

Kansas Health Statistics Report

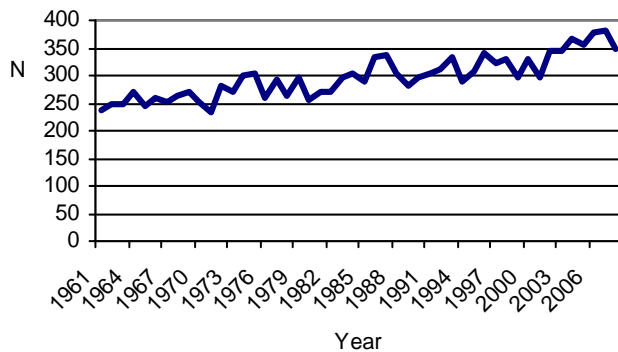
Kansas Department of Health and Environment – Bureau of Public Health Informatics – March 2010

Research Brief

Suicides in Kansas

Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death to Kansas residents in 2008. The 350 suicide deaths is 7.9 percent less than in 2007 when the 380 deaths was the highest ever recorded (Figure 1). Rates are from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's health information portal, Kansas Information for Communities (KIC)¹. Only 236 resident suicide deaths occurred in 1960.

Figure 1. Resident Suicide Deaths, Kansas, 1960-2008



Source: KDHE Bureau of Public Health Informatics

While a one-year decline in Kansas resident suicides is an improvement, one needs to see several years of decreases before pronouncing it a downward trend. The overall decline however, masked an increase in one age group.

Table 1. Kansas Resident Age-group Specific Mortality Rates, 2007 & 2008

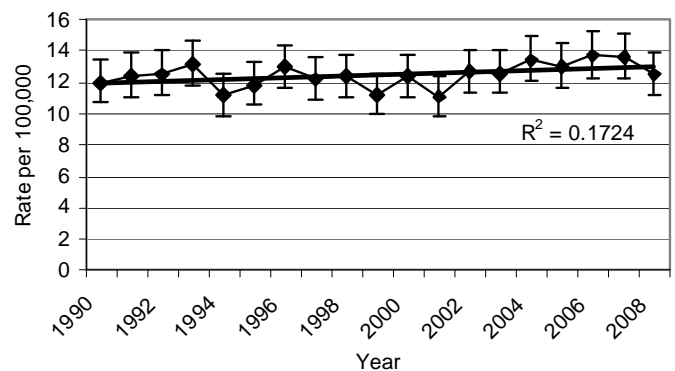
Age-group	2007		2008	
	N	Rate	N	Rate
Under 15	4	< 1.0	2	<1.0
15 to 24	59	14.4	69	16.8
25 to 44	120	16.5	121	16.6
45 to 64	144	20.5	108	15.1
65 and over	53	14.7	50	13.6

Source: Kansas Information for Communities, KDHE

In 2007 the 45-64 age group had the highest suicide mortality rate, 20.5 deaths per 100,000 population (Table 1). In 2008, that age group had a large decrease in deaths, but an increase was noted in the 15-24 age group. While the numbers are relatively small, the mortality rate change is not statistically significant, and a one-year change does not indicate a trend, this change warrants continued monitoring.

The age-adjusted suicide mortality rate for 2008 was 12.5 per 100,000 population. The 8.1 percent decrease from the 2007 age-adjusted mortality rate of 13.6 however is not statistically significant. Between 1990 and 2008, the highest age-adjusted mortality rate was 13.6 in 2006 with the lowest 11.1 in 2001.

Figure 2. Age-Adjusted Suicide Rates and 95% Confidence Intervals, Kansas, 1990-2008



Age-adjusted suicide mortality rates are subject to some volatility because of the relatively small statistical values. Plotting a linear regression trend line indicates the direction of that trend. The trend line in Figure 1 shows a very modest upward trend in age-adjusted suicide mortality rates. The R-squared value of 0.1724 is close to zero and thus the trend line is not very reliable.

While national rates are generally a couple of years behind published Kansas rates, they offer some comparison value. The most recent national age-adjusted suicide mortality rate was 11.1 per 100,000 in 2006².

The number of suicides reported to persons of Hispanic origin increased from 20 to 31 in 2008. Slightly more than nine out of 10 suicides occurred to persons of white race (90.3%) with blacks accounting for 13 suicide deaths (3.7%). Over four out of five suicides occurred to males (84.9%).

Guns were used in suicides in 54.3 percent (190) of Kansas resident suicides in 2008. Hanging was the second most frequent method at 25.7% of suicides (90)³.

Greg Crawford
Office of Health Assessment
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

References

- <http://kic.kdhe.state.ks.us/kic/index.html>. Accessed March 17, 2010
- Final Data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 57 no 14. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2009.
- 2008 Kansas Annual Tables, Kansas Department of Health and Environment. 2009.

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