



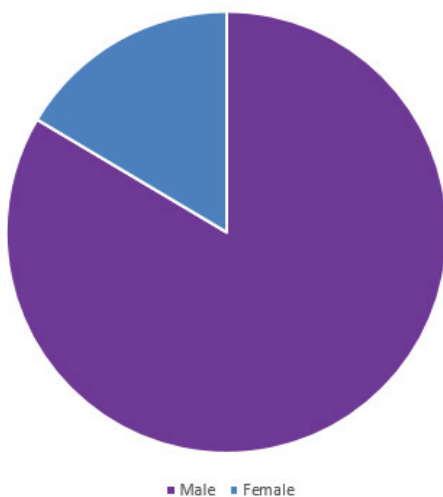
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Elderly Suicide Fact Sheet Based on 2012 Data (2014)

Overview

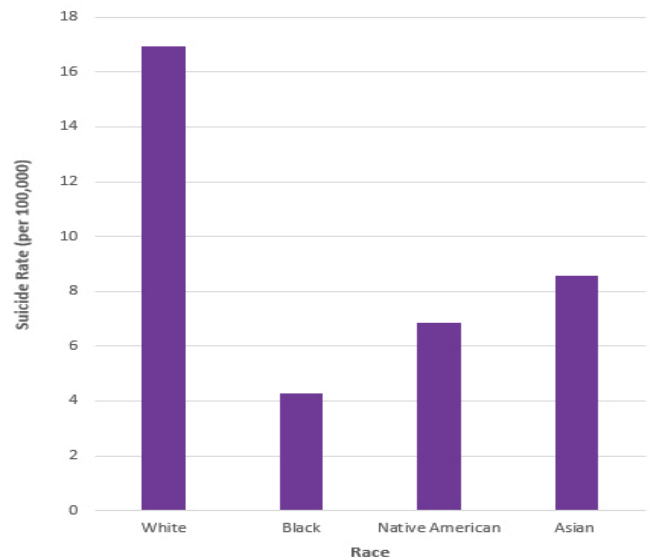
- The elderly (ages 65 and older) made up 13.75% of the population; they accounted for 16.37% of all suicides in the US.
- The rate of suicides for the elderly for 2012 was 15.4 per 100,000.
- There was about one elderly suicide every 80 minutes.
- There were about 18.2 suicides each day resulting in 6,648 suicides in among those 65 and older.
- Elderly white men were at the highest risk with a rate of approximately 32.24 suicides per 100,000 each year.
- 83.6% of elderly suicides were male; the rate of male suicides in late life was about 5.25 times greater than female suicides.

Elderly Suicides Among Elderly: Divided by Gender



- The rate of suicide for women typically declines after age 60 (after peaking in the middle adulthood, ages 45-49).

- White men over the age of 85 were at the greatest risk of all age-gender-race groups. In 2012, the suicide rate for these men was 50.67 per 100,000. That was almost 2.5 times the current rate for men of all ages (20.57 per 100,000). The suicide rate for the elderly reached a peak in 1987 at 21.8 per 100,000 people.



- Although older adults attempt suicide less often than those in other age groups, they have a higher completion rate. For all ages combined, there is an estimated 1 suicide for every 100-200 attempts. Over the age of 65, there is 1 estimated for every 4 attempted suicides.
- Firearms were the most common means (72.1%) used for completing suicide among the elderly. Men use firearms more often than women.
- Alcohol or substance abuse plays a diminishing role in later life suicides compared to younger suicides.



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Overview (continued)

- One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression; often undiagnosed and/or untreated.

Risk Factors

The act of completing suicide is rarely preceded by only one cause or one reason. Common risk factors include:

- The recent death of a loved one
- Physical illness
- Uncontrollable pain or the fear of a prolonged illness
- Perceived poor health
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Major changes in social roles (e.g. retirement)