

Suicide

Facts at a Glance

SUMMER 2010

Fatal Suicidal Behavior

In 2007:

- Suicide was the eleventh leading cause of death for all ages.¹
- More than 34,000 suicides occurred in the U.S. This is the equivalent of 94 suicides per day; one suicide every 15 minutes or 11.26 suicides per 100,000 population.¹
- The National Violent Death Reporting System includes information on the presence of alcohol and other substances at the time of death. For those tested for substances, the findings from the 16 states revealed that one-third of those who died by suicide were positive for alcohol at the time of death and nearly 1 in 5 had evidence of opiates, including heroin and prescription pain killers.²

Nonfatal Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior

- Among young adults ages 15 to 24 years old, there are approximately 100-200 attempts for every completed suicide.³
- Among adults ages 65 years and older, there are approximately four suicide attempts for every completed suicide.³
- In 2009, 13.8% of U.S. high school students reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months preceding the survey; 6.3% of students reported that they had actually attempted suicide one or more times during the same period.⁴

Gender Disparities

- Males take their own lives at nearly four times the rate of females and represent 78.8% of all U.S. suicides.¹
- During their lifetime, women attempt suicide about two to three times as often as men.⁵
- Suicide is the seventh leading cause of death for males and the fifteenth leading cause for females.¹
- Suicide rates for males are highest among those aged 75 and older (rate 36.1 per 100,000).¹
- Suicide rates for females are highest among those aged 45-54 (rate 8.8 per 100,000 population).¹
- Firearms are the most commonly used method of suicide among males (55.7%).¹
- Poisoning is the most common method of suicide for females (40.2%).¹

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

- Among American Indians/Alaska Natives ages 15- to 34-years, suicide is the second leading cause of death.¹
- Suicide rates among American Indian/Alaskan Native adolescents and young adults ages 15 to 34 (20.0 per 100,000) are 1.8 times higher than the national average for that age group (11.4 per 100,000).¹
- Hispanic and Black, non-Hispanic female high school students in grades 9-12 reported a higher percentage of suicide attempts (11.1% and 10.4%, respectively) than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts (6.5%).⁴



Suicide Facts at a Glance

Age Group Differences

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 25-34 year olds and the third leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year olds.¹
- Among 15- to 24-year olds, suicide accounts for 12.2% of all deaths annually.¹
- The rate of suicide for adults aged 75 years and older was 16.0 per 100,000.¹

Nonfatal, Self-Inflicted Injuries*

- In 2008, 376,306 people were treated in emergency departments for self-inflicted injuries.¹
- In 2008, 163,489 people were hospitalized due to self-inflicted injury.¹
- There is one suicide for every 25 attempted suicides.³

Suicide-Related Behaviors among U.S. High School Students

In 2009:

- 13.8% of students in grades 9-12 seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months (17.4% of females and 10.5% of males).⁴
- 6.3% of students reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months (8.1% of females and 4.6% of males).⁴
- 1.9% of students had made a suicide attempt that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or an overdose that required medical attention (2.3% of females and 1.6% of males).⁴

**The term “self-inflicted injuries” refers to suicidal and non-suicidal behaviors such as self-mutilation.*

References

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2. Karch D, Dahlberg L, Patel N, Davis T, Logan J, Hill H, Ortega L. Surveillance for Violent Deaths—National Violent Death Reporting System, 16 states, 2006. *MMWR* 2009; 58(ss01); 1-44.
3. Goldsmith SK, Pellmar TC, Kleinman AM, Bunney WE, editors. Reducing suicide: a national imperative. Washington (DC): National Academy Press; 2002.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009. *Surveillance Summaries*, June 4. *MMWR* 2010; 59(No. SS-5).
5. Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi A, Lozano R, editors. World report on violence and health. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2002.

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