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This report provides a summary and statistical analysis of the deaths that were investigated by the Mesa County Coroner's Office in the year 2010. Mesa County encompasses an area over 3300 square miles which consists of desert, agricultural and mountain areas. Mesa County is home to approximately 140,000 people in 12 communities. The largest of these is Grand Junction, followed by Fruita and Palisade. Other towns and unincorporated areas of the County include Clifton, Fruitvale, De Beque, Collbran, Mesa, Mack, Loma, Gateway, Glade Park and Whitewater.

The Coroner and/or Deputy Coroner are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Coroner's mission is to satisfy the legal requirements of the office in an expeditious manner. The primary task of the Coroner's Office is to determine the cause and manner of death of those who have died in Mesa County or in those whose traumatic event originated in Mesa County. An autopsy may be required depending upon the circumstances of the death.

The Coroner's Office investigates sudden, unexpected deaths, especially those that occur under violent or suspicious circumstances. Those deaths to be reported to the Mesa County Coroner's Office include all deaths occurring in Mesa County as outlined below regardless of where or when the initial injuring event occurred. In addition, all deaths as outlined below shall be reported that occurred outside of Mesa County but the initiating injuring event occurred in Mesa County.

- From disease which may be hazardous or contagious or which may constitute a threat to the health of the general public
- From external violence, an unexplained cause, or under suspicious circumstances
- Where no physician is in attendance, or where, though in attendance, the physician is unable to certify the cause of death
- From thermal, chemical, or radiation injury
- From criminal abortion
- While in the custody of law enforcement officials or while incarcerated in a public institution
- When the death was sudden and happened to a person who was in good health
- From an industrial accident or any death suspected to involved with the decedent's occupation
- When death occurs in a hospital less than 24 hours after admission to a hospital or after any invasive procedure
- Any death suspected to be due to alcohol intoxication or the result of exposure to drugs or toxic agents
- Any death due to neglect or suspected neglect
- Any stillbirth of 20 or more weeks gestational age unattended by a physician
- Any maternal death to include death of a pregnant woman regardless of the length of the pregnancy, and up to six weeks (or one year) post-delivery, even where the cause of death is unrelated to the pregnancy
- Any death of an infant or child where the medical history has not established a significant pre-existing condition

Staff

Dean Havlik, M.D.	Coroner & Forensic Pathologist
Kim Hollingshead, D-ABMDI	Deputy Coroner
Steven Stogsdill, D-ABMDI	Deputy Coroner
Robert Kurtzman, D.O.	Forensic Pathologist

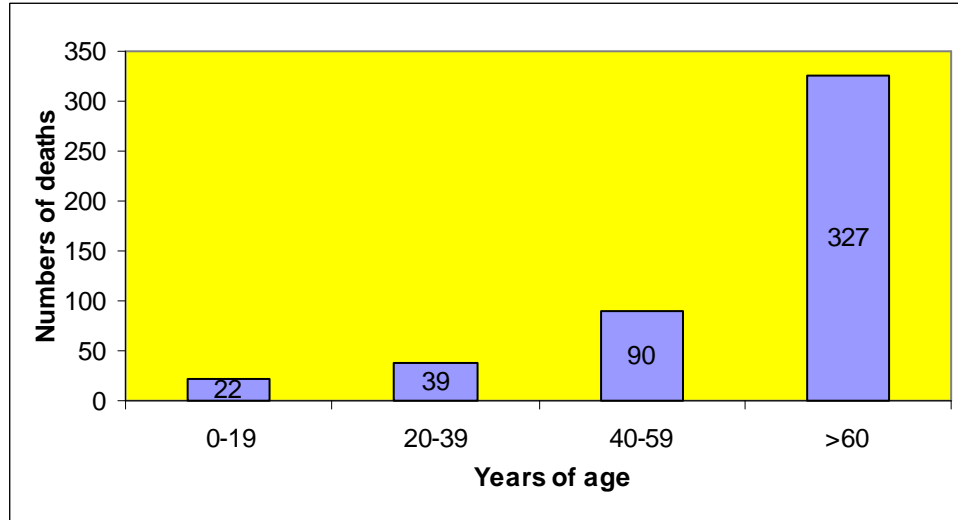
General Statistics

Mesa County population in 2010 (2010 census data)	137,879
Total Mesa County deaths	1407
Percentage of Mesa County citizens who died in 2010	1.02%
Number of deaths investigated	478
Percentage of deaths investigated	40%
Number of postmortem examinations	142
Percentage of deaths having an examination	10.1%
Gender	
Males	288
Females	190
Race	
Caucasian	458
Hispanic	16
Black	2
Native American	1
East Indian	1

Deaths by Day of the Week and Month

Day	2010	
	Count	% of Total
Sunday	68	14.2%
Monday	70	14.6%
Tuesday	65	13.6%
Wednesday	75	15.7%
Thursday	57	11.9%
Friday	75	15.7%
Saturday	68	14.2%
Month	2010	
	Count	% of Total
January	39	8.2%
February	38	8.0%
March	42	8.8%
April	45	9.4%
May	48	10.0%
June	44	9.2%
July	34	7.1%
August	46	9.6%
September	40	8.3%
October	35	7.3%
November	36	7.5%
December	31	6.5%

Age



** In the 0 to 19 years old group, 18 were males and 4 were females. Of these, 12 were natural deaths, 5 were accidental deaths, 1 was a suicide of a 14 year old, 1 was a gunshot wound homicide of a teenager (not child abuse related) and 3 were undetermined deaths. Of the 5 accidental deaths, 3 were motor vehicle accidents, 1 was of a teenager that fell out of a moving vehicle and 1 was a ski accident. Of the 3 undetermined deaths, 1 was of an infant with no definitive cause of death but was co-sleeping with others (possible asphyxia related death due to roll-over onto the infant). The other two undetermined deaths were of teenagers who died of drug intoxications but it was unclear if they were intentional (suicide) or accidental deaths. There were no child abuse related deaths.

Manner of Death

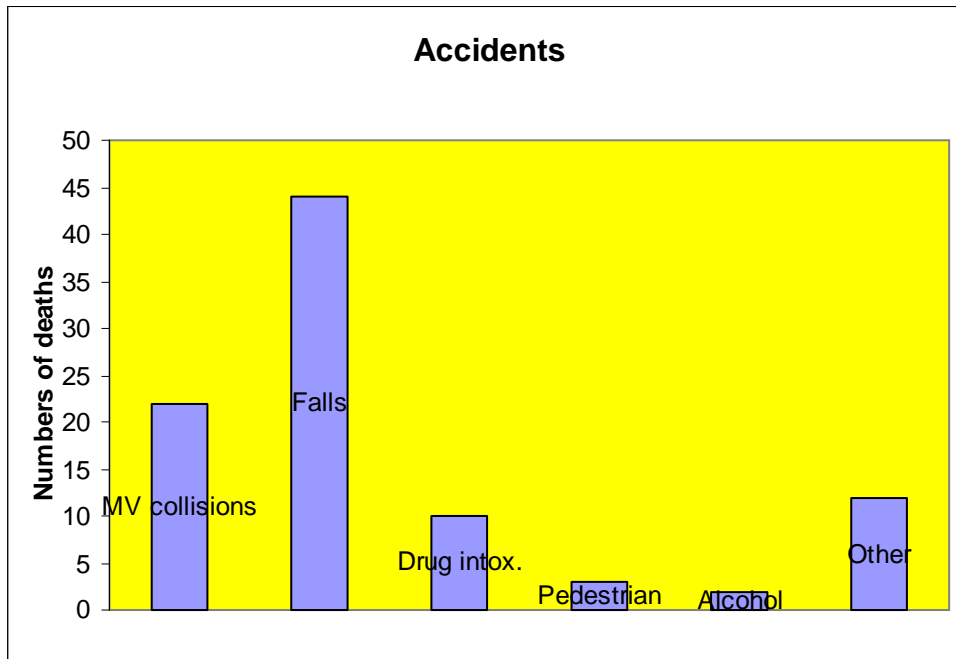
Manner	# of cases	# of postmortem exams	% receiving a postmortem exam **
Natural	333	48	14%
Accident	93	42	45%
Suicide	32	32	100%
Homicide	8	8	100%
Undetermined	12	12	100%

** In the 51 accidental deaths in which no postmortem examination was performed, the decedents were hospitalized for an extended period of time and the injuries were documented in the hospital. Of these deaths, 7 were motor vehicle accidents, 38 were falls from standing heights in older individuals, 1 was a fall down stairs, 1 was a fall from

a roof, 1 was from a ski accident, 1 was from food aspiration and 1 was from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle vs. pedestrian accident.

Accidental Deaths

Type	Number of deaths
Motor vehicle (MV) collisions	22
Falls	44
Drug intoxication	10
Pedestrian vs. Motor vehicle (MV)	3
Alcohol related	2
Other **	12



**The "other" cases include 3 deaths due to drowning, 2 fire victims, 1 death related to medical therapy, 1 death due to a skiing accident, 1 gunshot wound of the abdomen, 1 carbon monoxide poisoning, 1 ligature strangulation and 2 food aspiration related deaths.

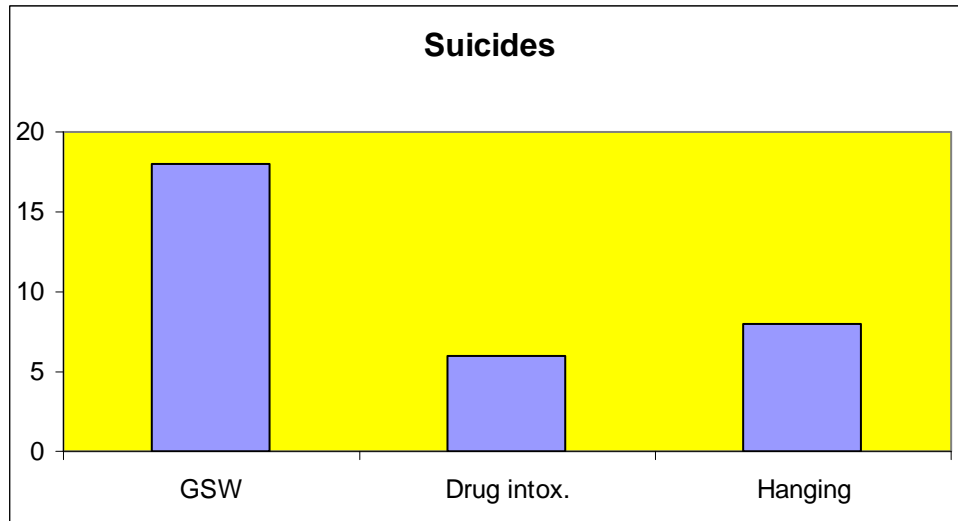
The majority of the falls were of elderly individuals who fell from a standing height, many of which resulting in a fractured hip.

The 22 motor vehicle collision-related deaths displayed the following characteristics:

- Drivers of automobiles – 13
- Passengers of automobiles – 5
- Drivers of motorcycle/ATV wearing a helmet – 2
- Drivers of motorcycle/ATV without a helmet – 2
- Automobile victims wearing a seatbelt – 9
- Automobile victims not wearing a seatbelt – 7
- Automobile victims unknown if wearing a seatbelt – 2
- Alcohol or drugs involved in at least 3 of the deaths (13.6% of cases)
 - Alcohol only in 2 deaths
 - Alcohol and drugs in 1 death
 - Drugs only in 1 death
 - Unknown if alcohol or drugs involved in 1 death

Suicides

Type	Number of deaths
Gunshot wounds (GSW)	18
Drug intoxications	6
Hanging	8



The following are some features of the suicide deaths:

- 28 males and 4 females
- Males ranged from 14 to 87 years of age (average age 48) and included the following:

- Gunshot wounds – 17 deaths
- Drug intoxications – 4 deaths
- Hanging – 7 deaths
- Females ranged from 33 to 64 years of age (average age 46) and included the following:
 - Gunshot wounds – 1 death
 - Drug intoxications – 2 deaths
 - Hanging – 1 death

Homicides

The 8 homicides had the following characteristics:

- 5 deaths due to gunshot wounds
- 3 deaths due to stabbing

Undetermined deaths

There were 12 deaths that had an undetermined manner of death. Nine of these deaths were drug intoxications. The manner was undetermined in these deaths primarily due to the lack of evidence indicating whether these deaths were suicides, i.e. intentional ingestion of the drug(s), versus accidental over usage of the drug(s). One of the undetermined deaths was that of an infant where no definitive cause of death was identified but was found dead in bed where others were sleeping (possible asphyxia death due to accidental roll-over onto the infant). There was 1 death of an individual who fell from a cliff and it was unclear if it was accidental fall or was intentionally pushed off the cliff. One of the deaths was of an individual who was found in the Colorado River and it was unclear the cause and manner of death.

Natural deaths

Of the 333 natural deaths investigated, the majority were cardiovascular related (232 deaths, 69.7%). Deaths due to cardiovascular causes include myocardial infarcts (heart attacks), heart arrhythmias, strokes and aneurysms. There were 23 deaths related to infectious causes (predominantly pneumonia in elderly individuals), 26 cancer related deaths and 6 deaths related to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema).

Notes of interest

There was 1 child homicide in 2010 which involved a teenager shooting another teenager. In 2009 there were no child homicides, in 2008 there were 3 child homicides and in 2007 there were 2 child homicides. Overall, the numbers of homicides in 2010 (8 cases) were similar to other years (5 homicides in 2009, 9 homicides in 2008 and 6 homicides in 2007). The numbers of suicides has decreased over the last four years. There were 32 suicides in 2010, 35 suicides in 2009, 39 in 2008 and 43 in 2007.