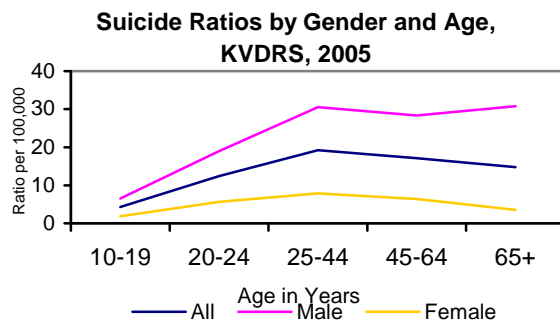


Information about Suicide from the Kentucky Violent Death Reporting System (KVDRS)

By Sabrina Walsh, Dr.P.H. & Julie Cerel, Ph.D.

Suicide is the most common manner (69%) of violent death in Kentucky. Suicides are almost three times more common than homicide in Kentucky.

In order to better understand why violent deaths occur, the CDC developed the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), a nationwide state-based surveillance system designed to track trends and characteristics of violent deaths with the goal of reducing these deaths. Kentucky is fortunate to be one of 17 states funded by NVDRS starting in 2005. Violent death information, including suicides, is collected from the Kentucky State Police, 120 county coroner offices, medical examiner offices, forensic crime laboratories and toxicology laboratories and combined into the KVDRS. The following results represent the first full year of KVDRS data collection and analysis.



Age and Sex: There are more male suicide deaths than would be expected from the number of male persons residing in Kentucky. Suicides in Kentucky occur predominantly in white (89%) males (78%) older than 25 years of age (84%).

Weapon/Mechanism: The majority of suicides in Kentucky involve a firearm (70%). Poisoning is a more common cause of suicide in women than in men

(26% and 8%), hanging is more common in minors versus adults (31% and 17%) and in nonwhites versus whites (27% and 17%).

Circumstances: A case history is recorded by the coroner and available to the KVDRS in 78% of suicides.

- Current depressed mood (55%), current mental health problem (52%), and current treatment for mental health (52%) comprise the top three circumstances surrounding a suicide.
- In 29% of suicides the coroner notes an intimate partner problem as a contributing factor. In 44% of those cases, the decedent's partner is in the process of leaving, breaking up, separating, divorcing, or a divorce recently finalized—87% were men.
- 8% of suicide in 2005 were of veterans. These veterans are all male, 11% (5/46) are between the ages of 18-34, 48%, (22/46) are between the ages of 35-59, and 41% (19/46) are older than 60. This is similar to that of Kentucky's veteran population (8.7%)

Future funding for NVDRS is still being debated by congress. For more detailed information about the KVDRS, please go to our website: <http://www.kvdrs.uky.edu/>