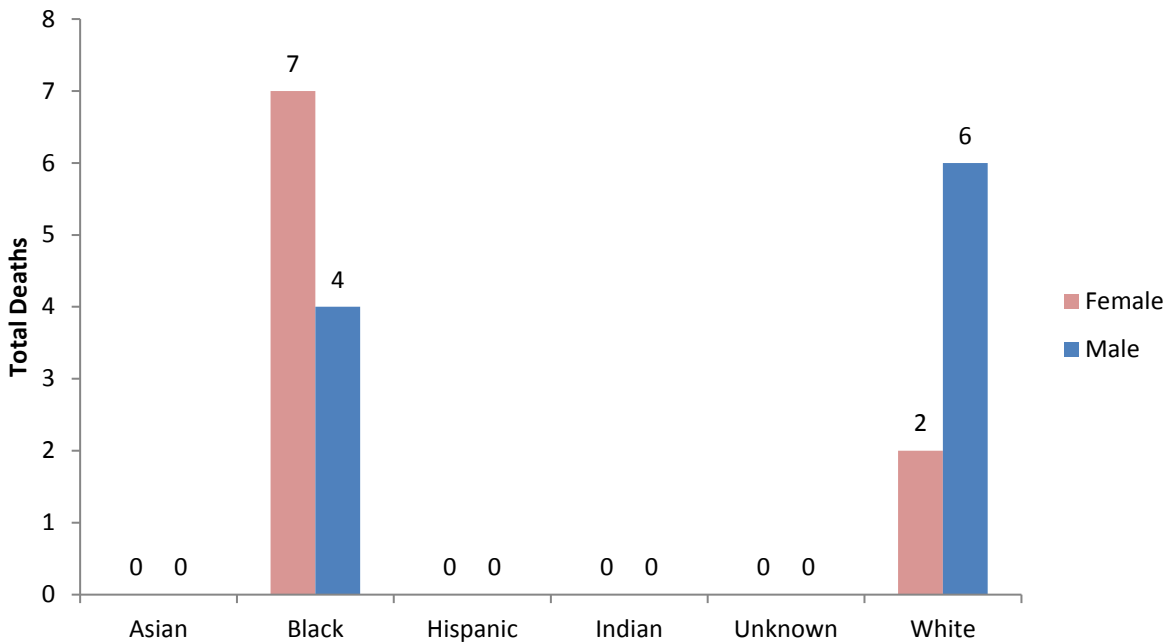
Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 3.27: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by gender and age group.



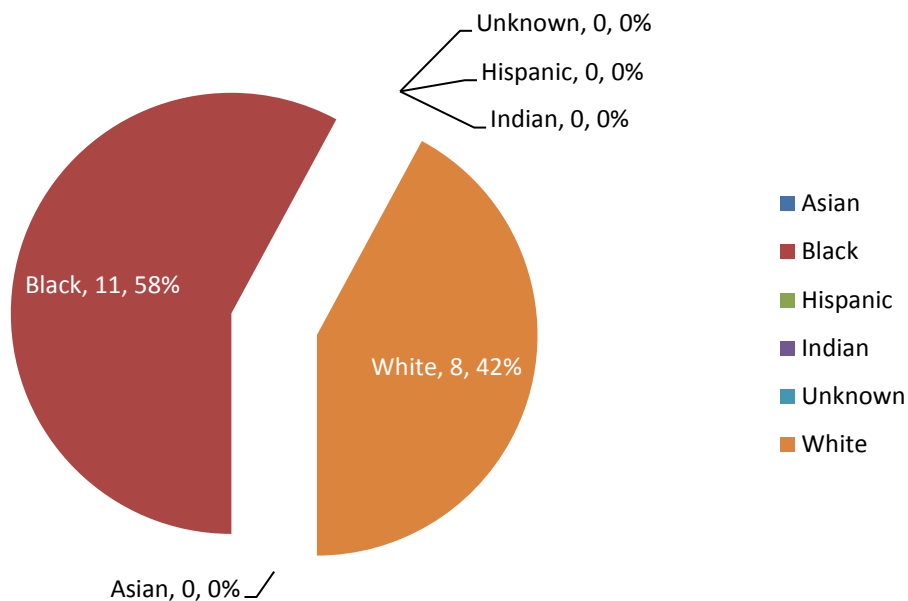
Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 3.28: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by gender and race.



Percentage of Undetermined Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 3.29: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by race.



Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 3.30: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by month of death.



Total Number of Undetermined Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 3.5: N=19, represents all undetermined deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	4
Futon mattress	1
Drug:	
Illicit	1
Prescription medications	1
Fire:	
House	1
Hypoxia:	
Unknown	1
Natural:	
Other natural	1
Undetermined:	
Car seat	2
Bathtub	1
Pack-n-play	1
Undetermined	5
Total	19

Section 4: Infant/Juvenile Deaths

Infant/Juvenile deaths accounted for 4.4% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016. There was a 10.8% decrease in the total number of infant/juvenile deaths, from 46 deaths in 2015 to 41 deaths in 2016. Infant deaths increased 55.5%, from 18 deaths in 2015 to 28 deaths in 2016, while juvenile deaths decreased 53.5%, from 28 deaths in 2015 to 13 deaths in 2016.

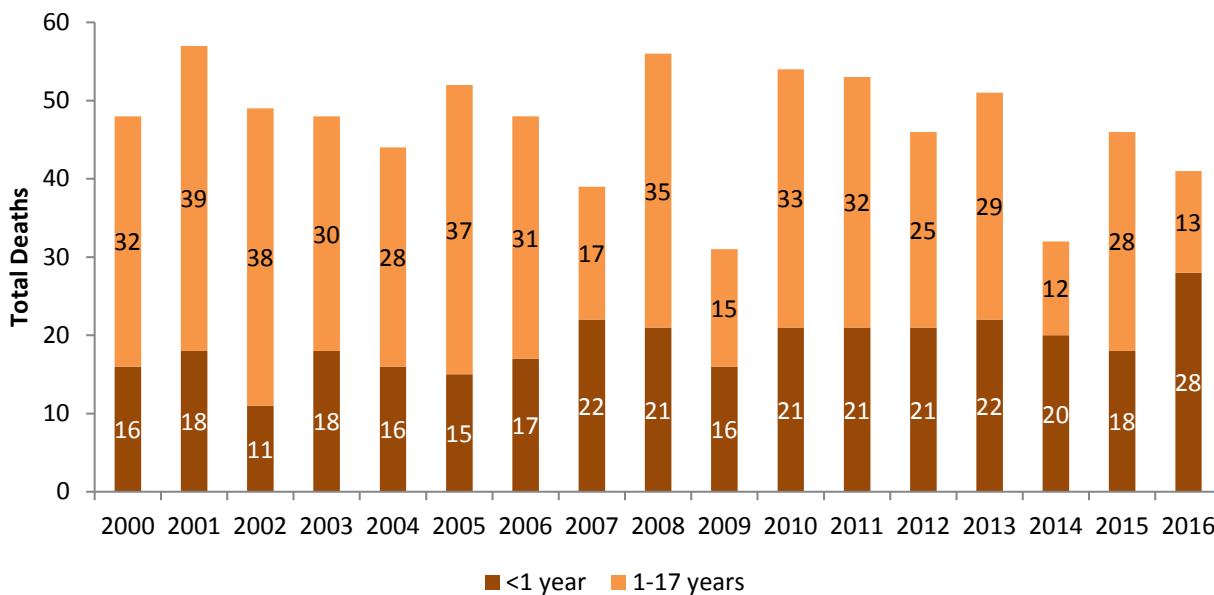
Infants (<1 year of age): Deaths due to co-sleeping was the most common means of infant death in 2016, accounting for 18 of the 28 or 64.2% of the infant deaths. Accidental death was the most common manner of infant death, accounting for 53.5% of the deaths. The most common race was black representing 71.4% of the infant deaths, with white accounting for 28.5% of the infant deaths. Infants 2 weeks and 4 weeks of age had the highest mortality rate accounting for 42.8% of the deaths.

Juveniles (1–17 years of age): Deaths due to firearms was the most common means of juvenile death in 2016, accounting for 53.8% of the deaths. Accident was the most common manner of death, accounting for 53.8% of the juvenile deaths, with Homicide accounting for the remaining 46.1% of the deaths. The most common race was black representing 85% of the juvenile deaths, with white accounting for 15% of the juvenile deaths.

Historical Summary

Total Number of Infant and Juvenile Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

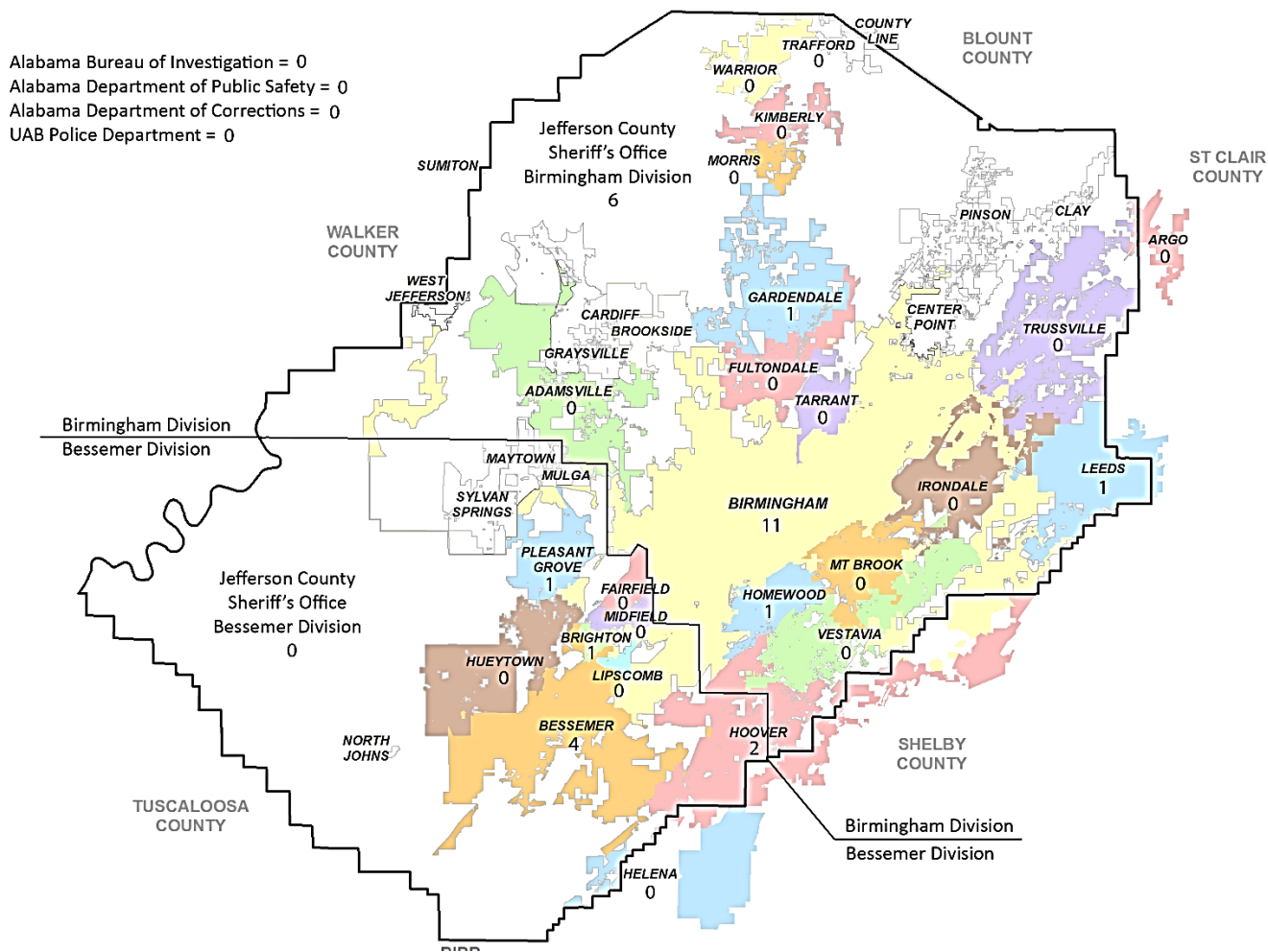
Figure 4.1: represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) and juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) investigated by the JCCMEO.



Infant Deaths

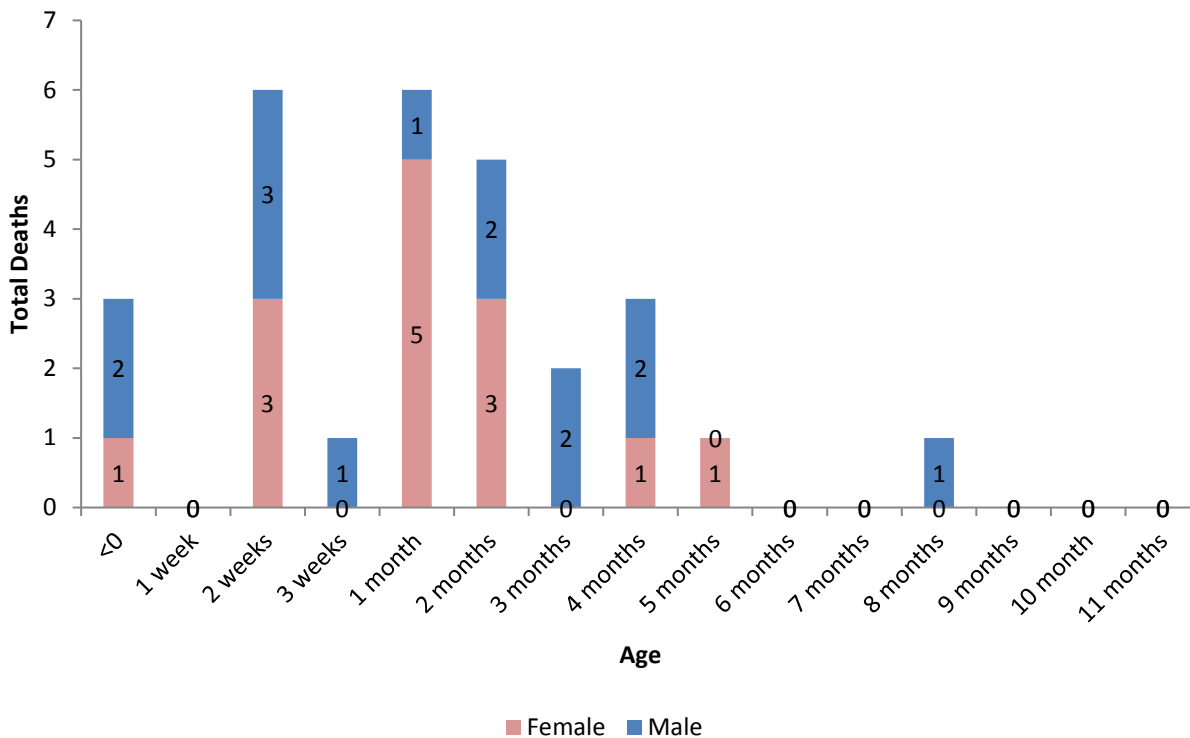
Total Number of Infant Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 4.2: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by law enforcement agency.



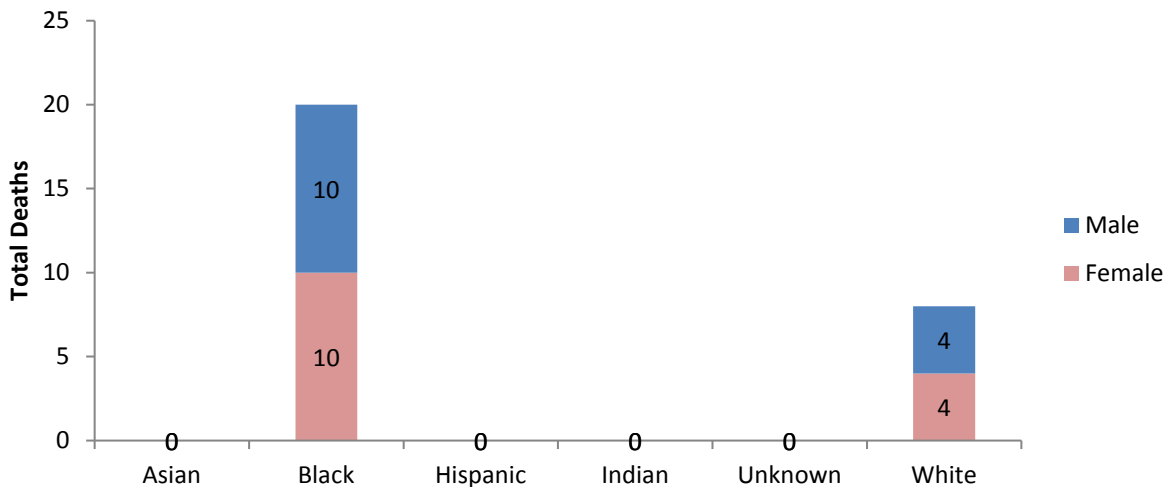
Total Number of Infant Deaths by Gender and Age, 2016

Figure 4.3: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by gender and age.



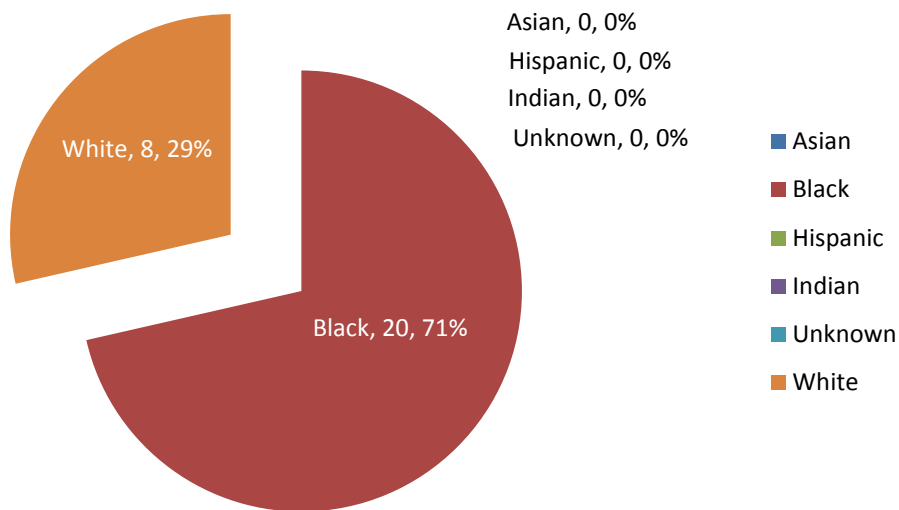
Total Number of Infant Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 4.4: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by gender and race.



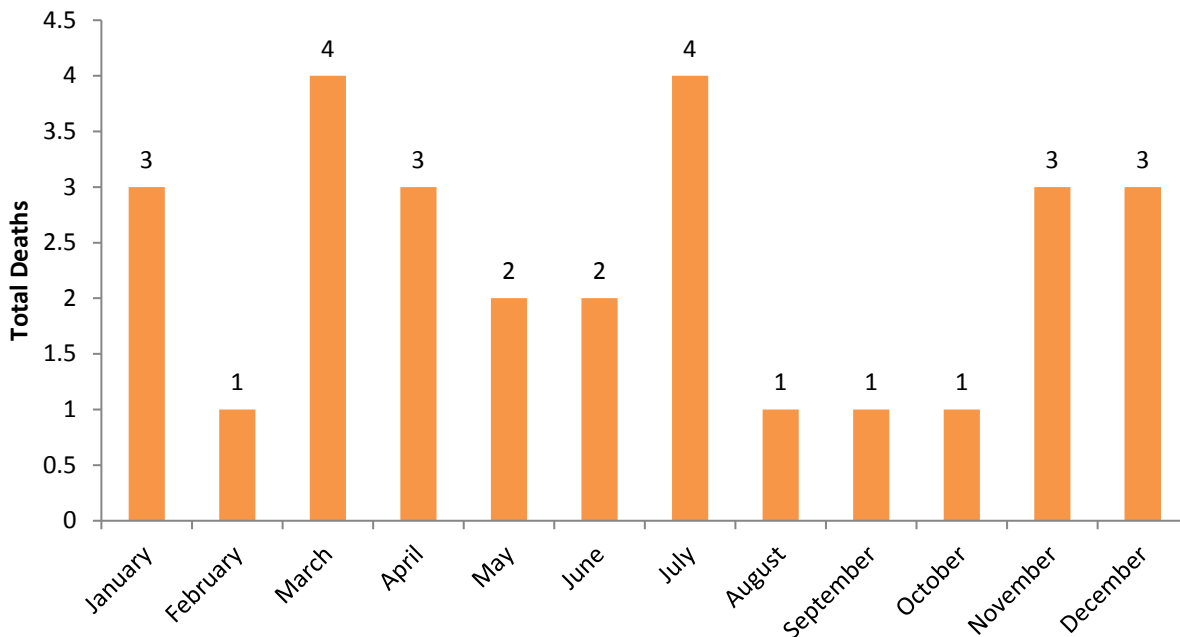
Percentage of Infant Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 4.5: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by race.



Total Number of Infant Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 4.6: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by month of death.



Total Number of Infant Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 4.1: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Asphyxia:	
Air mattress	1
Bassinet	1
Mattress	1
Blunt:	
Fist	1
Co-sleeping:	
Bed	14
Couch	2
Futon mattress	1
Hypoxia:	
Body weight	1
Natural:	
Pneumonia (Haemophilus influenzae)	1
Other	1
Undetermined:	
Car seat	2
Pack-n-play	1
Undetermined	1
Total	28

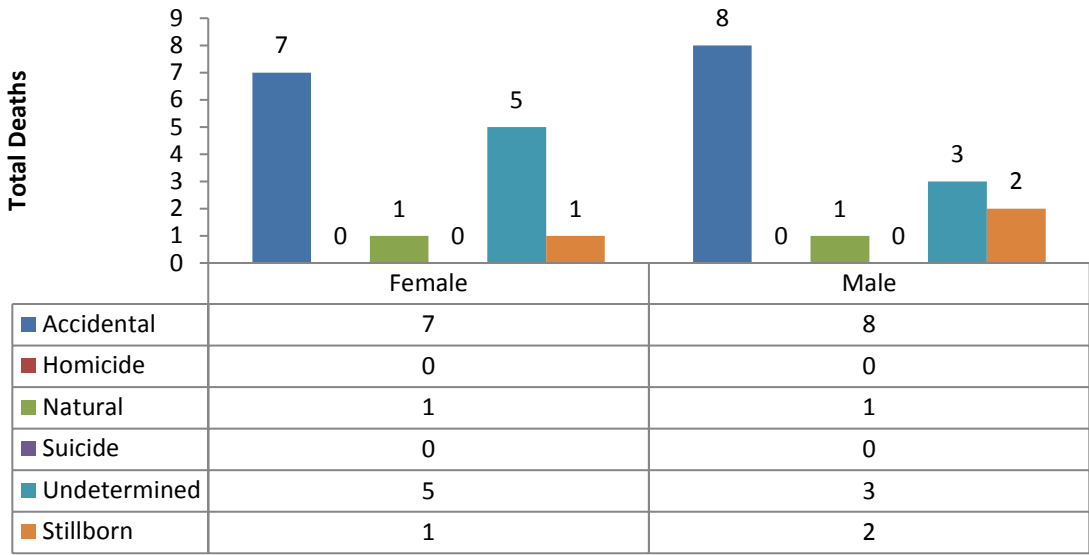
Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2016

Table 4.2: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by manner of death and race. Pursuant to the State of Alabama Vital Records laws, stillborn deaths are not assigned a manner of death.

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Stillborn	Total
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	10	0	2	0	7	1	20
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	5	0	0	0	1	2	8
Total	15	0	2	0	8	3	28

Total Number of Infant Deaths by Manner of Death and Gender, 2016

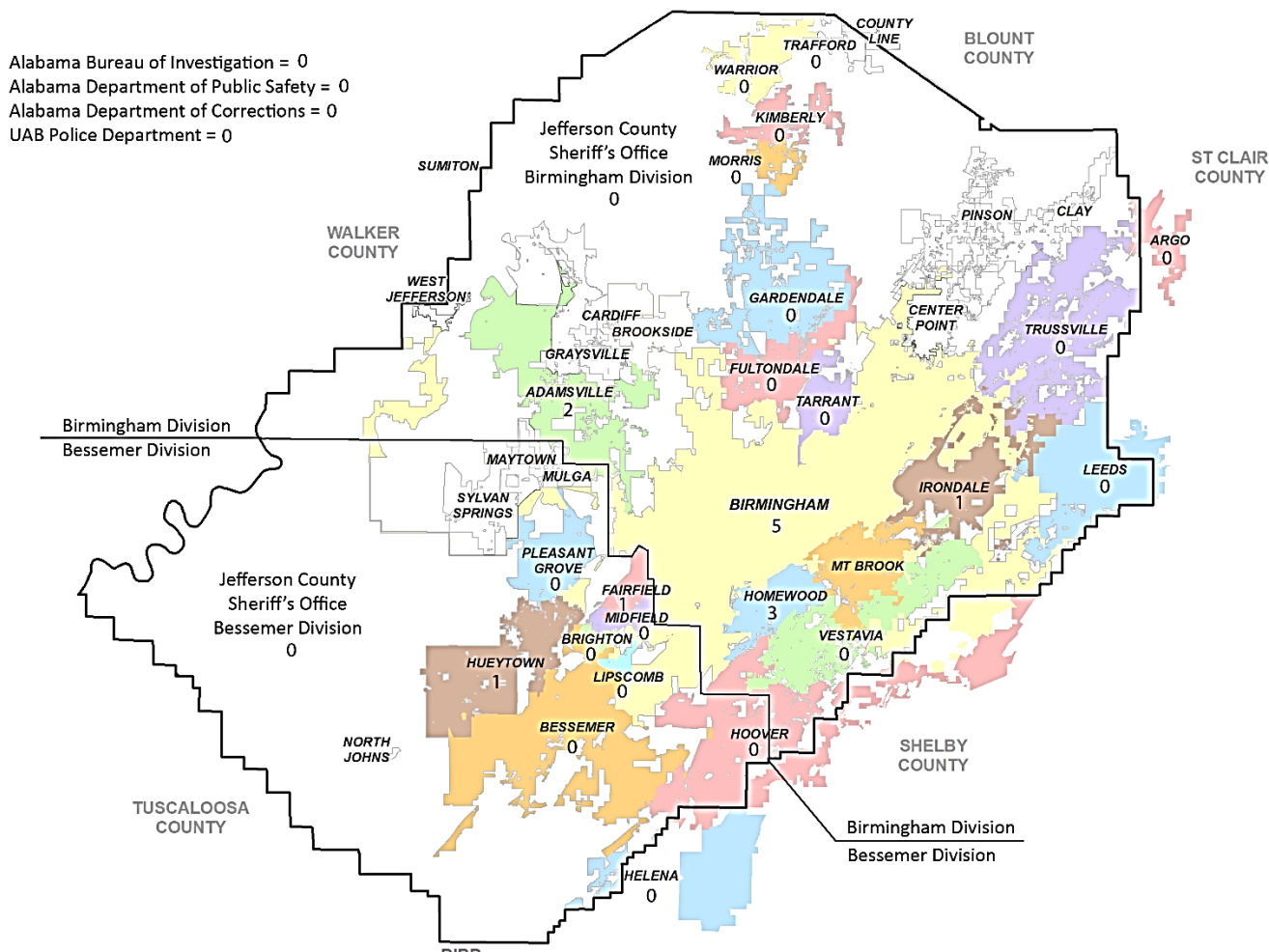
Figure 4.7: N=28, represents all infant deaths (<1 year of age) by manner of death and gender. Pursuant to the State of Alabama Vital Records laws, stillborn deaths are not assigned a manner of death.



Juvenile Deaths

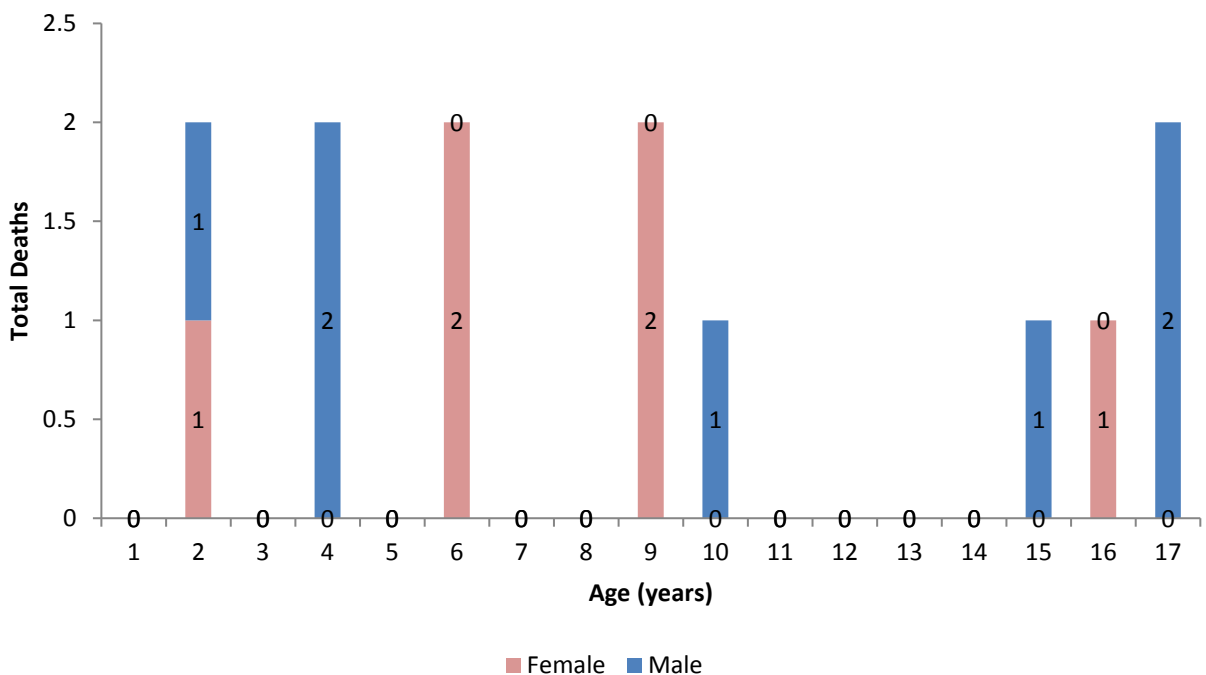
Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 4.8: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by law enforcement agency.



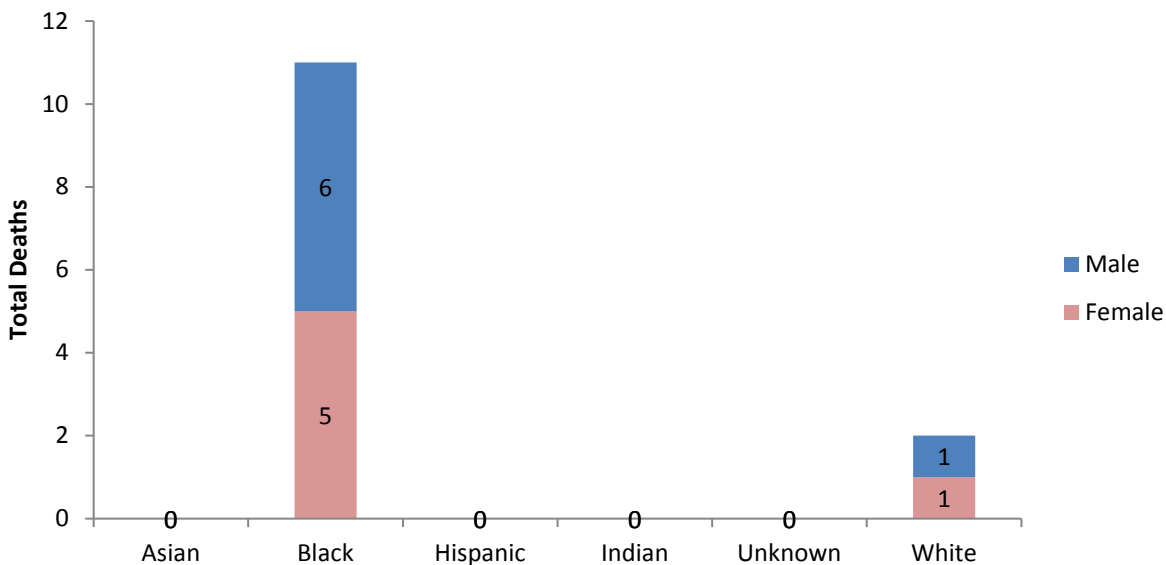
Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Gender and Age, 2016

Figure 4.9: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by gender and age.



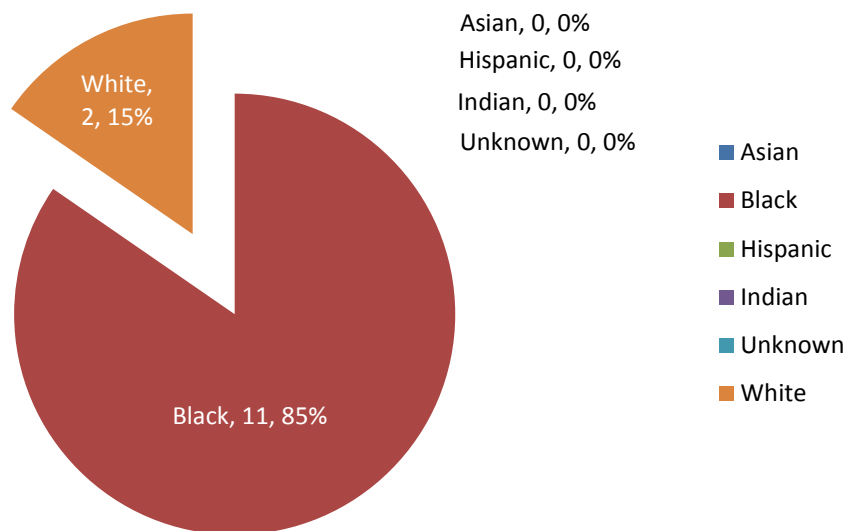
Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 4.10: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by gender and race.



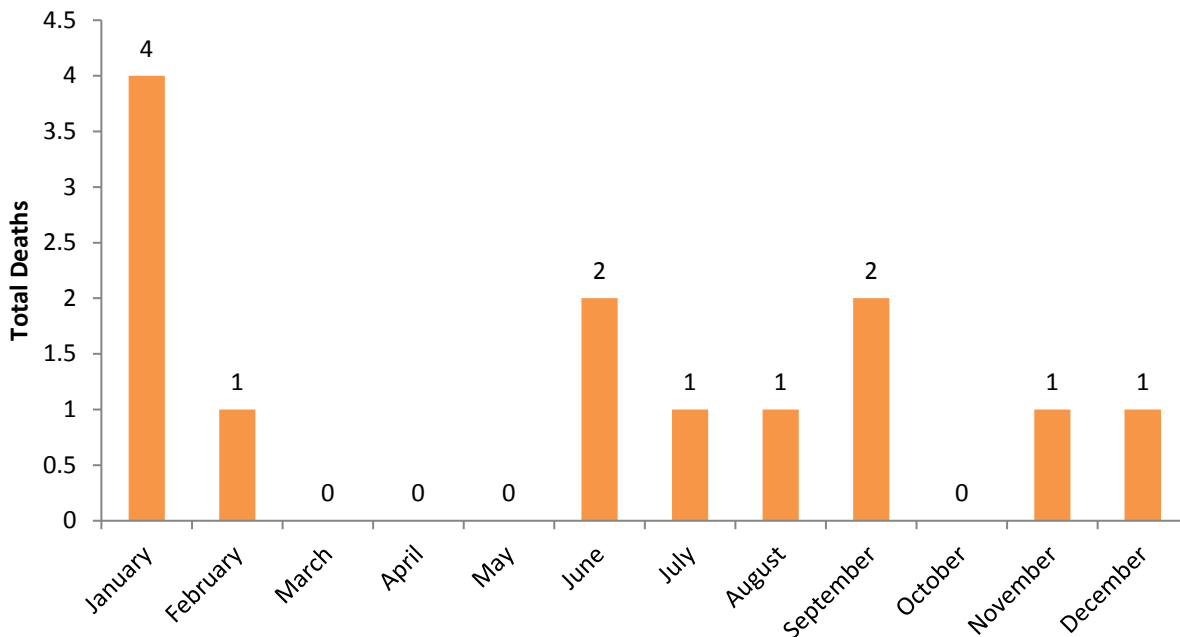
Percentage of Juvenile Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 4.11: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by race.



Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 4.12: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by month of death.



Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 4.3: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Drowning:	
Pool	2
Fire:	
House	2
Gun:	
Handgun	5
Unknown	2
Motor vehicle:	
Pedestrian	2
Total	13

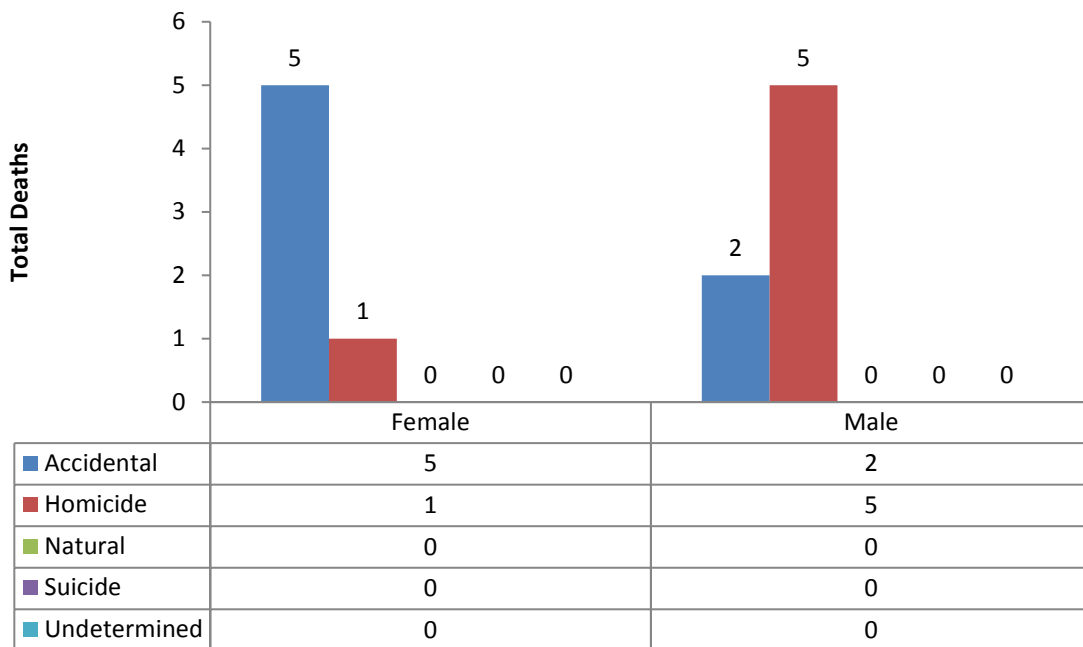
Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Race, 2015

Table 4.4: N=28, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by manner of death and race.

Race	Accident	Homicide	Natural	Suicide	Undetermined	Total
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	6	5	0	0	0	11
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total	7	6	0	0	0	13

Total Number of Juvenile Deaths by Manner of Death and Gender, 2016

Figure 4.13: N=13, represents all juvenile deaths (1-17 years of age) by manner of death and gender.



Section 5: Motor Vehicle Deaths

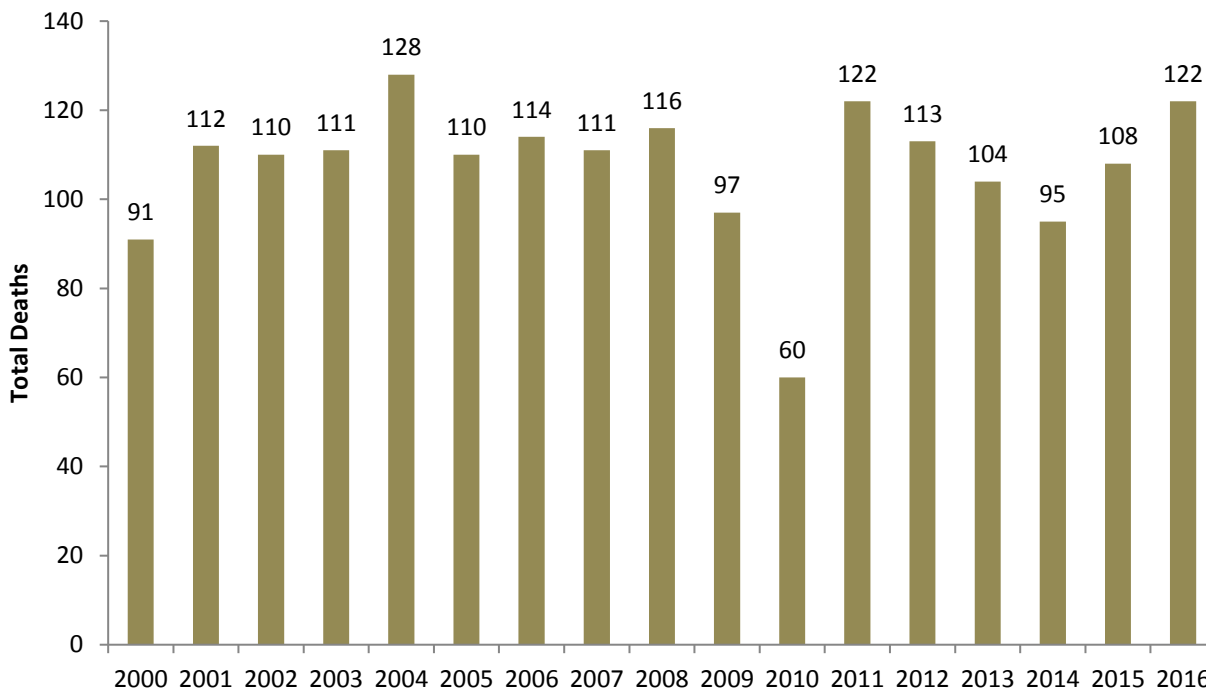
Motor vehicle deaths accounted for 13.2% of the deaths investigated by the JCCMEO in 2016. For the purpose of this report motor vehicle deaths include airplane, automobile, train, and pedestrian deaths.

There was a 12.9% increase in the total number of motor vehicle deaths, from 108 deaths in 2015 to 122 deaths in 2016; and is the second highest year in the last 16 years, tied with 2011 and only surpassed by 128 deaths in 2004.

Single vehicle collisions were the most common means of motor vehicle death, accounting for 45.9% of the deaths, followed by multi-vehicle collisions accounting for 35.2% of the deaths and motor vehicle-pedestrian collisions accounting for 15.5% of the deaths.

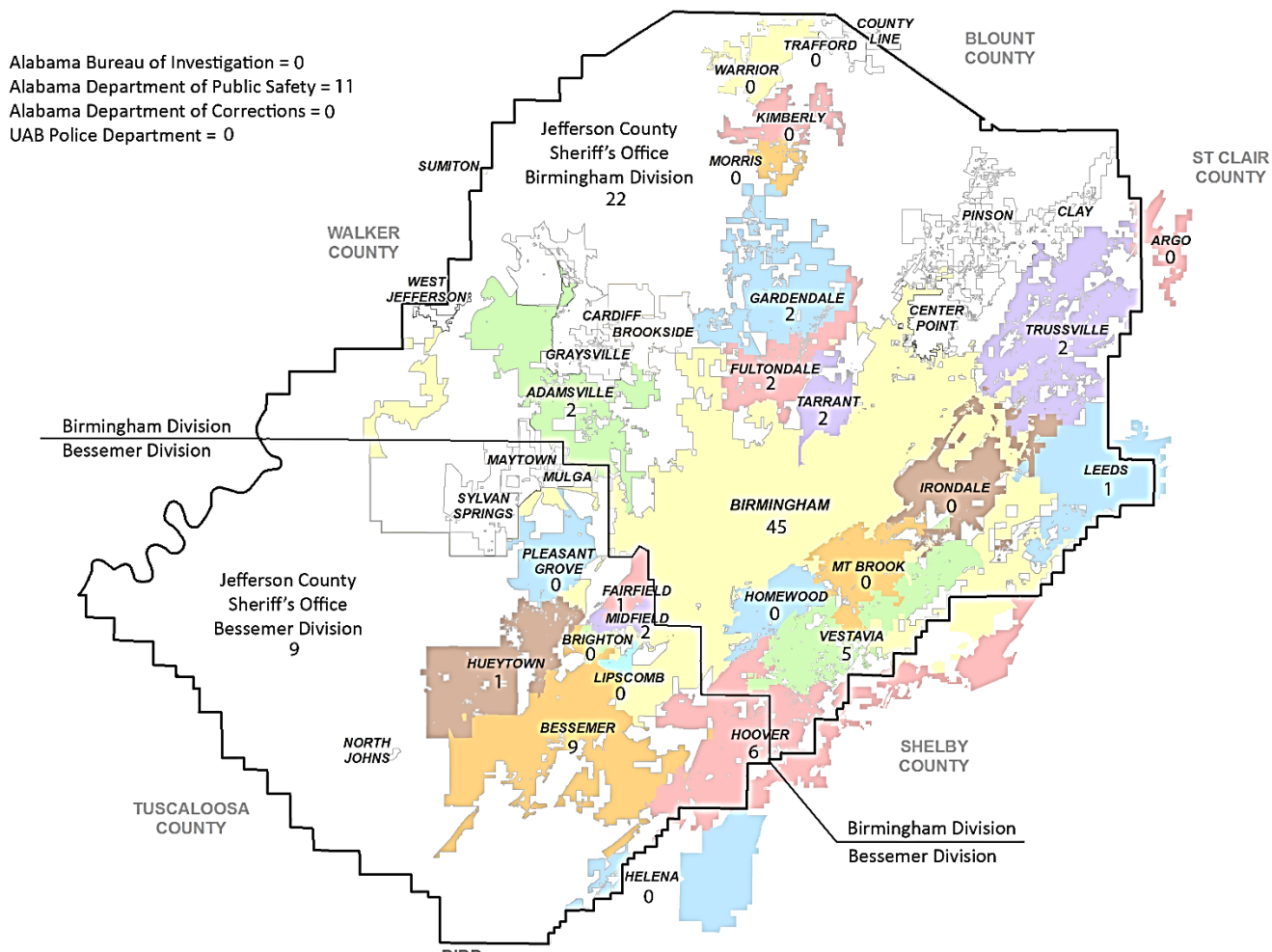
Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 5.1: represents all motor vehicle deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.



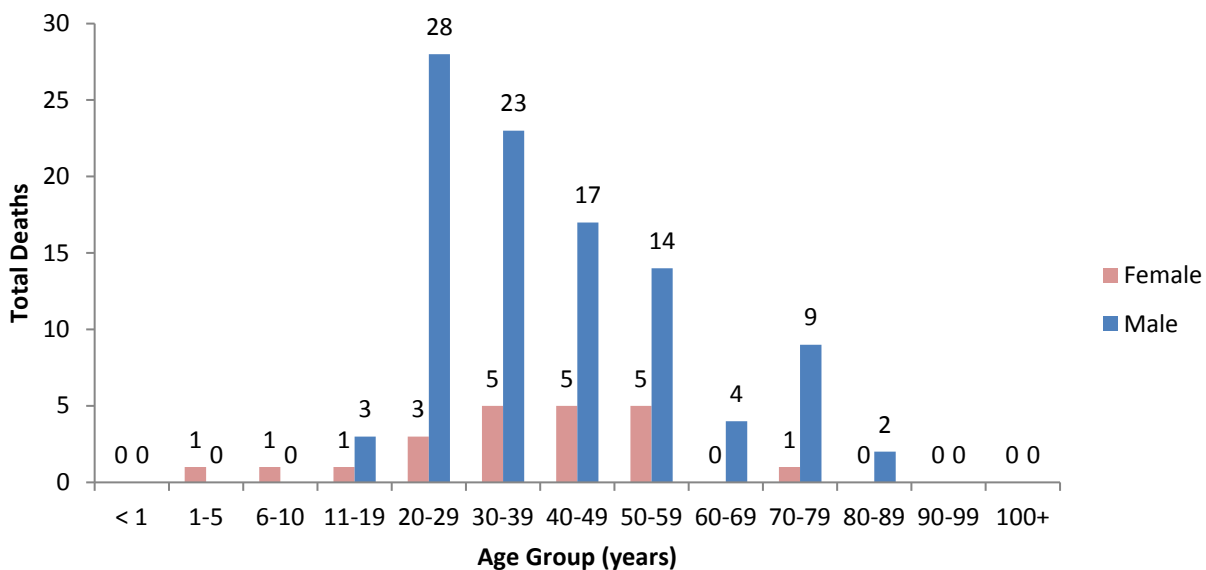
Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 5.2: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by law enforcement agency.



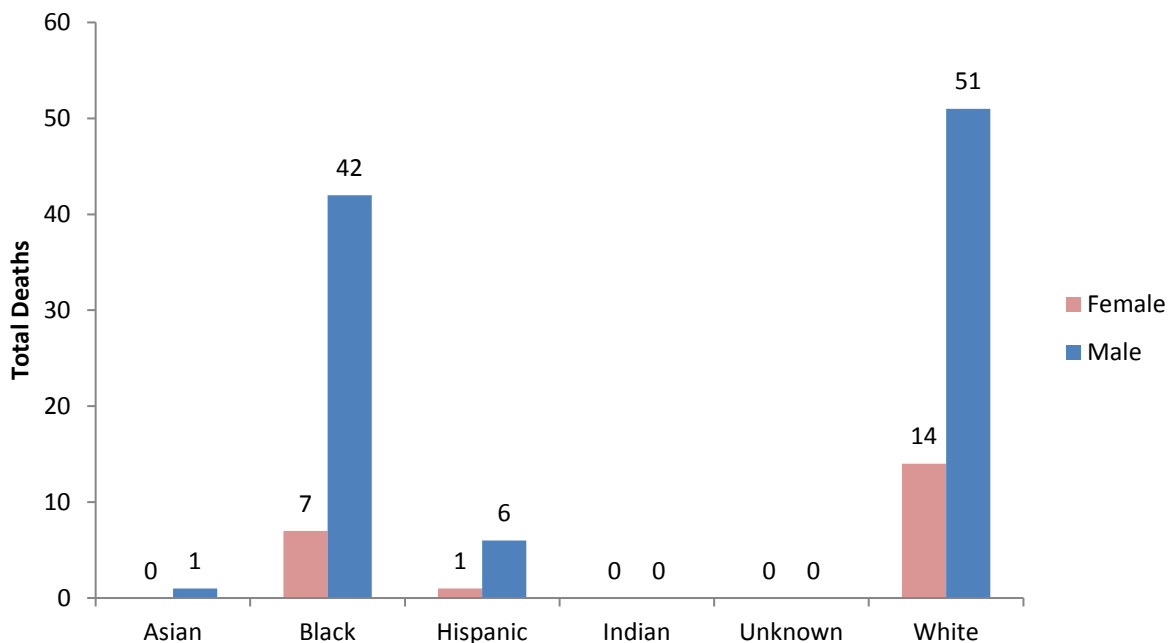
Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 5.3: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by gender and age group.



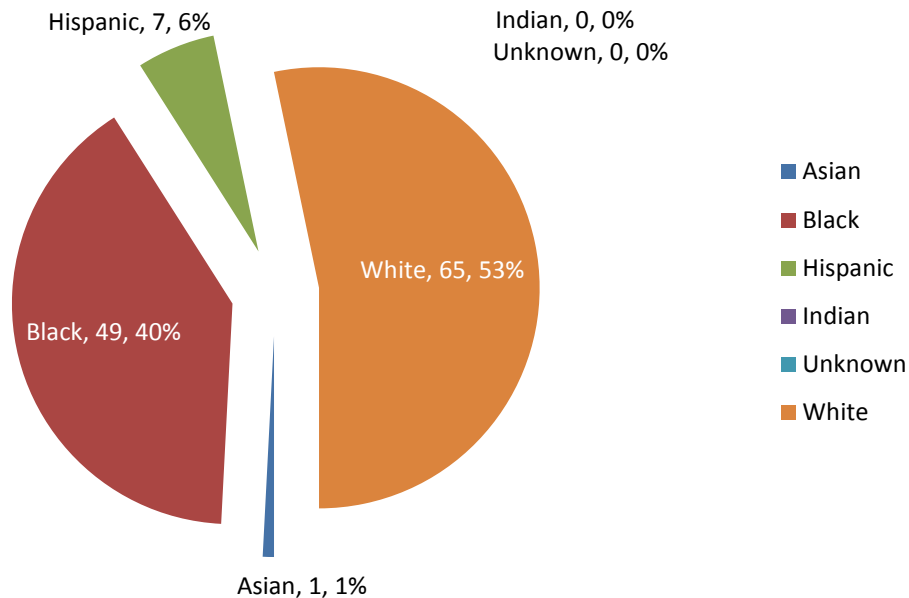
Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 5.4: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by gender and race.



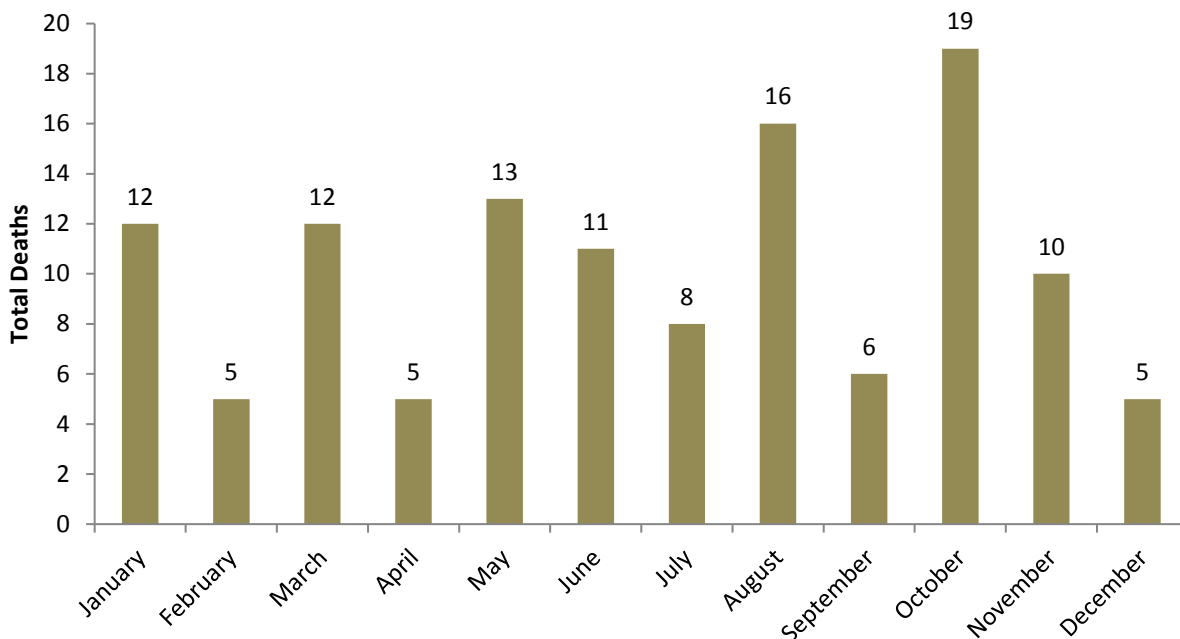
Percentage of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 5.5: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by race.



Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 5.6: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by month of death.



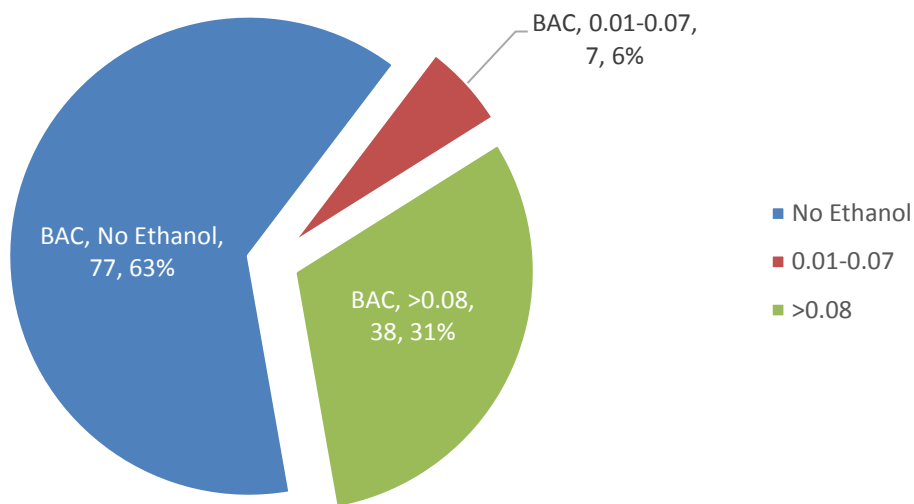
Total Number of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Means of Death, 2016

Table 5.1: N=122, represents all motor vehicle deaths by means of death.

Means of Death	Total
Motor-vehicle:	
Bicycle	1
Single vehicle	56
Multiple vehicles	43
Train	3
Pedestrian:	
Motor vehicle	19
Train	0
Total	122

Percentage of Motor Vehicle Deaths by Ethanol Amount, 2016

Figure 5.7: N=122, percentage of motor vehicle deaths by blood alcohol concentration (BAC).



Section 6: Overdose Deaths

Overview

The data in this section represent all overdose deaths investigated by the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office in the 2016 calendar year where the direct cause of death was due to an overdose/toxic level of illicit drug(s), prescription medication(s), prescription opioid(s), ethanol (alcohol), or other poison(s).

This section does not reflect data on other types of deaths where drugs or ethanol contributed to the death, but was not the direct cause of death. An example of a death that would not be included in this section would be a motor vehicle fatality where the decedent/driver of the vehicle was intoxicated, but the immediate cause of death was trauma due to the collision.

For the purpose of this report overdoses have been categorized into the following four Means of Death:

- Drug - refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to illicit drug(s) or, the direct cause of death was due to prescription medication(s) and/or prescription opioid(s) in combination with illicit drug(s). For the purpose of this report "illicit drugs" refers to illegal street type drugs (i.e. cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, etc.).
- Prescription Medication - refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to only prescription medication(s).
- Prescription Opioid – refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to only prescription opioid(s).
- Ethanol (alcohol) – refers to all overdoses where the direct cause of death was due to a toxic level of ethanol (alcohol).

Often drug overdoses are found to be a combination of illicit drugs, prescription medications, ethanol (alcohol), and/or other poisons; therefore a single death might be represented multiple times in this section. Because of this it is important to recognize that in the following graphs and tables the totals for each of the drugs represents the number of occurrences that particular drug was found to be either the single cause of death or a component in conjunction with another drug(s) that combined was the cause of death.

General Statistics and Notable Trends

There was a 12.0% increase in the total drug deaths this past year, from 224 drug deaths in 2015 to 251 drug deaths in 2016.

There was a 116.3% increase in fentanyl deaths, from 49 deaths in 2015 to 106 deaths in 2016.

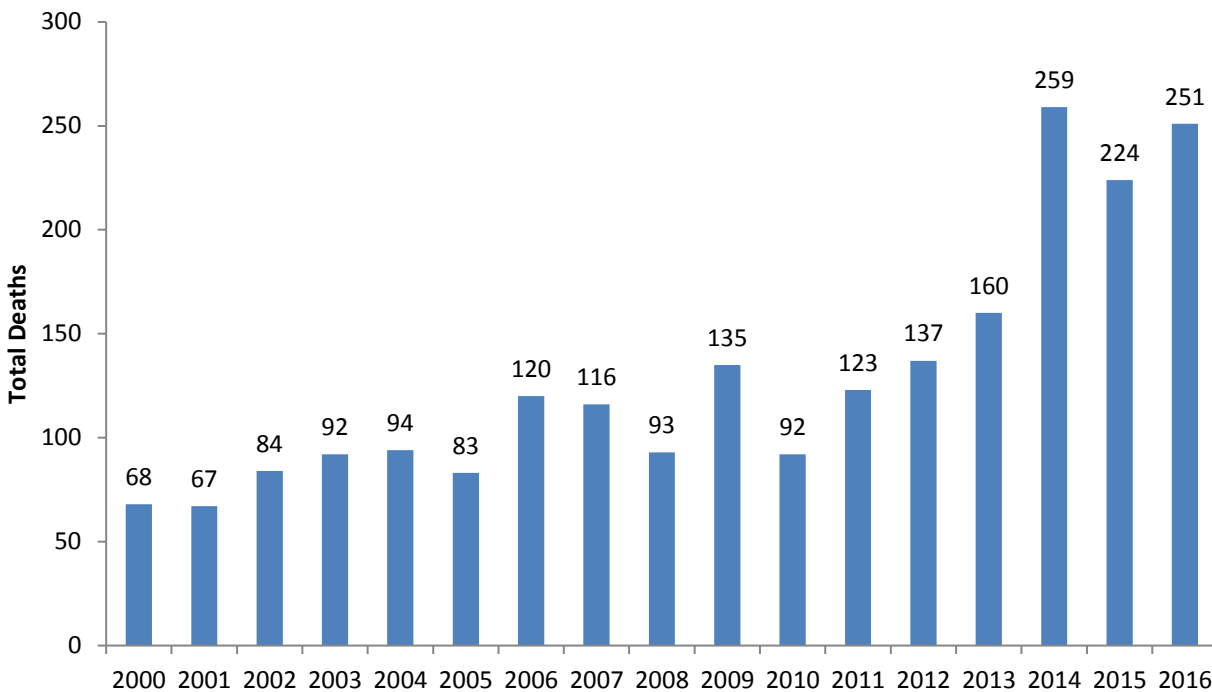
There was a 3.0% increase in heroin deaths, from 97 deaths in 2015 to 100 deaths in 2016.

There was a 70.2% decrease in prescription opioid deaths, from 74 deaths in 2015 to 22 deaths in 2016.

Historical Summary

Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Year of Death 2000-2016

Figure 6.1: represents all overdose deaths investigated by the JCCMEO.

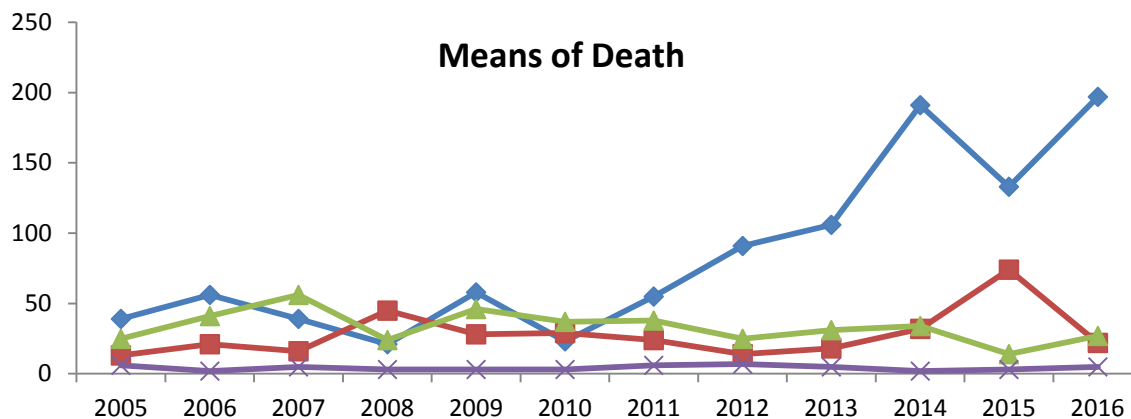


Historical Summary: Means of Death, 2005-2016

Table 6.1: represents all overdoses by means of death.

Year	Drug/ Poison	Prescription Medication	Prescription Opioid	Ethanol	=	Total Overdose Deaths
2005	39	25	13	6	=	83
2006	56	41	21	2	=	120
2007	39	56	16	5	=	116
2008	21	24	45	3	=	93
2009	58	46	28	3	=	135
2010	23	37	29	3	=	92
2011	55	38	24	6	=	123
2012	91	25	14	7	=	137
2013	106	31	18	5	=	160
2014	191	34	32	2	=	259
2015	133	14	74	3	=	224
2016	197	27	22	5	=	251

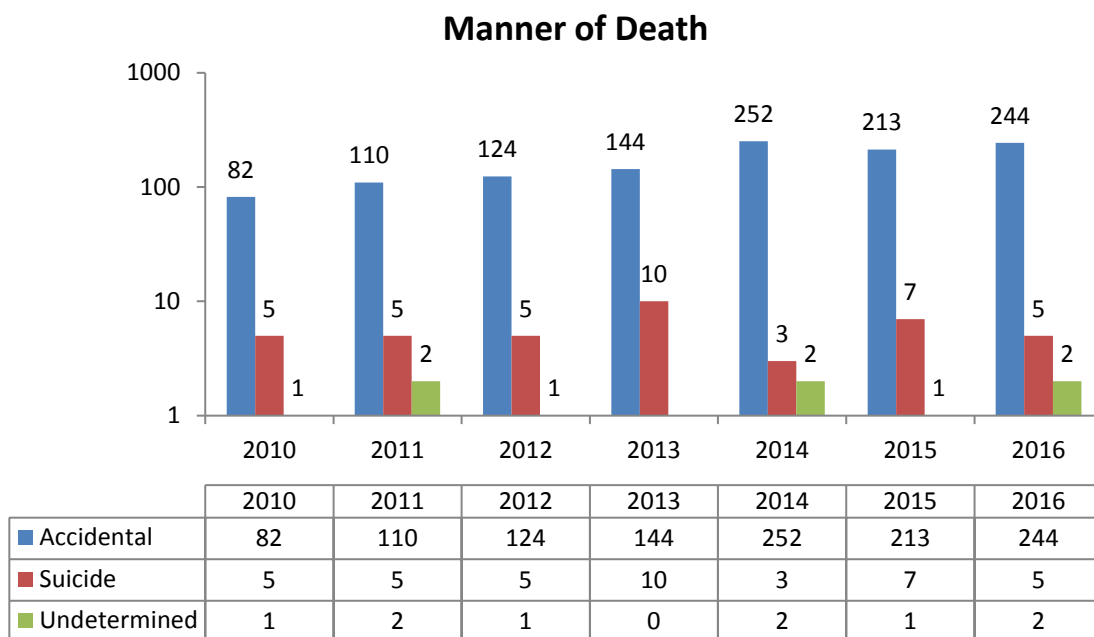
Figure 6.2: represent all overdoses by means of death, 2005-2016.



	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
◆ Drug/Poison	39	56	39	21	58	23	55	91	106	191	133	197
■ Rx-Opioid	13	21	16	45	28	29	24	14	18	32	74	22
▲ Rx-Medication	25	41	56	24	46	37	38	25	31	34	14	27
× Ethanol	6	2	5	3	3	3	6	7	5	2	3	5

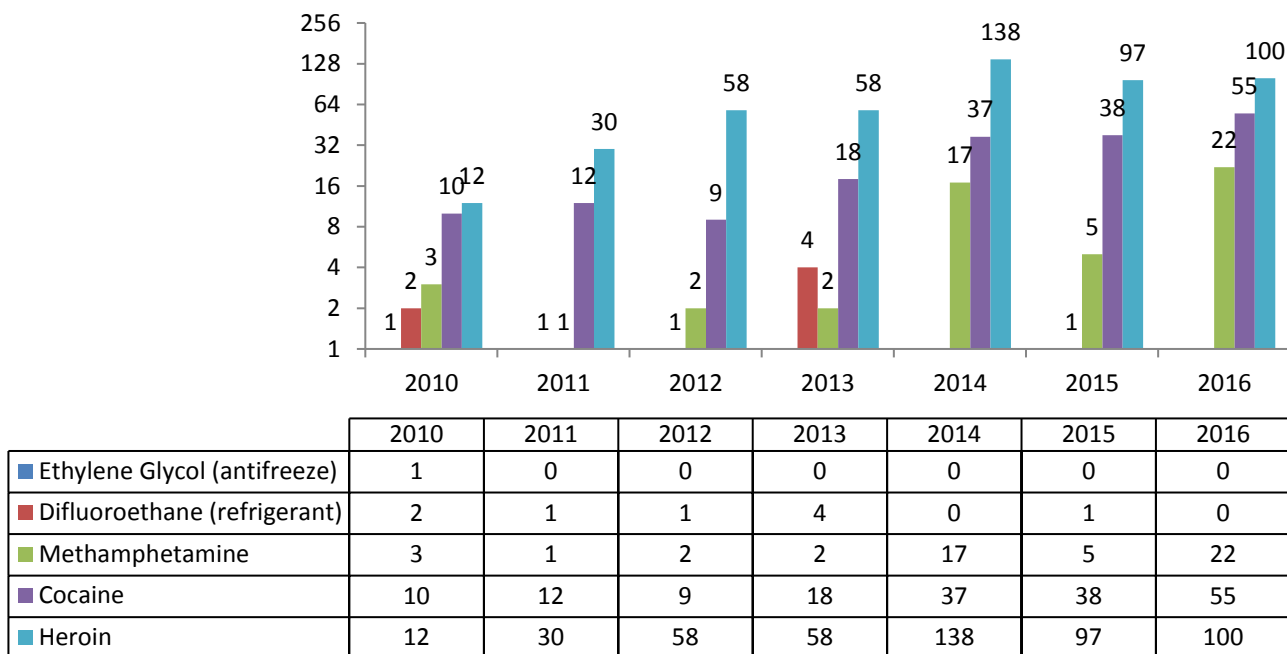
Historical Summary: Manner of Death, 2010-2016

Figure 6.3: represents all overdoses by manner of death.



Historical Summary: Illicit Drugs/Poisons, 2010-2016

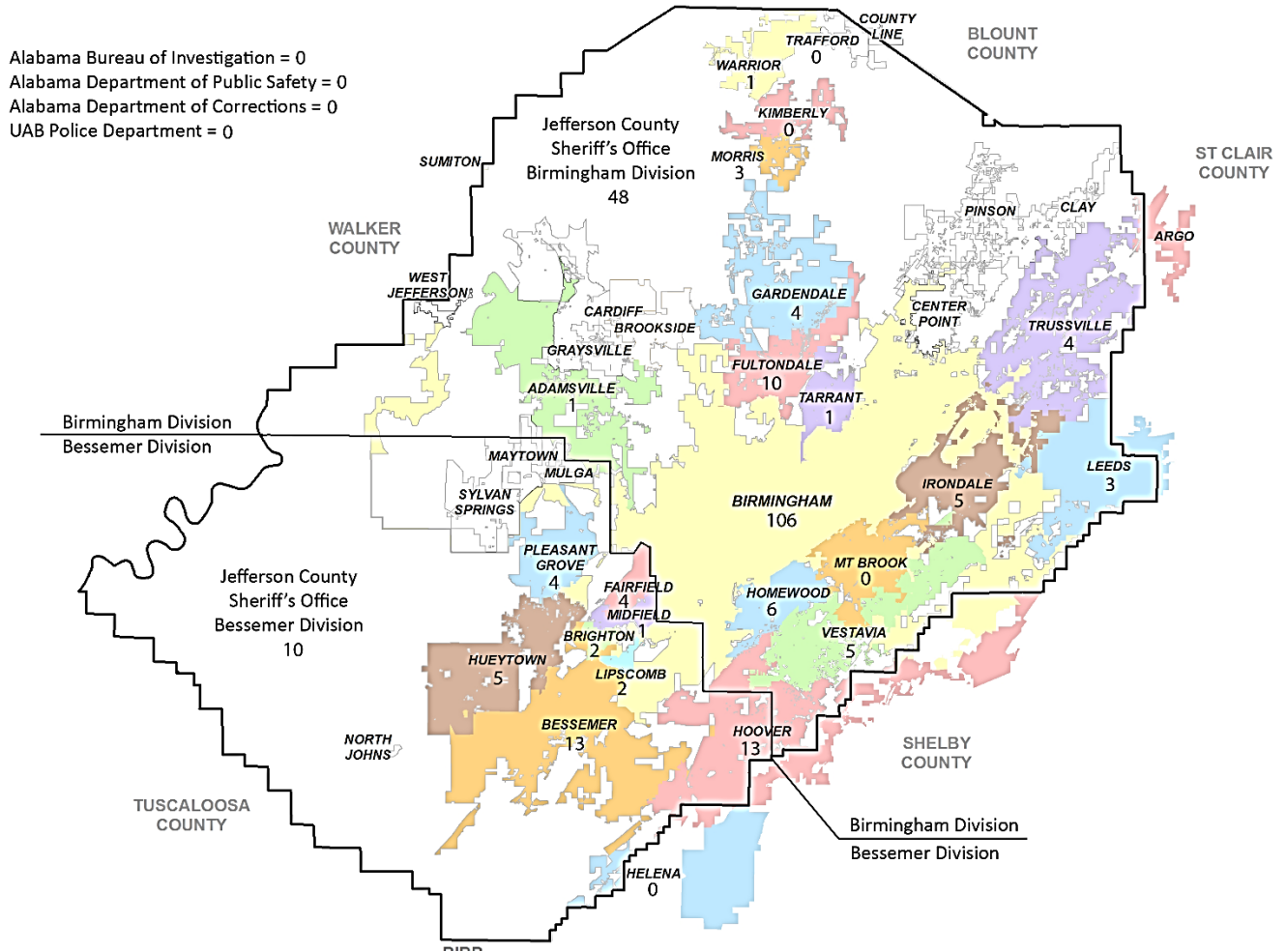
Figure 6.4: represents illicit drugs and poisons.



2016 Overdose Deaths

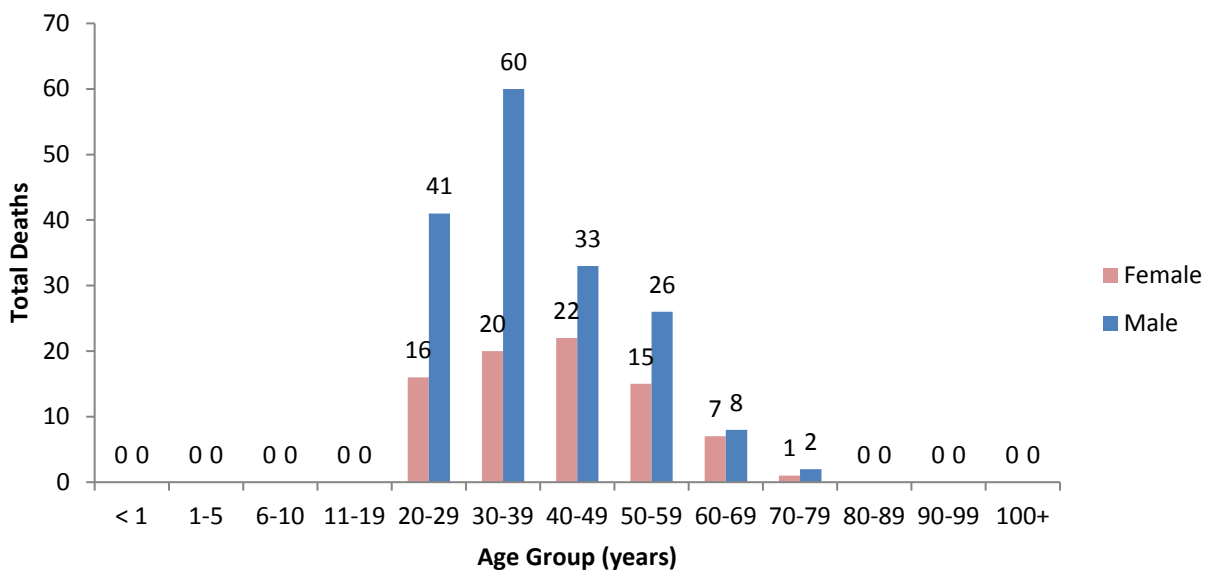
Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency, 2016

Figure 6.5: N=251, represents all overdose deaths by law enforcement agency.



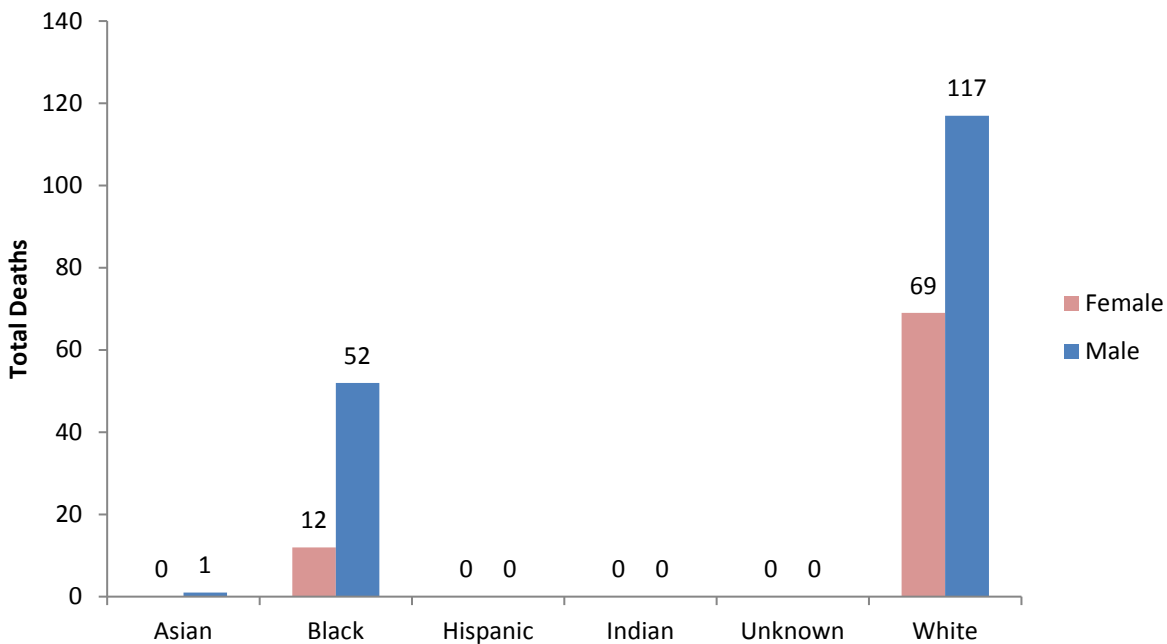
Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Gender and Age Group, 2016

Figure 6.6: N=251, represents all overdose deaths by gender and age group.



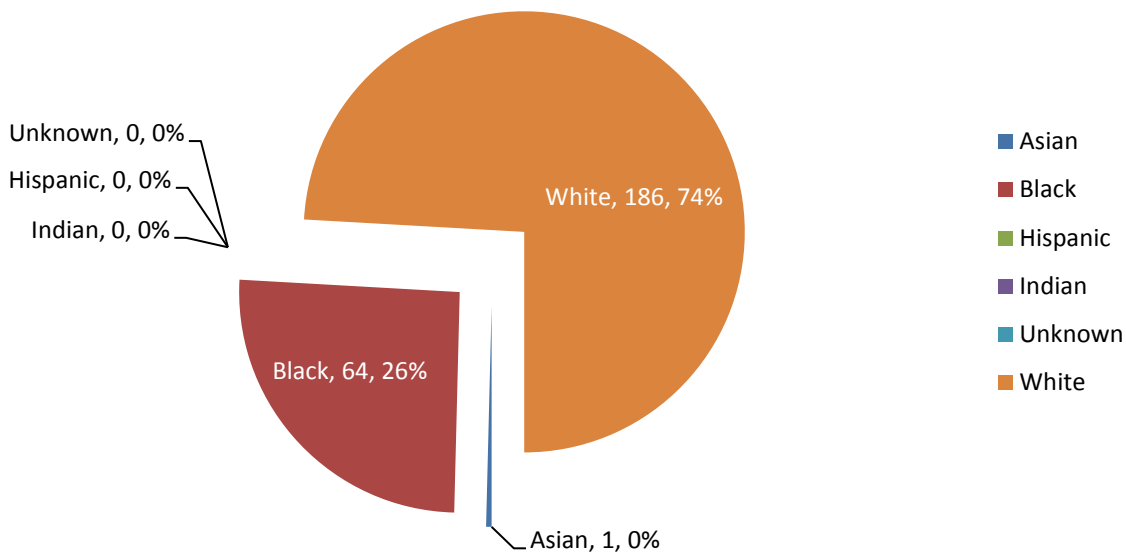
Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Gender and Race, 2016

Figure 6.7: N=251, represents all overdose deaths by gender and race.



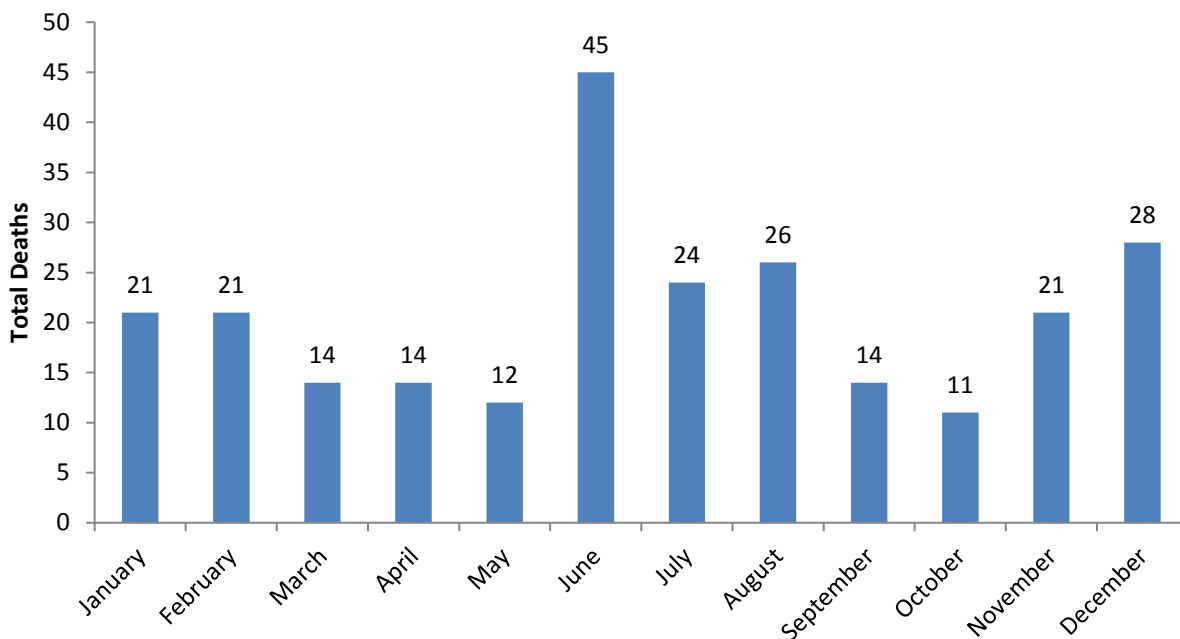
Percentage of Overdose Deaths by Race, 2016

Figure 6.8: N=251, represents all overdose deaths by race.



Total Number of Overdose Deaths by Month of Death, 2016

Figure 6.9: N=251, represents all overdose deaths by month of death.

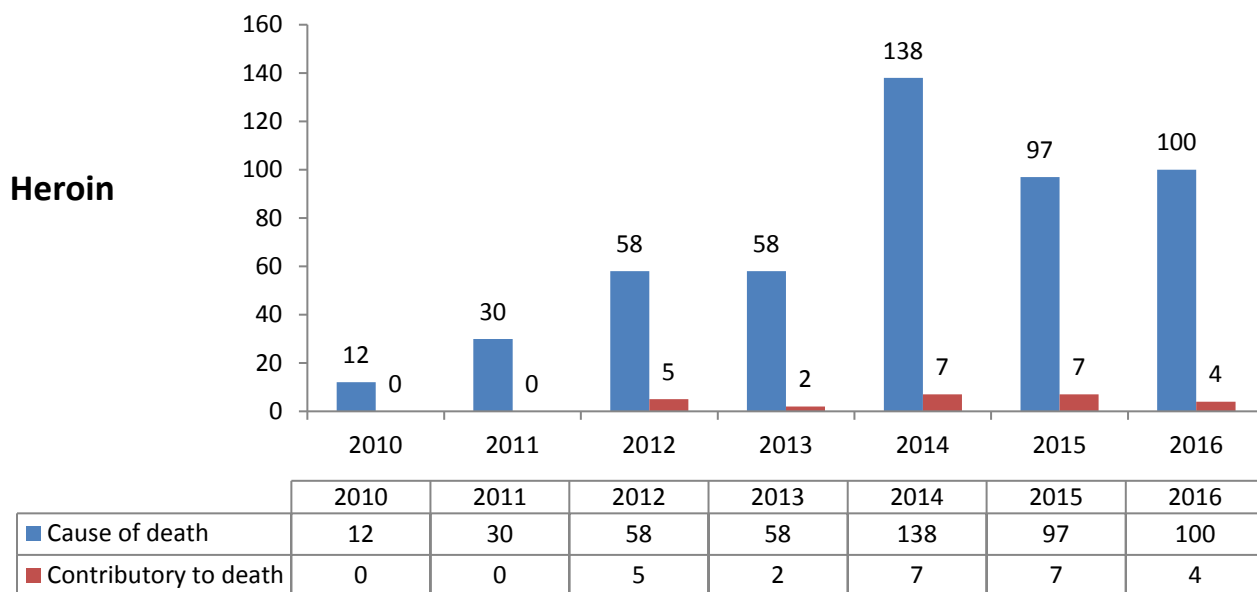


Heroin, 2016

Table 6.2, N= 100, represents all overdoses where heroin as a single component or combined in conjunction with another drug(s) was the cause of death in 2016.

Month		Age		Race		Gender		Law Enforcement	
January	9	0-19	0	W	84	M	71	Adamsville	1
February	6	20-29	28	B	15	F	29	Bessemer	5
March	8	30-39	38	H	0			Birmingham	44
April	7	40-49	21	A	1			Fairfield	2
May	5	50-59	12	I	0			Fultondale	8
June	16	60-69	1					Gardendale	3
July	9	70+	0					Homewood	3
August	5							Hoover	4
September	10							Hueytown	2
October	2							Irondale	1
November	8							Jefferson County	18
December	15							Leeds	2
								Midfield	1
								Morris	3
								Pleasant Grove	1
								Trussville	2

Figure 6.10: includes all cases where heroin as a single component or combined with other drugs was the direct cause or contributing factor in the death.

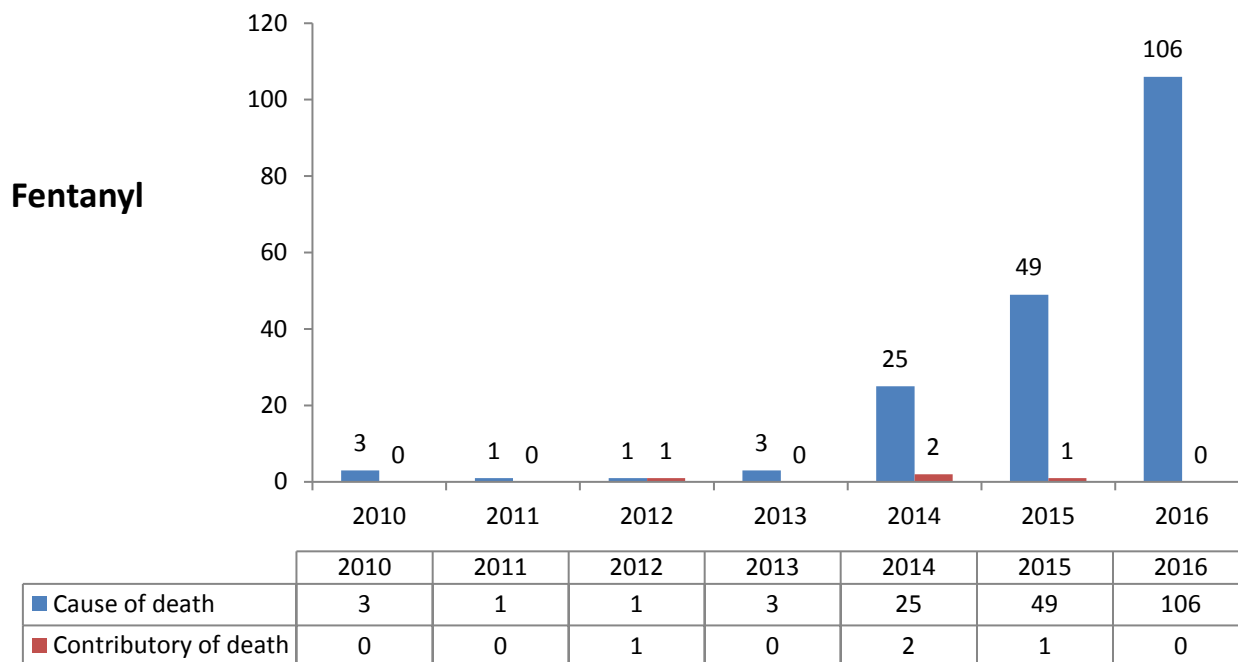


Fentanyl, 2016

Table 6.3, N= 106, represents all overdoses where fentanyl as a single component or combined in conjunction with another drug(s) was the cause of death in 2016.

Month		Age		Race		Gender		Law Enforcement	
January	4	0-19	0	W	81	M	75	Bessemer	4
February	9	20-29	33	B	25	F	31	Birmingham	53
March	0	30-39	34	H	0			Fairfield	1
April	4	40-49	24	A	0			Fultondale	4
May	4	50-59	13	I	0			Gardendale	2
June	26	60-69	2					Homewood	2
July	12	70+	0					Hoover	8
August	14							Hueytown	2
September	7							Irondale	2
October	4							Jefferson County	21
November	9							Morris	1
December	13							Tarrant	1
								Trussville	2
								Vestavia Hills	3

Figure 6.11: includes all cases where fentanyl as a single component or combined with other drugs was the direct cause or contributing factor in the death.



Most Common Prescription Medications Causing Death: 2010-2016

Table 6.4: Rx medications and Rx opioids. A single death might contain multiple drugs therefore; a single death might be represented multiple times in this table. The total for each drug represents the number of occurrences for that calendar year where that particular drug was found to be either the single cause of death or a component in conjunction with another drug(s) that combined was the cause of death. Also, the deaths represented in this table might be a result of a combination of prescription drug(s) and illicit drug(s). Often drug overdoses are found to be a combination of both prescription and illicit drugs.

Prescription Medications	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Opioids:							
Hydrocodone	8	7	8	12	28	11	13
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Fentanyl	3	1	1	3	25	49	106
Methadone	22	13	11	21	21	17	16
Morphine	10	17	12	5	7	3	5
Oxycodone	4	8	4	13	21	11	12
Tramadol	2	0	1	6	5	3	3
Benzodiazepines:							
Alprazolam (Xanax)	5	3	7	12	32	8	31
Clonazepam (Klonopin)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Diazepam (Valium)	3	1	2	7	11	5	3
Barbiturates:							
Butalbital	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Phenobarbital	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Antidepressants:							
Citalopram (Celexa)	4	2	1	1	2	0	1
Nortriptyline (Pamelor)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Velafaxine (Effexor)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other:							
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	2	1	2	1	1	0	0
Amphetamine	3	0	1	0	2	1	2
Carisoprodol (Soma)	1	3	0	2	4	0	0
Fluoxetine (Prozac)	3	2	1	1	1	4	1
Gabapentin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Promethazine (Phenergan)	0	0	1	3	4	1	0
Quetiapine (Seroquel)	1	0	0	2	2	1	1
Sertraline (Zoloft)	0	0	0	0	3	0	1
Trazodone (Oleptro)	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)	1	0	1	0	1	0	0

End of Report