

SUICIDE DEATHS IN PENNSYLVANIA, 2018-2020

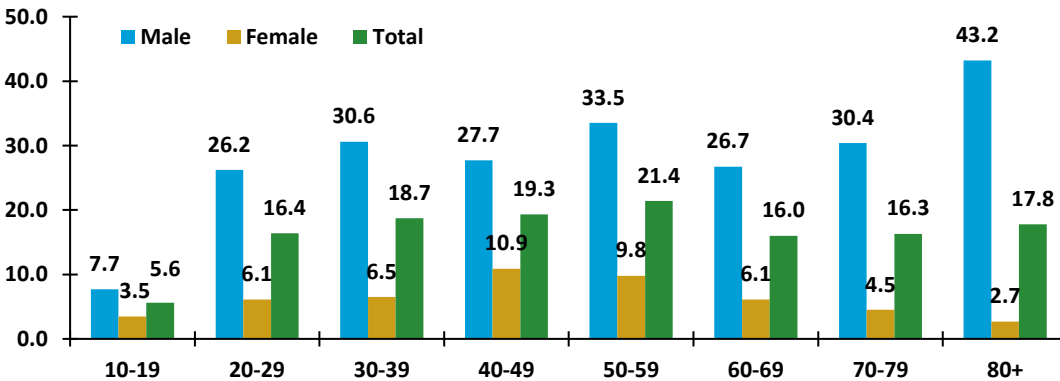
BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania Violent Death Reporting System (PAVDRS) is a state level surveillance system funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The PAVDRS program collects data on suicides, homicides, deaths of undetermined intent, and accidental firearm deaths occurring in Pennsylvania. Data is collected from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, and law enforcement reports. PAVDRS data is used for research, policymaking, and to support violence prevention programs.

The PAVDRS program collected data on 8,700 violent deaths occurring in Pennsylvania from 2018 through 2020. Approximately 65% of these deaths were suicides. The program reviewed death certificates for 5,627 suicide deaths (4,461 males and 1,166 females) from all 67 counties. The program also collected reports from coroners, medical examiners, and law enforcement agencies throughout Pennsylvania. The PAVDRS program worked closely with these partners and the Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries to gather detailed information about each violent death. For more information about the PAVDRS program, please call 717-787-5900 or email RA-DHPAVDRS@pa.gov

- During 2018-2020, Pennsylvania averaged more than 5 suicide deaths per day.
- Data from all 67 counties showed that males were almost 4 times more likely to die by suicide than females (4,461 males / 1,166 females). Nationally, males die by suicide at a rate of approximately 4 times that of females¹.
- Overall, suicide rates in Pennsylvania during this time span were slightly higher than national averages:
Pennsylvania Crude Rates: 14.6 deaths per 100,000 population (males 23.5 and females 5.9).
National Rates: 14.4 deaths per 100,000 population (males 22.3 and females 5.9)¹

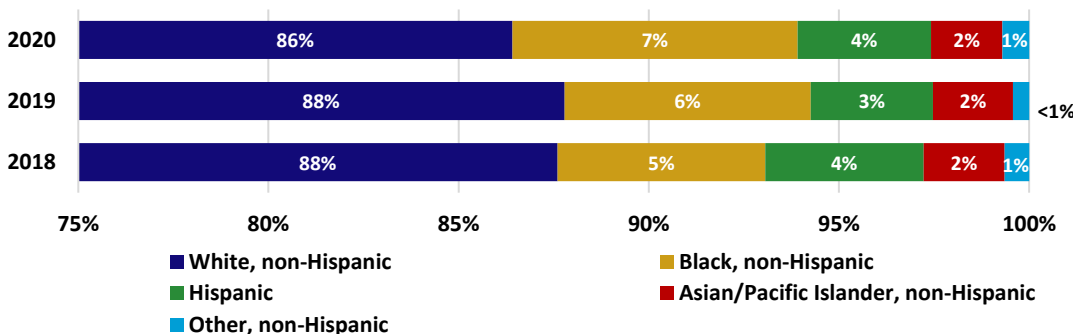
Sex-specific Suicide Rates* by Age:



* Per 100,000 Pennsylvania 2018-2020 population

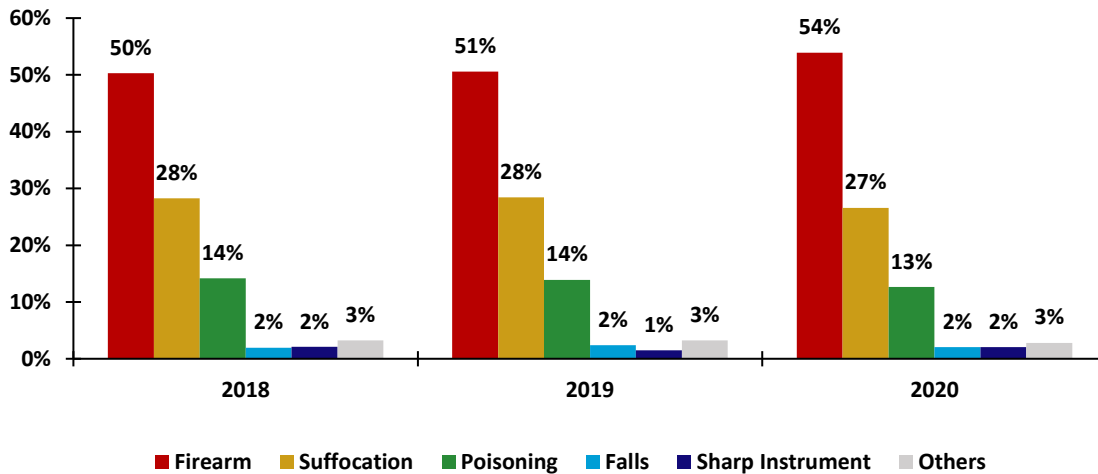
- Amongst males, the highest rate of suicide deaths occurred within the 80+ age group.
- Amongst all Pennsylvanians, age group 50-59 had the highest rate of suicide deaths.

Race/Ethnicity of Suicide Victims:



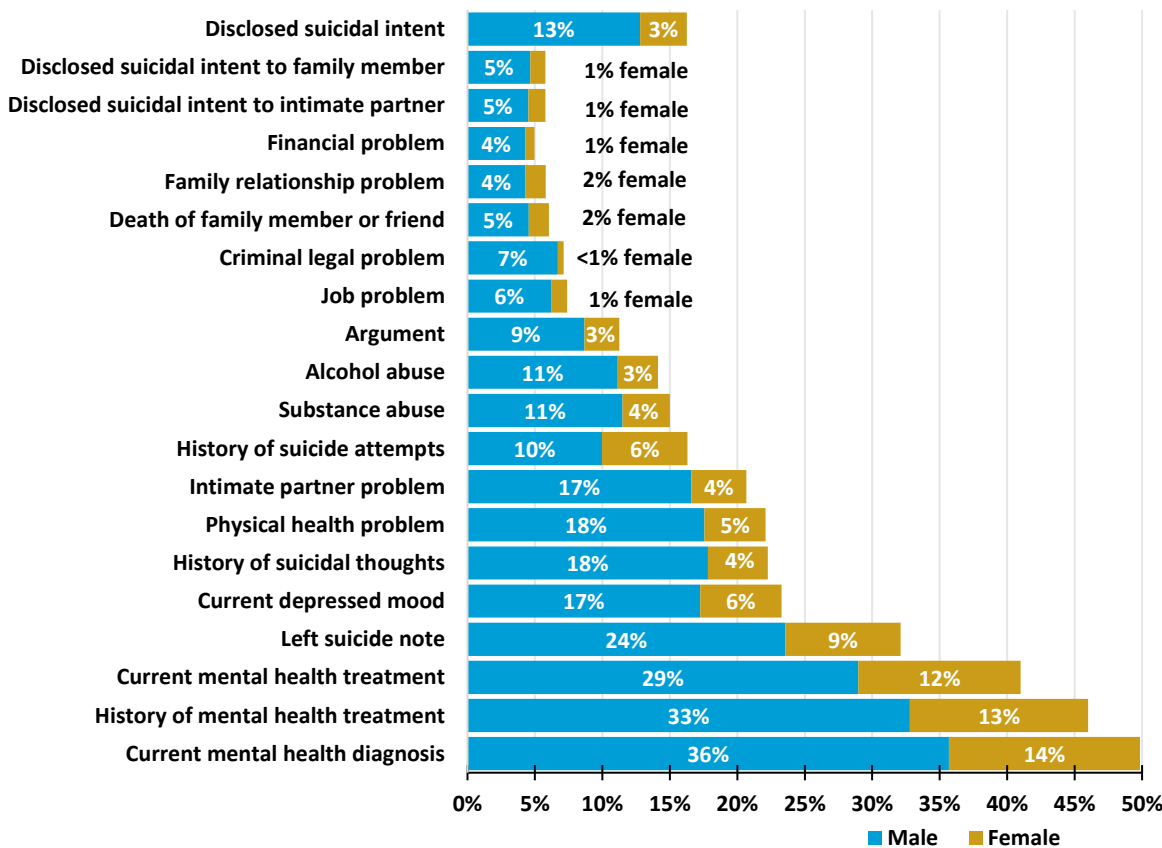
- A slight decrease in White, non-Hispanic suicide victims occurred in 2020.
- A slight increase in Black, non-Hispanic suicide victims occurred each year.

Leading Cause of Suicide Deaths:



- From 2018-2020, suicides by firearm increased 3%.
- Suffocation, hanging and strangulation, caused almost 30% of all suicides.
- The leading cause of suicide deaths for females was poisoning (34%). The leading cause of suicide deaths for males was firearm (58%).

Most Common Precipitating Circumstances:



- Sixteen percent of suicide victims disclosed suicidal intent in the month before their death.
- Forty-one percent of suicide victims received mental health or substance abuse treatment in the two months before their death.
- Half of all suicide victims had a diagnosed mental health problem at the time of death.

Notes: The denominator for Most Common Precipitating Circumstances is the sum of CME and LE records that have information about the circumstances associated with the violent death. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS, Fatal Injury Reports, National, Regional and State: <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/fatal-reports>