

Suicide

Facts at a Glance

SUMMER 2008

Fatal Suicidal Behavior

In 2005:

- Suicide was the eleventh leading cause of death for all ages.¹
- Suicides accounted for 1.3% of all deaths in the U.S.¹
- More than 32,000 suicides occurred in the U.S. This is the equivalent of 89 suicides per day; one suicide every 16 minutes or 11.01 suicides per 100,000 population.¹
- The National Violent Death Reporting System examined toxicology tests of those who committed suicide in 13 states: 33.3% tested positive for alcohol; 16.4% for opiates; 9.4% for cocaine; 7.7% for marijuana; and 3.9% for amphetamines.²

Nonfatal Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior

- Among young adults ages 15 to 24 years old, there is one suicide for every 100-200 attempts.³
- Among adults ages 65 years and older, there is one suicide for every four suicide attempts.³
- In 2007, 14.5% of U.S. high school students reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months preceding the survey. More than 6.9% 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 79.4% 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 eighth leading cause of death for males and the seventeenth leading cause for females.¹
- Among males, adults ages 75 years and older have the highest rate of suicide (rate 37.97 per 100,000 population).¹
- Among females, those in their 40s and 50s have the highest rate of suicide (rate 7.53 per 100,000 population).¹
- Firearms are the most commonly used method of suicide among males (57.6%).¹
- Poisoning is the most common method of suicide for females (39.1%).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 (21.7 per 100,000) are 2.2 times higher than the national average for that age group (10.0 per 100,000).¹
- Hispanic female high school students in grades 9-12 reported a higher percentage of suicide attempts (14.0%) than their White, non-Hispanic (7.7%) or Black, non-Hispanic (9.9%) counterparts.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 12.3% of all deaths annually.¹
- The rate of suicide for adults aged 65 years and older was 14.7 per 100,000.¹

Nonfatal, Self-Inflicted Injuries*

- In 2005, 372,722 people were treated in emergency departments for self-inflicted injuries.⁶
- In 2006, 162,359 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 2007:

- 14.5% of students, grade 9-12, seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months (18.7% of females and 10.3% of males).⁴
- 6.9% of students reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months (9.3% of females and 4.6% of males).⁴
- 2.0% of students reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months that required medical attention (2.4% of females and 1.5% of males).⁴

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

References

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