

Alcohol deaths soar in England and Wales amid COVID-19 pandemic

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London, February 4 (RHC)-- As the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated national lockdown, continues to exact a heavy toll in lives, it has been revealed that alcohol-related deaths have been rising at record levels as well.

Provisional figures for England and Wales released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), shows that between January and September 2020, 5,460 alcohol-related deaths were officially registered. That figure represents a 16 percent rise on the same period in 2019. It is also the highest alcohol-related death toll since records began in 2001.

According to the ONS' provisional figures, alcohol-related fatalities reached a peak of 12.8 deaths per 100,000 people in the first three months of 2020 and remained at this level throughout September, which

is higher than in any other time since official records began 20 years ago.

It is not clear to what extent (if any) the pandemic, and the associated three national lockdowns (which have confined large numbers of people to their homes), have contributed to a spike in alcohol-related deaths.

On the issue of a connection, ONS spokesman, Ben Humberstone, appeared agnostic by asserting: "The reasons for this [record high alcohol-related deaths] are complex and it will take time before the impact the pandemic has had on alcohol-specific deaths is fully understood."

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