U.S. life expectancy declines for first time since 1993

By Lenny Bernstein, Washington Post

 For the first time in more than two decades, life expectancy for Americans declined last year — a troubling development linked to a panoply of worsening health problems in the United States.

Rising fatalities from heart disease and stroke, diabetes, drug overdoses, accidents and other conditions caused the lower life expectancy revealed in a report released Thursday by the National Center for Health Statistics. In all, death rates rose for eight of the top 10 leading causes of death.

"I think we should be very concerned," said Princeton economist Anne Case, who called for thorough research on the increase in deaths from heart disease, the No. 1 killer in the United States. "This is singular. This doesn't happen."

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