

# SUICIDE IN TEXAS

## Introduction

Suicide is death due to an injury which was intentionally inflicted upon the decedent by him/her self. Suicide is reported on death certificates by the Medical Examiner or Justice of the Peace. 90% of people who die from suicide have a mental health disorder; 95% of people with mental health disorders do not die from suicide. Every year, about 30,000 people die by suicide in the U.S., and some 650,000 receive emergency treatment after a suicide attempt.

Childhood trauma has emerged as a strong risk factor for suicidal behavior in adolescents and adults. The official rate of child victimization in 1999 was about 12 per 1000 but the rates are even higher in surveys of children and parents. Independent of psychopathology and other known risk factors, child sexual abuse has been reported in 9–20 percent of suicide attempts in adults.

## 10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States-2006

Rank	Age Groups										Total
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1	Congenital Anomalies 5,819	Unintentional Injury 1,010	Unintentional Injury 1,044	Unintentional Injury 1,214	Unintentional Injury 16,229	Unintentional Injury 14,554	Unintentional Injury 17,534	Malignant Neoplasms 50,334	Malignant Neoplasms 101,454	Heart Disease 910,542	Heart Disease 631,636
2	Short Gestation 4,841	Congenital Anomalies 615	Malignant Neoplasms 459	Malignant Neoplasms 448	Homicide 4,199	Suicide 4,935	Malignant Neoplasms 13,917	Heart Disease 38,095	Heart Disease 65,477	Malignant Neoplasms 397,515	Malignant Neoplasms 559,898
3	SIDS 2,323	Malignant Neoplasms 377	Congenital Anomalies 182	Homicide 241	Suicide 4,199	Homicide 4,725	Heart Disease 12,339	Unintentional Injury 13,975	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 12,375	Cerebrovascular 117,210	Cerebrovascular 137,119
4	Maternal Pregnancy Comp. 1,683	Homicide 366	Homicide 149	Suicide 216	Malignant Neoplasms 1,664	Malignant Neoplasms 3,656	Suicide 6,991	Liver Disease 7,712	Unintentional Injury 11,446	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 108,845	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 124,583
5	Unintentional Injury 1,147	Heart Disease 161	Heart Disease 90	Heart Disease 163	Heart Disease 1,078	Heart Disease 3,307	HIV 4,010	Suicide 7,426	Diabetes Mellitus 11,432	Alzheimer's Disease 71,660	Unintentional Injury 121,559
6	Placenta Cord Membranes 1,140	Influenza & Pneumonia 125	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 52	Congenital Anomalies 162	Congenital Anomalies 460	HIV 1,182	Homicide 3,020	Cerebrovascular 6,341	Cerebrovascular 10,518	Diabetes Mellitus 52,351	Diabetes Mellitus 72,449
7	Respiratory Distress 825	Septicemia 88	Cerebrovascular 45	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 63	Cerebrovascular 210	Diabetes Mellitus 673	Liver Disease 2,551	Diabetes Mellitus 5,692	Liver Disease 7,217	Influenza & Pneumonia 49,346	Alzheimer's Disease 72,432
8	Bacterial Sepsis 807	Perinatal Period 65	Influenza & Pneumonia 40	Cerebrovascular 50	HIV 206	Cerebrovascular 527	Cerebrovascular 2,221	HIV 4,377	Suicide 4,583	Nephritis 37,377	Influenza & Pneumonia 56,326
9	Neonatal Hemorrhage 618	Benign Neoplasms 60	Septicemia 40	Septicemia 44	Influenza & Pneumonia 194	Congenital Anomalies 437	Diabetes Mellitus 2,094	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 3,924	Nephritis 4,368	Unintentional Injury 35,263	Nephritis 45,344
10	Circulatory System Disease 543	Cerebrovascular 54	Benign Neoplasms 38	Benign Neoplasms 38	Complicated Pregnancy 179	Influenza & Pneumonia 335	Septicemia 870	Viral Hepatitis 2,911	Septicemia 4,032	Septicemia 28,201	Septicemia 34,234

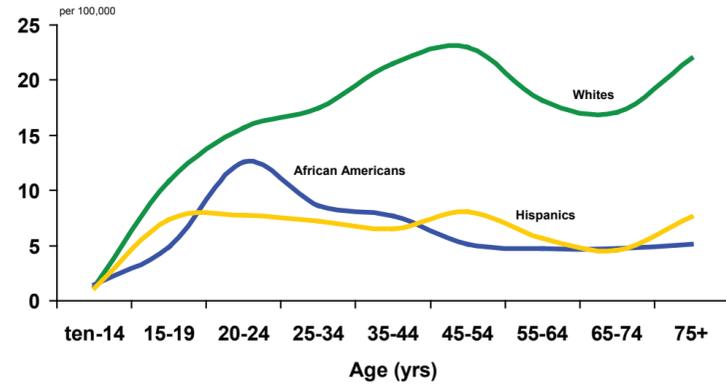
Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC.  
Produced by: Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

Deaths by: ■ Homicide ■ Suicide ■ Unintentional Injury

Figure 1. 10 Leading Causes of Death. Colored blocks are unnatural causes of death.

Social support is a protective factor. Those who enjoy close relationships cope better with various stresses, including bereavement, job loss, and illness, and enjoy better psychological and physical health. Divorced, separated and widowed persons are more likely to die by suicide. Being a parent, particularly for mothers, appears to decrease the risk of suicide. Discord within the family is correlated with increased suicide, while parental and family connectedness has a protective effect, especially among youth. Participation in religious activities is a protective factor for suicide, perhaps in part because of the social support it affords, but belief structures and spiritualism may also be important factors. Furthermore, epidemiological analyses reveal that occupation, employment status, and socioeconomic status affect the risk of suicide. These factors are not specific to the United States or even to the Western world, but global.<sup>1</sup>

## Texas Suicide Deaths Across the Life-Span by Race/Ethnicity



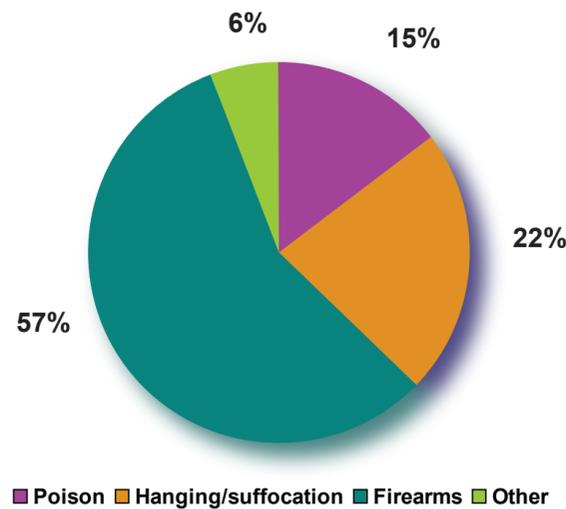
Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, Vital Statistics Unit, 2003-2005

Figure 2. Texas Suicide Deaths Across the Human Life-Span.

## Suicide in Texas

The table in Figure 1 indicates that during youth suicide ranks less than homicide and accidental injury as a cause of death, and later in life both cancer and heart disease are more common than suicide. Figure 2 shows that suicide is more prevalent among whites than either blacks or Hispanics. Furthermore for whites suicide reaches its peak in the forties; For blacks the peak is in the early twenties, and Hispanics have no significant peak. The most common methods for suicide in Texas are shown in Figure 3. Firearms, hanging, and poison are the leading methods of suicide in Texas.<sup>2</sup>

## Texas Suicide Methods 2004-2006

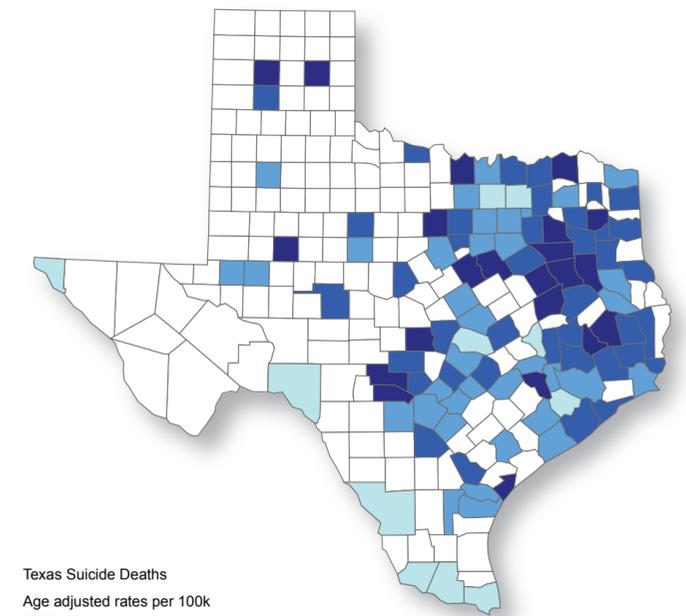


Source: DSHS Vital Statistics Unit.

Figure 3. Texas Suicide Methods for 2004-2006.

The map in Figure 4. was created using Texas county level data for 2000-2006. During that period, suicide was most common in the rural counties of the eastern half of the state.

## Texas Suicide Deaths, 2000-2006



Texas Suicide Deaths

Age adjusted rates per 100k

5.34 - 9.16  
9.17 - 12.75  
12.76 - 16.44  
16.45 - 23.69

Annualized Age-adjusted Rate for Texas: 10.73



Data Sources: NCHS National Vital Statistics System for numbers of deaths; US Census Bureau for population estimates. Prepared by: Center for Health Statistics, GIS, June 2010

Figure 4. Texas Suicide Deaths for 2000-2006.

## Solutions

At the national level the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act was created to develop early intervention and prevention strategies to reduce suicide among adolescents and college age youth. Funding began in 2005 with \$40 million for fiscal year 2010. In Texas we have the Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project. This program provides information to the public about youth suicide, risk factors, and prevention. It trains health, school and community representatives to identify and refer youth who are at risk of suicide screening, using Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR).

## Acknowledgements

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Poster prepared by: Center for Health Statistics, GIS, December 2010

## References

1. Institute of Medicine. Reducing Suicide: A National Imperative. 2002. p. 2-3. The National Academies Press. Washington.

2. Texas Department of State Health Services, Vital Statistics Unit.

For information go to: <http://www.texasuicideprevention.org/>