

9/2010

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health  
Division (PHD)

# Suicides in Oregon Trends and Risk Factors

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Oregon Violent Death Reporting System  
Injury and Violence Prevention Program  
Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology

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[Oregon suicide report issued in September 2010. Data through 2007. Excerpts attached].

## Executive Summary

Suicide is one of Oregon's most persistent yet largely preventable public health problems. Suicide is the leading cause of injury death – there are more deaths due to suicide in Oregon than due to car crashes. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Oregonians ages 15-34, and the 9<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among all Oregonians. This report provides the most current suicide statistics in Oregon that can inform prevention programs, policy, and planning. We analyzed mortality data from 1981 to 2007 and 2003 to 2007 data of Oregon Violent Death Reporting System (ORVDRS). This report presents main findings of suicide trends and risk factors in Oregon.

### Key Findings

X In 2007, the age-adjusted suicide rate among Oregonians of 15.2 per 100,000 was 35 percent higher than the national average.

The rate of suicide among Oregonians has been increasing since 2000.

Suicide rates among women ages 45-64 rose 55 percent from 8.2 per 100,000 in 2000 to 12.8 per 100,000 in 2007.

X Men were 3.7 times more likely to die by suicide than women. The highest suicide rate occurred among men ages 85 and over (78.4 per 100,000). White males had the highest suicide rate among all races / ethnicity (25.6 per 100,000). Firearms were the dominant mechanism of suicide among men (62%).

Approximately 27 percent of suicides occurred among veterans. Male veterans had a higher suicide rate than non-veteran males (45.7 vs. 27.4 per 100,000). Significantly higher suicide rates were identified among male veterans ages 18-24, 35-44 and 45-54 when compared to non-veteran males. Veteran suicide victims were reported to have more physical health problems than non-veteran males.

Over 70 percent of suicide victims had a diagnosed mental disorder, alcohol and/or substance use problems, or depressed mood at time of death. Despite the high prevalence of mental health problems, less than one third of male victims and just about half of female victims were receiving treatment for mental health problems at the time of death.

Investigators suspect that 30 percent of suicide victims had used alcohol in the hours preceding their death.

The number of suicides in each month varies. But there was not a clear seasonal pattern.