

Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have long-lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. The causes of suicide are complex and determined by multiple factors. Suicide prevention focuses on promoting resilience and reducing risk factors. Risk factors for suicide include previous suicide attempts, history of depression or mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, physical illness, and feelings of isolation.

There was a total of 2,028 suicide deaths in Sacramento County during the 10-year period from 2012 to 2021, with an average of 203 deaths per year. There were 199 suicide deaths in Sacramento County in 2021, a rate of 12.6 per 100,000 population [Figure 1]. This is a 1.8% increase compared to 2020, which is 1.8% lower than the Healthy People 2030 (HP2030) goal of 12.8 per 100,000 population. Whites have consistently had the highest rates of suicide than any other racial/ethnic group in the County.

Figure 2 shows the three-year average suicide deaths and rates by age groups. Persons aged 75 and older are at highest risk of suicide in the County, with a rate of 21.0 per 100,000 population. The second largest number of suicide deaths occurs among persons aged 30-39 (rate of 19.7 per 100,000 population). Adolescents and teens aged 10-19 have the lowest rate of suicide of any age group in the County (4.1 per 100,000 population).

Males have accounted for more than three quarters of all suicide deaths in the County for the past 10 years [Table 1]. The most common mechanism of injury for male suicide deaths was firearms, whereas the most common mechanism of injury for female suicide deaths was poisoning.

Figure 1: Suicide Rates by Select Race/Ethnicity, 2012-2021

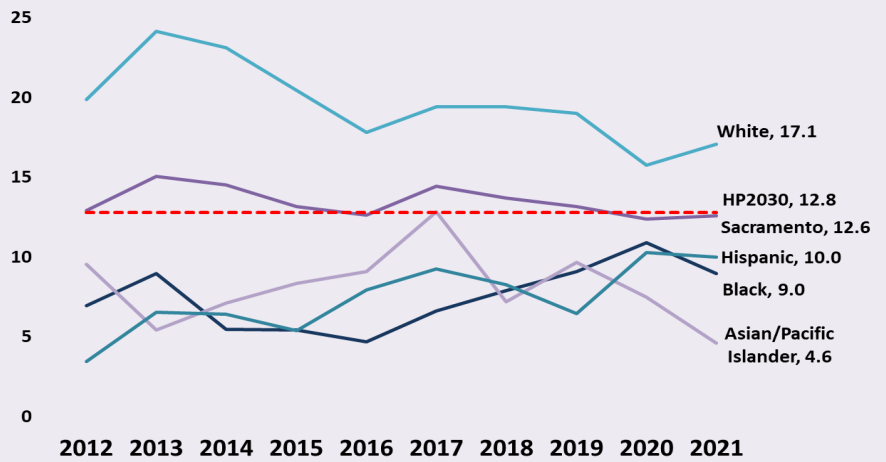


Figure 2: Three-Year Average Suicide Deaths and Rates by Age Group, 2012-2021

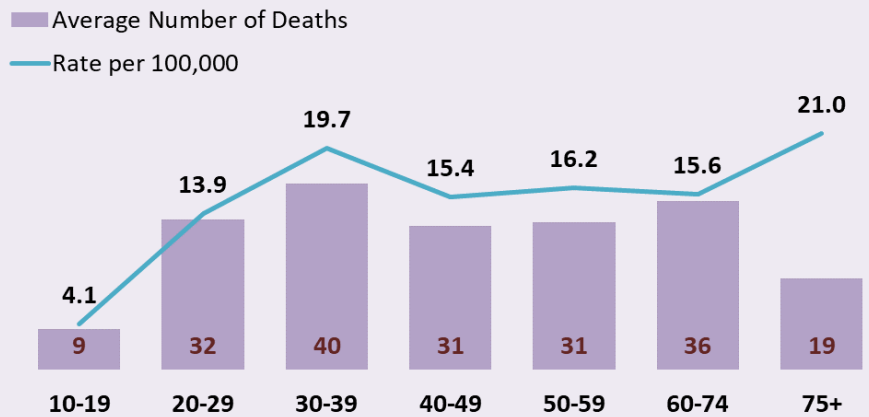


Table 1: Suicide Deaths by Sex and Mechanism, 2012-2021

Mechanism	Female (%) (N=475)	Male (%) (N=1,552)	Total (%) (N=2,028)
Firearms	16.6	45.7	38.9
Suffocation/Hanging	32.8	32.1	32.3
Poisoning	36.2	10.2	16.3
Other	14.3	11.9	12.5

Suicide in Veterans

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces are over-represented among suicide deaths. The proportion of suicide deaths among Veterans (15.0%) is more than twice the proportion of the Veteran population in the County (6.2%) between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 3).

Suicide in Youths

In Sacramento County, suicide is the third leading cause of death among youths aged 10-24, following accidents (unintentional injuries) and homicides. In 2021, there were 28 suicide-related deaths, a 64.7% increase from 17 in 2012 to 28 in 2021. The suicide death rate also increased 54.8% between 2012 and 2021 [Figure 4].

Youth suicides are three times higher among males than females [Table 2]. The top mechanisms of death were suffocation/hanging for female youths and firearms for male youths.

Youths aged 20-24 contributed to 61.1% of all youth suicides, followed by youths aged 15-19 with 33.7% of all youth suicides. Suffocation/hanging was the top mechanism of suicide among all age youth age groups, followed by firearms [Table 3].

Data Sources: Vital Records Business Intelligence System; 2012-2021 CA Dept. of Finance Population Projections 2021; American Community Survey 5-year population estimates 2021.

Figure 3: Percent of Suicide Deaths among Veterans of U.S. Armed Forces vs. County Veteran Population, 2017-2021

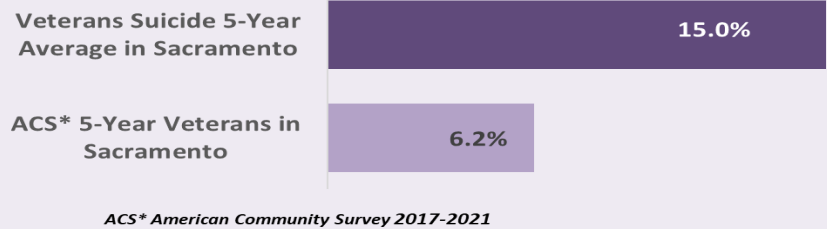


Figure 4: Suicide Deaths and Rates among Youth (aged 10-24), 2012-2021

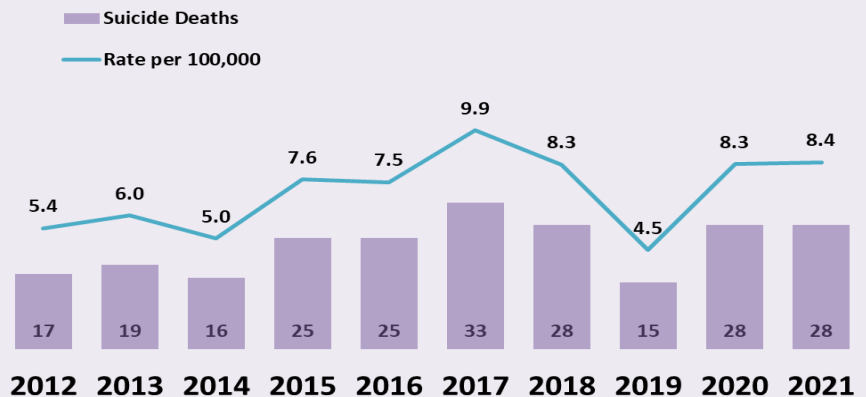


Table 2: Suicide Deaths in Youth (aged 10-24) by Mechanism and Sex, 2012-2021

Mechanism	Female (%) (N=59)	Male (%) (N=174)	Total (%) (N=234)
Suffocation/Hanging	52.5	35.6	40.2
Firearms	15.3	42.5	35.5
Jumping	10.2	5.2	6.4
Poisoning	5.1	5.7	5.6
Other	16.9	10.9	12.4

Table 3: Suicide Death by Mechanism and Youth Age Group, Sacramento County, 2012-2021

Mechanism	Age 10-14 (N=12)	Age 15-19 (N=79)	Age 20-24 (N=143)
Suffocation/Hanging	66.7	43.0	36.4
Firearms	16.7	40.5	34.3
Poisoning	N/A	3.8	10.5
Other	16.7	12.7	18.9