

# Utah Health Status Update:

## Suicide in Utah

March 1999

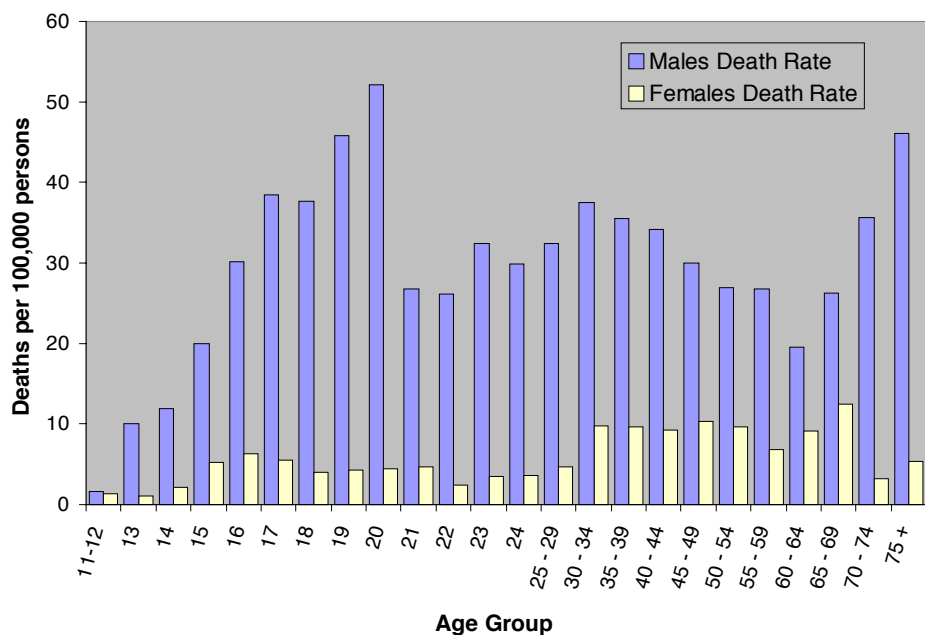
Utah Department of Health

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Utahns age 15-44 and the leading cause for males in that age group. Suicide rates in Utah are higher than national rates. This Health Status Update reviews recent data on suicide in Utah.

- Utah's suicide rate is the 10th highest among all states in the U.S.
- The Utah suicide death rate (1995-97) was 4 times higher for boys/men than for girls/women. About 80% of suicide deaths were boys/men.
- Suicide death rates among boys/men in Utah increased dramatically from age 15 to age 20 or 21. Rates decreased somewhat after that peak and remained high throughout adult life.
- Suicide rates have remained fairly level among adult men. Rates among boys and young men increased through 1992-94, but appear to have leveled off in 1995-97.
- Among race/ethnic groups, suicide rates were highest for white non-Hispanic and Hispanic people.
- Firearms were the most common method of suicide, accounting for about 60% of all suicide deaths.
- Over half of firearm suicides were committed using a hand gun.
- Among women, poisoning was the most common method of suicide.
- Firearms and hanging were more common as methods of suicide among young people in Utah, accounting, respectively, for 67% and 20% of suicides at age 21 or under.
- Among boys/men, poisoning suicides most often involved motor vehicle exhaust fumes. Among women, overdose with a variety of medical substances was most common.

### Suicide Deaths by Age and Sex

Deaths per 100,000 persons by age and sex, Utah 1993-1997.



### Suicide by Method

Suicide Deaths by Sex and Method of Suicide, Utah 1993-1997.

Method	Male		Female	
	Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage
Firearms	738	64%	95	36%
Poisoning	199	17%	126	48%
Hanging	185	16%	31	12%
Other	32	3%	12	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100%</b>

### State Suicide Rates

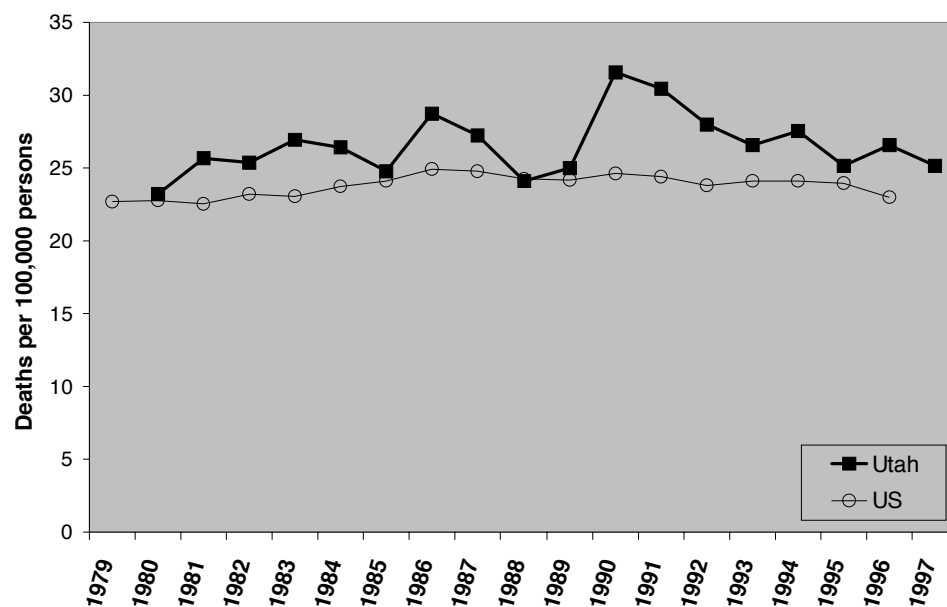
Ten states with highest age-adjusted suicide rates, 1995-1996.

State	Deaths*	Crude Rate	Age-Adjusted Rate**
Nevada	730	23.3	23.6
Montana	375	21.5	21.5
Alaska	223	18.5	18.6
New Mexico	615	18.1	19.0
Wyoming	170	17.7	18.0
Colorado	1348	17.8	18.1
Arizona	1531	17.5	17.9
Idaho	363	15.4	16.1
Oregon	1017	16.0	15.8
Utah	575	14.4	15.4
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>62,187</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>11.9</b>

\* Average annual deaths  
\*\* Rate per 100,000 persons age-adjusted to U.S. 2000 population projection

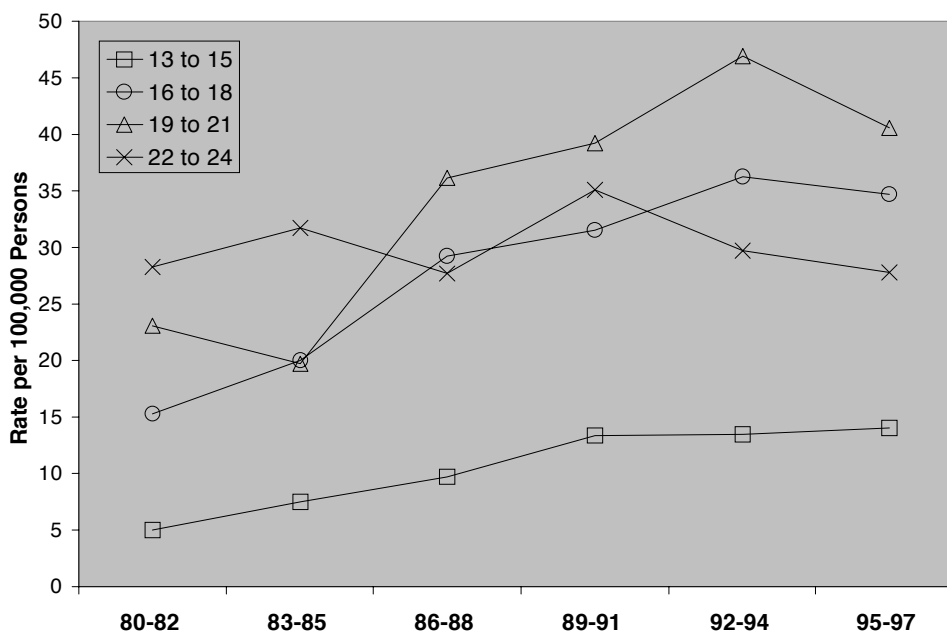
### Suicide Trends, U.S. and Utah

Suicide Death Rates by Year, Boys and Men, United States and Utah, 1979-1997.



### Youth Suicide Trends

Suicide death rates per 100,000 persons by age group, males age 13-24 in Utah, 1980-1997.



## Utah Youth Suicide Study

This study being conducted by investigators at the University of Utah and the Utah Department of Health seeks to identify characteristics of Utah youth suicide victims and ways to identify youth at risk of suicide. Its results should allow effective intervention to be designed and implemented to prevent suicides.

Preliminary results were published in Gray D, Keller T, Haggard L, et. al. "Utah Youth Suicide Study Preliminary Results". *Utah's Health An Annual Review*; Vol. V, 1997-1998. The Governor Scott M. Matheson Center for Health Care Studies, University of Utah.

Suicide is an important cause of death in Utah, especially for boys and men in the age group 15 to 44 years. Firearms are the most common way that suicide is committed, and having firearms present in a home is a demonstrated risk factor for suicide. Restricting access to firearms for persons at risk of suicide is one potential way to prevent suicide.

## March Utah Health Status Update

The complete report, *Suicide in Utah*, as well as additional information about this topic are available from the Office of Public Health Data, Utah Department of Health, P O Box 142101, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2101, (801) 538-6108, FAX (801) 536-0947, email: [phdata@doh.state.ut.us](mailto:phdata@doh.state.ut.us); or the Violence and Injury Prevention Program, P O Box 142106, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2106, (801) 538-6864, FAX (801) 538-9134, email: [tkeller@doh.state.ut.us](mailto:tkeller@doh.state.ut.us). Please send any comments on this report to the Office of Public Health Data.



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