

Experts warn Covid, NCDs lowering life expectancy: Report

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PETALING JAYA: The Covid-19 pandemic is the most significant factor behind the decline in life expectancy of babies born this year in Malaysia, experts said.

However, other factors such as genetics and the healthcare system are also driving factors, health experts told The Malaysian Insight.

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said the decline in life expectancy from 2020 to 2022 is attributed to the increase in the number of excess deaths during the pandemic.

“Life expectancy is an average measurement and depends on the number and ages of people who die.

“During the pandemic, the number of young people dying rose disproportionately, resulting in life expectancy declining,” Dr Muruga Raj told [The Malaysian Insight](#).

According to a 2021 study published in the British Medical Journal that was conducted in 37 countries, more than 28 million excess years of life were lost in 2020 in 31 countries, with a higher rate in men than women.

Public health expert Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said accidents and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer are also possible causes of lower life expectancy.

“Malaysia is seeing an increasing trend in morbidity and premature death (below 70 yrs old) due to chronic illnesses, NCDs, and accidents. This may contribute to a future reduction in life expectancy,” Dr Zainal said.