OPINION

Sibling anesthesiologists ask whether significantly low COVID-19 proportionate mortality ratios in 2020 among anesthetists in the United States could be extrapolated to India

Divya Gupta¹, Deepak Gupta²

¹Department of Anaesthesiology and Pain Management, Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India ²Department of Anesthesiology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, United States

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Deepak Gupta, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, United States

Email: dgupta@med.wayne.edu

CITATION

Gupta D, Gupta D. Sibling anesthesiologists ask whether significantly low COVID-19 proportionate mortality ratios in 2020 among anesthetists in the United States could be extrapolated to India. Journal of the Epidemiology Foundation of India. 2024;2(4):211-219.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.56450/JEFI.2024.v2i04.010

ARTICLE CYCLE

Received: 15/10/2024; Accepted: 16/12/2024; Published: 31/12/2024 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. ©The Author(s). 2024 Open Access

ABSTRACT

For the year 2020, the pre-vaccination COVID-19 pandemic era, public use data of decedents as delineated and stratified by their occupations among the residents in India may not be available. Contrastingly, public use data of decedents as delineated and stratified by their occupations among the residents in the United States (U.S.) is available for the year 2020. It was found that all-age (18–90-year-old) and older (65+ year-old) nurse anesthetists in the U.S. as well as the youngest (18–54-year-old) physicians and surgeons including U.S. anesthesiologists had significantly lower proportions of COVID-19 deaths as compared to COVID-19 deaths among all correspondingly age-grouped U.S. workers during the pre-vaccination COVID-19 pandemic era in the year 2020. The question remains whether inverse association between COVID-19 and deaths specifically amongst nurse anesthetists in the U.S. may be a proxy indicator of a potentially inverse association between COVID-19 and deaths amongst anesthesiologists across the world wherever anesthesiologists personally deliver anesthesia to their patients and stay with their patients during the entirety of peri-anesthesia period while following the peri-anesthesia standards of personal protective equipment use as analogous to their use standards followed by nurse anesthetists in the U.S.

For the year 2020, the pre-vaccination COVID-19 pandemic era, public use data of decedents as delineated and stratified by their occupations among the residents in India may not be available. Contrastingly, public use data of decedents as delineated and stratified by their occupations among the residents in the United States (U.S.) is available from 46 states and New York City (excluding Arizona, Iowa, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C.) for the year 2020. This public use data is in public domain per National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Division of Field Studies and Engineering, Health Informatics Branch (1-4). The primary statistics deduced in this public use data are proportionate mortality ratios (PMRs) as derived from death certificates of U.S. resident populations with the objective to detect if the lone underlying causes of death as documented in such death certificates are associated with decedents' occupations (5-6). With mutually-dependent PMRs contributing to each other's PMR inversely (6-7), inter-dependent cause-specific PMRs based on lone documented underlying causes of death have their own set of limitations (a) when decedents may have been affected by up to twenty additionally documented multiple causes of death thus confounding biases, (b) when decedents' usual or longest held occupations per family members/guardians/informants may be incomplete and even inaccurate thus leading to classification biases, and (c) when decedents' data cannot quantify their specific exposure levels at occupation as pertaining to their significant underlying causes of death whereafter interpretations only going by the generally available information as pertaining to their inferable occupational exposures which could very well implicate non-causal associations if not chance associations secondary to indeterminable causal associations.

Anyhow, for this manuscript based on public use data thus non-human participant research, the authors zeroed in on exploring COVID-19 as the underlying cause of death to detect whether proportion of COVID-19 decedents among U.S. anesthetists in the year 2020 were similar to proportion of COVID-19 decedents among all U.S. workers in the year 2020. Moreover, the authors zeroed in on COVID-19 PMRs among similar healthcare practitioners as well as overall lowest/highest significant COVID-19 **PMRs** among NIOSH/NOMS census-coded occupations. Finally, COVID-19 PMRs were delineated per the following age-groups: 18-90 years (all-age decedents), 65+ years (older decedents), 18-64 years (younger decedents) and 18-54 years (the youngest decedents) with PMRs ranging from zero to infinity. These unadjusted COVID-19 PMRs were age-adjusted by 10-year age-group categories (8). For example, before age-adjustment, the unadjusted COVID-19 PMR for 18–90-year-old nurse anesthetists in the year 2020 was equal to 100 multiplied by ratio of proportion of COVID-19 deaths among 18–90-year-old nurse anesthetists in the year 2020 to proportion of COVID-19 deaths among all 18–90-year-old workers in the year 2020.

Essentially, when age-adjusted COVID-19 PMR for an age-grouped occupation was more than 100, it indicated that higher proportion of COVID-19 deaths occurred in that agegrouped occupation as compared to all workers in that age group; and when ageadjusted COVID-19 PMR for an age-grouped occupation was less than 100, it indicated that lower proportion of COVID-19 deaths occurred in that age-grouped occupation as compared to all workers in that age group. whenever COVID-19 PMRs' However. confidence intervals (lower confidence limitsupper confidence limits) included 100 within, those COVID-19 PMRs did not achieve statistical significance per chi-square test irrespective of whether COVID-19 PMRs were higher than, lower than, or equal to 100. Moreover, significance levels were either at *<0.05 level or at **<0.01 level (Tables 1-2) with higher significance levels suggesting precision with narrower confidence intervals.

 Table 1 2020 COVID-19 Proportionate Mortality Ratios (PMRs): Occupation Titles With Significantly

 Lowest/Highest PMRs Per Age Groups

Occupation title	Total number	Total	Proporti	PMR	PMR 95%	Signific
	of decedents	number	onate	95%	Upper	ance
	in occupation	of	Mortalit	Lower	Confidenc	Level:
	title with	decede	y Ratio	Confide	e Limit	*<0.05
	COVID-19 as	nts in	(PMR)	nce	(UCL)	**<0.0

	underlying cause of death N (%)	occupat ion title		Limit (LCL)		1			
WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-90, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH									
BEING 251,591 (10.4%) AMONG THE TOTAL									
MASSAGE THERAPISTS	38 (4.4)	872	47	33	65	**			
IURSE ANESTHETISTS	18 (5.4)	332	50	30	79	**			
IEALTH DIAGNOSING AND TREATING RACTITIONERS, ALL OTHER	15 (5.3)	285	51	29	85	**			
IOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS	66 (5.6)	1187	52	40	66	**			
STRONOMERS AND PHYSICISTS	35 (5.8)	599	52	37	73	**			
LIGHT ATTENDANTS	59 (5.6)	1054	53	41	69	**			
WEB DEVELOPERS	15 (4.5)	337	54	30	89	*			
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION RESEARCH	16 (5.7)	281	55	32	90	*			
NFORMATION SECURITY ANALYSTS	13 (5.1)	255	55	29	94	*			
MARINE ENGINEERS AND NAVAL ARCHITECTS	21 (6.1)	342	57	35	87	**			
RANSPORTATION ATTENDANTS, EXCEPT	69 (17.3)	400	167	130	211	**			
IELPERSPRODUCTION WORKERS	23 (15.8)	146	174	110	261	*			
HOE AND LEATHER WORKERS AND REPAIRERS	128 (19.2)	667	175	146	208	**			
PARKING LOT ATTENDANTS	85 (17.6)	482	178	142	220	**			
MISCELLANEOUS AGRICULTURAL NORKERS	2313 (19.6)	11806	193	188	199	**			
MBULANCE DRIVERS AND ATTENDANTS, XCEPT EMERGENCY MEDICAL ECHNICIANS	65 (19.2)	339	195	151	249	**			
DISHWASHERS	329 (17.8)	1845	196	176	219	**			
AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERS	26 (21.5)	121	198	129	290	**			
AXI DRIVERS AND CHAUFFEURS	1295 (23.2)	5574	229	221	236	**			

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 65+, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 198,478 (11.3%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 1,759,004

ASTRONOMERS AND PHYSICISTS	32 (5.8)	551	51	35	72	**
NURSE ANESTHETISTS	16 (5.9)	272	52	30	85	**
MASSAGE THERAPISTS	23 (5.9)	391	53	33	79	**
BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS	58 (6)	959	54	41	69	**
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS	46 (6.1)	757	54	39	72	**
TECHNICAL WRITERS	33 (6.7)	493	59	41	83	**
CONSERVATION SCIENTISTS AND	38 (6.8)	559	60	43	83	**
FORESTERS						
DIRECTORS, RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AND	16 (6.8)	237	60	34	97	*
EDUCATION						
SMALL ENGINE MECHANICS	27 (6.7)	403	60	39	87	**
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FUNDRAISING	20 (6.9)	290	61	37	94	*
MANAGERS						
PRODUCERS AND DIRECTORS	52 (6.8)	761	61	45	80	**
MARINE ENGINEERS AND NAVAL	20 (7.1)	282	63	38	97	*
ARCHITECTS						
SHOE AND LEATHER WORKERS AND	113 (19.3)	584	171	141	206	**
REPAIRERS						
PARKING LOT ATTENDANTS	55 (19.4)	283	173	130	225	**
AMBULANCE DRIVERS AND ATTENDANTS,	38 (21.2)	179	189	134	260	**
EXCEPT EMERGENCY MEDICAL						
TECHNICIANS						
MISCELLANEOUS AGRICULTURAL	1754 (22.2)	7913	197	191	203	**
WORKERS						
TAXI DRIVERS AND CHAUFFEURS	787 (23)	3428	205	191	220	**

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERS DISHWASHERS	24 (23.3) 196 (23.6)	103 831	206 211	132 182	307 242	** **				
WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-64, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 53,113 (8%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 660,399										
FISHERS AND RELATED FISHING WORKERS	21 (2.2)	963	28	17	42	**				
WRITERS AND AUTHORS	20 (2.6)	783	32	20	50	**				
CEMENT MASONS, CONCRETE FINISHERS, AND TERRAZZO WORKERS	18 (2.6)	702	32	19	51	**				
STRUCTURAL IRON AND STEEL WORKERS	21 (2.8)	748	35	22	54	**				
LOGGING WORKERS	38 (3.3)	1136	40	28	55	**				
MASSAGE THERAPISTS	15 (3.1)	481	41	23	67	**				
SHIP AND BOAT CAPTAINS AND OPERATORS	11 (3.5)	316	41	20	73	**				
BARTENDERS	77 (3.4)	2252	46	36	58	**				
HOSTS AND HOSTESSES, RESTAURANT,	13 (2.9)	448	47	25	81	**				
LOUNGE, AND COFFEE SHOP	()									
NONFARM ANIMAL CARETAKERS	24 (3.5)	690	47	30	71	**				
SAILORS AND MARINE OILERS	12 (3.6)	331	47	24	83	**				
MINING MACHINE OPERATORS	34 (4.2)	808	49	34	68	**				
SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS, APPLICATIONS	61 (4)	1526	50	38	64	**				
AND SYSTEMS SOFTWARE										
MILITARY COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND	17 (4)	424	50	29	80	**				
WARRANT OFFICERS										
AMBULANCE DRIVERS AND ATTENDANTS,	27 (16.9)	160	204	135	298	**				
EXCEPT EMERGENCY MEDICAL										
TECHNICIANS										
FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS OF	25 (18.4)	136	207	134	306	**				
CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS										
TRANSPORTATION ATTENDANTS, EXCEPT	23 (17.6)	131	210	133	315	**				
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS										
SHOE AND LEATHER WORKERS AND	15 (18.1)	83	212	119	350	*				
REPAIRERS										
FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS OF FARMING,	45 (18.8)	240	217	159	291	**				
FISHING, AND FORESTRY WORKERS										
SEWING MACHINE OPERATORS	195 (19.7)	992	220	190	253	**				
TAILORS, DRESSMAKERS, AND SEWERS	74 (20.6)	360	232	182	291	**				
CLERGY	434 (23)	1887	259	235	284	**				
TAXI DRIVERS AND CHAUFFEURS	508 (23.7)	2146	279	255	304	**				

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-54, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 19,831 (6.5%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 304,433

SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS, APPLICATIONS	22 (2.8)	778	42	27	64	**
AND SYSTEMS SOFTWARE						
ARTISTS AND RELATED WORKERS	28 (2.6)	1086	44	29	63	**
WRITERS AND AUTHORS	12 (3)	397	46	24	81	**
COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS	17 (3.4)	507	47	28	76	**
MARKET RESEARCH ANALYSTS AND	12 (3)	400	48	25	84	**
MARKETING SPECIALISTS						
LOGGING WORKERS	14 (3.3)	430	48	26	81	**
WAITERS AND WAITRESSES	141 (2.6)	5487	49	41	58	**
MILITARY	63 (2.7)	2361	50	38	64	**
MILITARY NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER	16 (2.8)	572	50	29	82	**
AND OTHER ENLISTED PERSONNEL						
MILITARY OCCUPATION BLANK	42 (2.6)	1591	51	37	69	**
PERSONAL FINANCIAL ADVISORS	13 (3.7)	348	52	28	89	*
ROOFERS	51 (3.2)	1596	52	39	68	**
FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS OF POLICE AND	23 (15.4)	149	197	125	295	**
DETECTIVES						
DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES WORKERS, NEWS	30 (13.8)	217	197	133	281	**
AND STREET VENDORS, AND RELATED						

WORKERS						
PACKAGING AND FILLING MACHINE	55 (12)	459	197	148	256	**
OPERATORS AND TENDERS						
TAILORS, DRESSMAKERS, AND SEWERS	13 (14.9)	87	210	112	360	*
FOOD PROCESSING WORKERS, ALL OTHER	40 (12.5)	320	213	152	291	**
TRANSPORTATION ATTENDANTS, EXCEPT	11 (18.3)	60	254	127	455	**
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS						
CLERGY	127 (21.9)	581	281	234	334	**
TAXI DRIVERS AND CHAUFFEURS	187 (21.3)	877	294	253	339	**
FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS OF FARMING,	18 (21.4)	84	296	175	468	**
FISHING, AND FORESTRY WORKERS						
SEWING MACHINE OPERATORS	59 (22.7)	260	301	229	388	**
AMBULANCE DRIVERS AND ATTENDANTS,	19 (25)	76	351	211	548	**
EXCEPT EMERGENCY MEDICAL						
TECHNICIANS						

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS)

Table 2: 2020 COVID-19 Proportionate Mortality Ratios (PMRs) Of Nine Occupational Titles Among Health Practitioners Per Age Groups

Occupation title	Total number of	Total	Proporti	PMR	PMR	Significanc
	decedents in	number	onate	95%	95%	e Level:
	occupation title with	of	Mortalit	Lower	Upper	*<0.05
	COVID-19 as underlying	decede	y Ratio	Confide	Confid	**<0.01
	cause of death N (%)	nts in	(PMR)	nce	ence	
		occupat		Limit	Limit	
		ion title		(LCL)	(UCL)	

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-90, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 251,591 (10.4%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 2,419,403

CHIROPRACTORS	50 (7.9)	634	75	56	99	*
DENTISTS	229 (9.7)	2358	88	77	101	Not Significant
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS	1059 (11.3)	9406	103	98	109	Not Significant
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS	68 (11.1)	615	107	83	136	Not Significant
PODIATRISTS	16 (14.2)	113	130	74	212	Not Significant
VETERINARIANS	70 (9.4)	744	88	69	112	Not Significant
REGISTERED NURSES	4539 (10)	45271	93	91	96	**
NURSE ANESTHETISTS	18 (5.4)	332	50	30	79	**
NURSE PRACTITIONERS	72 (8.8)	815	86	67	108	Not Significant

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 65+, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 198,478 (11.3%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 1,759,004

CHIROPRACTORS	37 (8.4)	442	74	52	103	Not Significant
DENTISTS	203 (9.8)	2072	87	75	99	*
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS	917 (11.5)	7996	102	95	108	Not
						Significant
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS	54 (12.8)	423	114	85	148	Not
						Significant
PODIATRISTS	14 (15.4)	91	136	75	229	Not
						Significant
VETERINARIANS	63 (10.5)	602	93	71	119	Not
						Significant
REGISTERED NURSES	3662 (10.2)	36017	90	87	93	**

NURSE ANESTHETISTS	16 (5.9)	272	52	30	85	**
NURSE PRACTITIONERS	39 (7.3)	536	65	46	89	**

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-64, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 53,113 (8%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 660,399

CHIROPRACTORS	13 (6.8)	192	78	41	133	Not Significant
DENTISTS	26 (9.1)	286	105	68	154	Not Significant
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS	142 (10.1)	1410	118	99	139	Not Significant
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS	14 (7.3)	192	87	48	147	Not Significant
PODIATRISTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
VETERINARIANS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
REGISTERED NURSES	877 (9.5)	9254	110	103	117	**
NURSE ANESTHETISTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
NURSE PRACTITIONERS	33 (11.8)	279	138	95	194	Not Significant

WITHIN THE AGE GROUP 18-54, TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS WITH COVID-19 AS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH BEING 19,831 (6.5%) AMONG THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DECEDENTS BEING 304,433

CHIROPRACTORS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
DENTISTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS	26 (4.7)	549	65	42	95	*
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
PODIATRISTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
VETERINARIANS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
REGISTERED NURSES	275 (8.1)	3391	111	98	125	Not
						Significant
NURSE ANESTHETISTS	<11	-	-	-	-	-
NURSE PRACTITIONERS	14 (11.2)	125	147	80	246	Not
						Significant

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS)

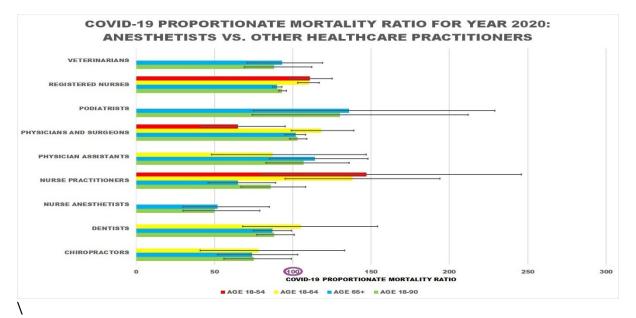
Among a total of 572 occupation titles/codes for each of the four age groups, occupation titles/codes with <11 COVID-19 decedents were suppressed for confidentiality and thus COVID-19 PMRs were not calculated for those suppressed occupation titles/codes (9). When COVID-19 PMRs for occupation titles/codes with 11-19 decedents were calculated despite their potential for unreliable significance level due to smaller sample sizes (10), some of such occupational titles with "unreliable" COVID-19 PMRs have been tabulated in Table 1 depicting occupation titles with significantly lowest/highest PMRs per age groups as well as in Table 2 depicting nine occupational titles among health practitioners per age groups.

In terms of deducing association between the underlying causes of death like COVID-19 and decedents' reported usual or longest held occupations, cause-specific PMRs like COVID-19 PMRs are potential indicators of (a) positive association when significantly higher than 100, (b) inverse association when significantly lower than 100, and (c) noassociation when their confidence intervals either include 100, begin at 100, or end at 100. However, such cause-specific PMRs like COVID-19 PMRs are depicting comparisons of decedents in specific occupations with the decedents amongst the overall worker population. Therefore, they may NOT effectively deduce comparisons between the decedents of one occupation with the decedents of another occupation despite the non-overlapping confidence intervals of multiple occupations' significant COVID-19 PMRs potentially indicating their PMRs as significantly different amongst themselves too. For example, in Table 1, significant COVID-19 PMR at **<0.01 level as 229 (95% CI: 221-236) for 18–90-year-old taxi drivers and chauffeurs was significantly different with non-overlapping confidence interval from significant COVID-19 PMR at **<0.01 level as 193 (95% CI: 188-199) for 18–90-year-old miscellaneous agricultural workers thus potentially implicating that among 18–90year-olds, the occupation of taxi drivers and chauffeurs might have had significantly more positive association with COVID-19 deaths than the occupation of miscellaneous agricultural workers.

As detailed in Table 2 and diagrammed in Figure 1, although all-age (18–90-year-old) nurse anesthetists as well as older (65+ yearold) nurse anesthetists had significant COVID-19 PMRs at **<0.01 level with PMRs being lower than 100 implicating an inverse association between their occupation and COVID-19 as the underlying cause of their deaths, the results might be deemed "unreliable" due to <20 decedents in either age group. Anyhow, inverse association between COVID-19 and deaths amongst nurse anesthetists in the U.S. may be a proxy indicator of a potentially inverse association between COVID-19 and deaths amongst anesthesiologists across the world wherever anesthesiologists personally deliver anesthesia to their patients and stay with their patients during the entirety of perianesthesia period while following the perianesthesia standards of personal protective equipment use as analogous to their use standards followed by nurse anesthetists in the U.S. Interestingly, preponderance of female gender amongst nurse anesthetists female with gender itself potentially protective against COVID-19 and its complications including mortality might have contributed to this inverse association (11-12). Correspondingly, a "reliable" inverse association between COVID-19 and deaths amongst physicians and surgeons including U.S. anesthesiologists was only deduced amongst 18–54-year-old workers with significant COVID-19 PMR at *<0.05 level with PMR being lower than 100. However, U.S. anesthesiologists have multifaceted roles during anesthesia delivery with varying degrees of personally performing, medical and medical supervision of direction. anesthesia procedures which may not be equivalent to the level of occupational exposure as pertaining to COVID-19 among anesthetists in the U.S. nurse and anesthesiologists outside-the-U.S. staving with their patients during the entirety of perianesthesia period. Contrastingly, Kiang et al had reported excess mortality among 45-84year-old U.S. physicians over a 22-month period (March 2020 – December 2021) based on American Medical Association (AMA) Physician Masterfile and AMA Deceased Physician File not containing their causes of death but investigating COVID-19 as potential contributor to their deaths (13). Anyhow, significant COVID-19 PMRs lower than 100 thus depicting inverse association between and COVID-19 deaths amongst U.S. anesthetists and many if not all healthcare practitioner occupations (Table 2) could be reflective of potentially effective use of personal protective equipment by them, decreased volumes of elective surgical procedures and elective healthcare visits in the U.S. during shutdowns/lockdowns, and other unknown unknowns such as healthcare practitioners' own diverse microbiomes secondary to lifelong occupational exposures potentially protecting them and keeping them protected during anesthesia and other healthcare delivery in the pre-vaccination COVID-19 pandemic era (14-17). Few limitations specific to this public use data exploration were that (a) U.S. anesthesiologists were not coded as a separate occupation unlike nurse anesthetists, only whose data could be extrapolated to anesthetists outside-the-U.S.

extrapolated to anesthetists outside-the-U.S. like those practicing anesthesia in India; and (b) sex-grouped, race-grouped, and ethnicitygrouped COVID-19 PMRs were not calculated to avoid classification bias secondary to potential discordance between self-identified demographics and observer-identified demographics considering that eliciting selfidentified gender, race and ethnicity could not be feasible from decedents (18). Summarily, all-age (18–90-year-old) and older (65+ year-old) nurse anesthetists in the U.S. as well as the youngest (18–54-year-old) physicians and surgeons including U.S. anesthesiologists had significantly lower proportions of COVID-19 deaths as compared to COVID-19 deaths among all correspondingly age-grouped U.S. workers during the pre-vaccination COVID-19 pandemic era in the year 2020.

Figure 1: Pre-vaccination pandemic era COVID-19 proportionate mortality ratios for the year 2020 grouped by healthcare practitioners' age-groups: Nurse anesthetists vs. other healthcare practitioners (Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS))



AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All authors have contributed equally.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For the sourced public use data shared in this manuscript from the National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): the authors are indebted to Andrea L Steege, Ph.D., M.P.H., National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), CDC, for providing detailed analyses using NIOSH's Proportionate Mortality Ratio (PMR) Analysis System and for Dr Steege's guidance and support throughout.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI

Assisted Technologies In The Writing Process

The authors haven't used any generative AI/AI assisted technologies in the writing process.

REFERENCES

- NIOSH (2024). National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Field Studies and Engineering, Health Informatics Branch. Last accessed May 23, 2024
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS) https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/surveillance/noms/ind ex.html Last accessed June 16, 2024
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cause of Death (NOMS 2020-2021) Charts: National Occupational Mortality Surveillance (NOMS) https://wwwn.cdc.gov/NIOSH-WHC/chart/NOMS-COD Last accessed Dec 25, 2024
- 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. New Data Available! Assess Causes of Death by Industry and Occupation https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-

science-blog/2022/02/16/noms/ Last accessed Dec 25, 2024

- 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Analyzing Death Certificate Data https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/surveillance/noms/tips -for-analyzing.html Last accessed Dec 25, 2024
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Steps Required to Calculate Proportionate Mortality Ratios https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/media/files/Steps Req

uired_to_Calculate_PMRs_CORRECTED_508.docx Last accessed Dec 25, 2024

- Miettinen OS, Wang JD. An alternative to the proportionate mortality ratio. Am J Epidemiol. 1981;114(1):144-8.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Death Rates for Selected Causes by 10-Year Age Groups, Race, and Sex: Death Registration States, 1900-32, and United States, 1933-98 https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mortality/hist290. htm Last accessed Dec 25, 2024
- 9. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CMS Cell Suppression Policy: Guidance for CMS Cell Suppression Policy Web Page https://www.hhs.gov/guidance/document/cmscell-suppression-policy Last accessed Dec 25, 2024
- 10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2020 https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/ucd.html Last accessed Dec 25, 2024
- 11. Zippia. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist demographics and statistics in the US https://www.zippia.com/certified-registered-nurse-

anesthetist-jobs/demographics/ Last accessed Dec 25, 2024

- Zaher K, Basingab F, Alrahimi J, Basahel K, Aldahlawi A. Gender Differences in Response to COVID-19 Infection and Vaccination. Biomedicines. 2023;11(6):1677.
- Kiang MV, Carlasare LE, Thadaney-Israni S, Norcini JJ, Zaman JAB, Bibbins-Domingo K. Excess Mortality Among US Physicians During the COVID-19 Pandemic. JAMA Intern Med. 2023;183(4):374-376.
- 14. Risko N, Werner K, Offorjebe OA, Vecino-Ortiz AI, Wallis LA, Razzak J. Cost-effectiveness and return on investment of protecting health workers in lowand middle-income countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. PLoS One. 2020;15(10):e0240503.
- Ghoshal S, Rigney G, Cheng D, et al. Institutional Surgical Response and Associated Volume Trends Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic and Postvaccination Recovery Period. JAMA Netw Open. 2022;5(8):e2227443.
- 16. Kumar P, Chander B. COVID 19 mortality: Probable role of microbiome to explain disparity. Med Hypotheses. 2020;144:110209.
- Stutz MR, Dylla NP, Pearson SD, et al. Immunomodulatory fecal metabolites are associated with mortality in COVID-19 patients with respiratory failure. Nat Commun. 2022;13(1):6615.
- Institute of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics. 4.3 Issue #3—Selfidentification or Observer-identification: Principle 1: Self-identification is preferable. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/rediguide/ch4_3.asp Last accessed Dec 25, 2024