

Invisible deaths

393 homeless people died
in the street in **2022**

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(synthesis)

fiو.PSD Observatory- febbraio 2023

The deaths of homeless people in Italy in 2022

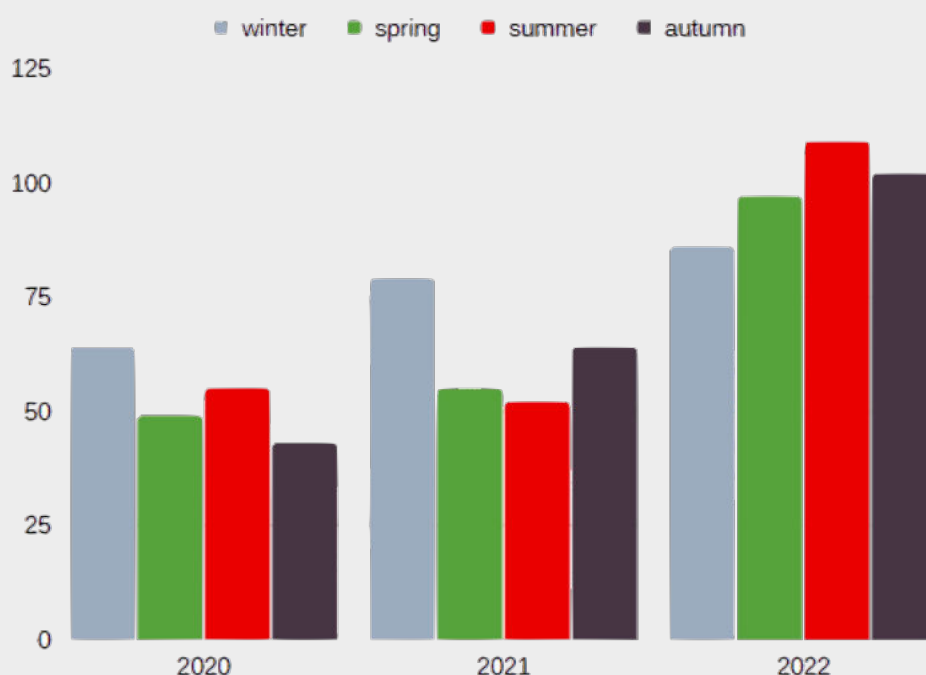
Every year fio.PSD tracks the number of the deaths among homeless people. Unlike countries such as the UK, which monitor these figures using statistical data, our survey uses data collected through the voluntary reporting of fio.PSD members and a review of newspaper reports.

In 2022, a total of 393 deaths among homeless people were registered, an increase of 55% compared to 2021 (250 people) and 83% compared to 2020 (211 people).

As homelessness services have explained in a recent survey¹, the increase in the number of deaths could be due to the emergency situation they have faced in last few years, caused by the pandemic, the Ukrainian emergency and the energy crisis. This situation has put considerable pressure on services, which have had to operate in a context of restrictions and difficulties in coping with an increasingly widespread demand for accommodation and support services.

Interestingly, the following graph clearly shows that **homeless people die throughout the year, and not only during the so called “winter emergency” period**. The figures for 2022 seem particularly relevant, as the number of deaths in summer (109), but also in spring (97) and autumn (101), exceeds the number of deaths occurred in winter (86).

Graph. 1 – Seasonal trend in deaths, 2020,2021,2022



These data suggest some reflections. On the one hand, they confirm what was found in a recent survey carried out among fio.PSD members on the impact of the energy crisis and climate change on the homelessness sector², namely that in the summer period the living conditions of homeless people are

¹ Osservatorio fio.PSD, I servizi all'homelessness in Italia – infografiche, [I Servizi alla Homelessness in Italia - Infografiche 2022](#)

² Osservatorio fio.PSD, Povertà energetica e cambiamento climatico, Settembre 2022 [Povertà energetica e cambiamento climatico](#)

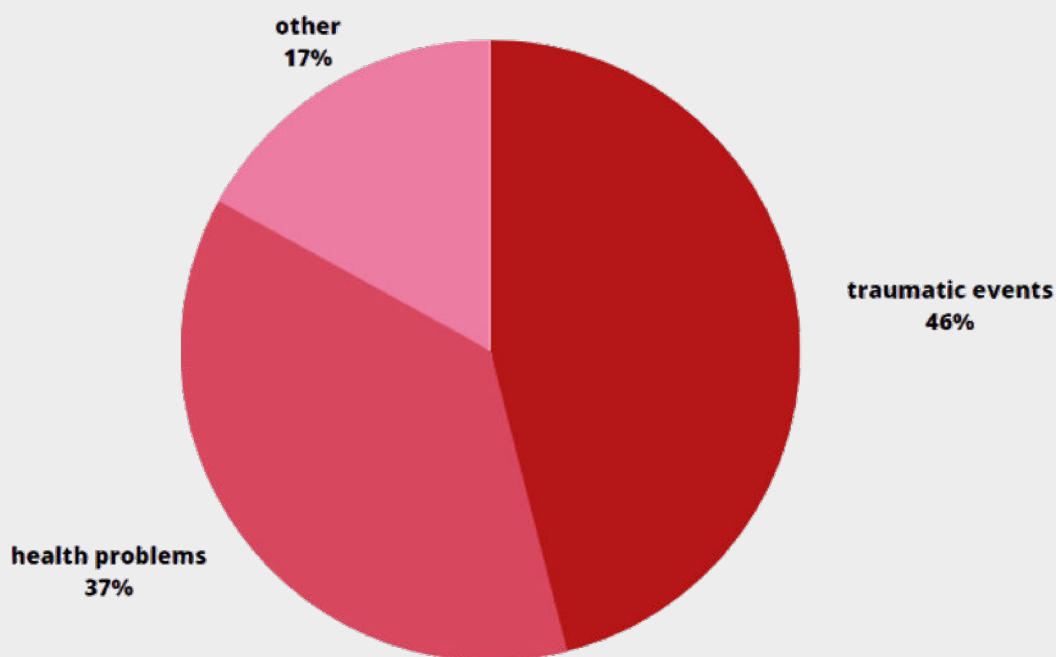
particularly critical, due to the worsening of sanitary conditions and the greater difficulties to protect themselves from heat waves and to access water resources. On the other hand, they could also indicate that the emergency plan adopted by the local administration during the winter period, with the expansion of places in the night shelters and the strengthening of the outreach activities, may have contributed, at least in part, to limiting the number of deaths.

The information collected indicates that the vast majority of people who died in 2022 were men (91%) and foreign nationals, both from non-EU (46%) and EU (14%) countries. Homeless people die at all ages, from young people under 30 (15%) to people over 70 (8%), but the middle age groups are the most represented. Particularly significant in describing the dramatic circumstances in which homeless people die is the comparison between **the average age of death of the Italian population, 81.3 years, and the average age of death of homeless people, 46.9 years**. The deaths have occurred all over the country, overall deaths are registered in 234 Italian municipalities, and especially in the big cities such as Rome, Milan, Naples and Florence.

The causes of deaths are largely related to precarious health conditions (37%), but **the main cause of death, affecting 46% of those who died in 2022, is due to external and traumatic events**: transport accidents (15%), assaults or homicides (9%), suicides (8%), drowning (6%), fires (6%), falls and others accidental events (4%). Finally, 17% of death are due to other causes: hypothermia (5%), drugs overdoses (6%) and alcohol consumption (6%).

The comparison with the national statistical data on the causes of death of the Italian population provides a better understanding of the fact that homeless people die in extreme and violent conditions. The population dies mainly in old age and only in 7% of cases due to the so-called “external causes of trauma”, while this cause accounts for 46% of the deaths among the homeless population. For example, suicides accounts for 1% of death cause among general population, but 8% among homeless people.

Graph 2 – Causes of death of homeless people, macro category (%), 2022



Note: “health problems”: illness, sickness. “Traumatic events”: accidents, drownings, suicides, assaults or murders, fire, falls or other accidental events. “Other”: Hypothermia, overdoses and alcohol abuse.

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This work would not have been possible without the passionate and accurate collection and research work of Fabio Tesser to whom goes the heartfelt thanks of the Federation

The data are constantly updated on the fio.PSD website <https://www.fiopsd.org/morti-senza-dimora/>

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