

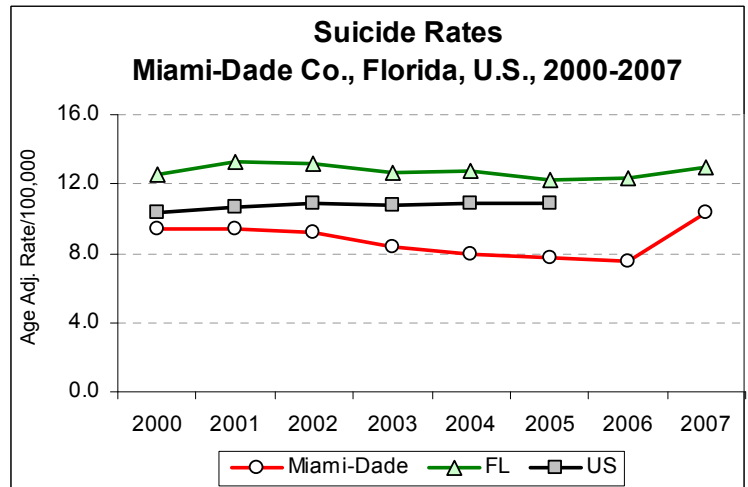


Suicide in Miami-Dade County, 2007

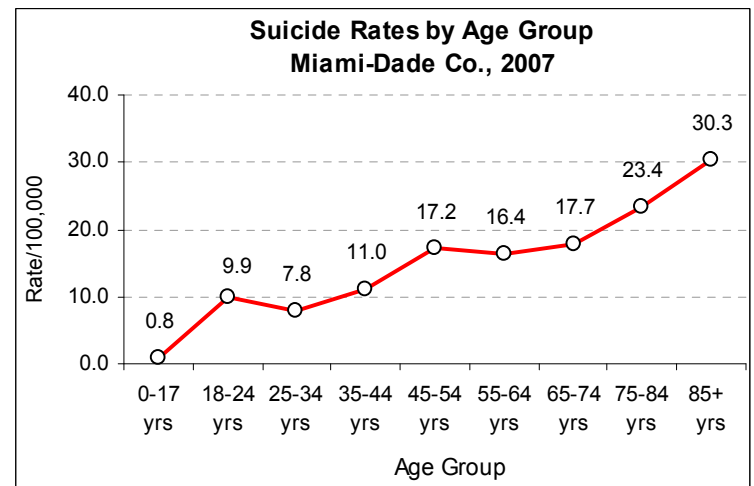
Jan 2009

Miami-Dade County Injury Facts

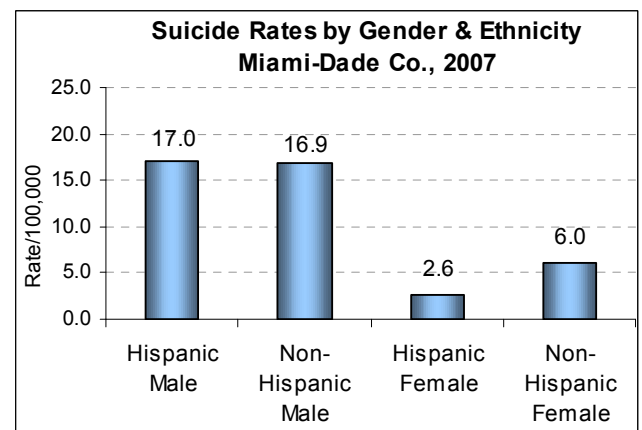
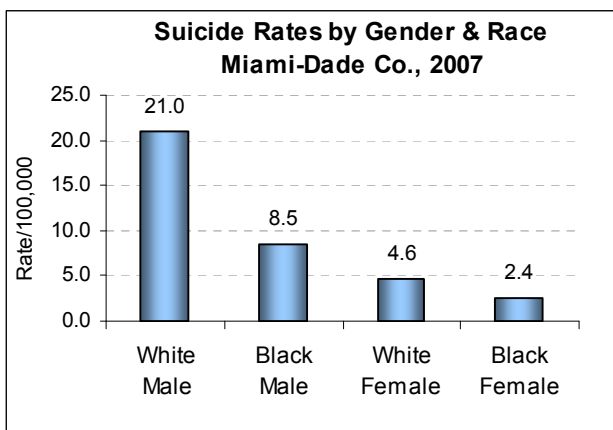
During 2007, 268 residents of Miami-Dade County died from suicide, resulting in the highest suicide rate observed this decade. The 2007 suicide rate increased 39% over 2006 after 5 consecutive years of declining rates. Despite this increase, the county's suicide rate has been consistently lower than the state suicide rate. Furthermore, between 2000-2005, the county suicide rate ranged between 10-29% lower than the national suicide rate.



- Suicide rates increased as persons aged. The highest rates occurred to residents aged 85+ years (14 deaths; 24.6/100,00) while the lowest rates occurred to children less than 18 years old (5 deaths; 0.8/100,000).
- Males took their lives more than 4 times greater than females (18.1/100,000 vs. 4.1/100,000). White males were most at-risk to complete suicide, with a suicide rate more than twice the rate of other racial and gender groups.



- There was no difference in suicide rates between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic males (17.0/100,000 vs. 16.9/100,000). However, Non-Hispanic females had a suicide rate more than twice as high as Hispanic females (6.0/100,000 vs. 2.6/100,000)



Mechanism Used for Suicides

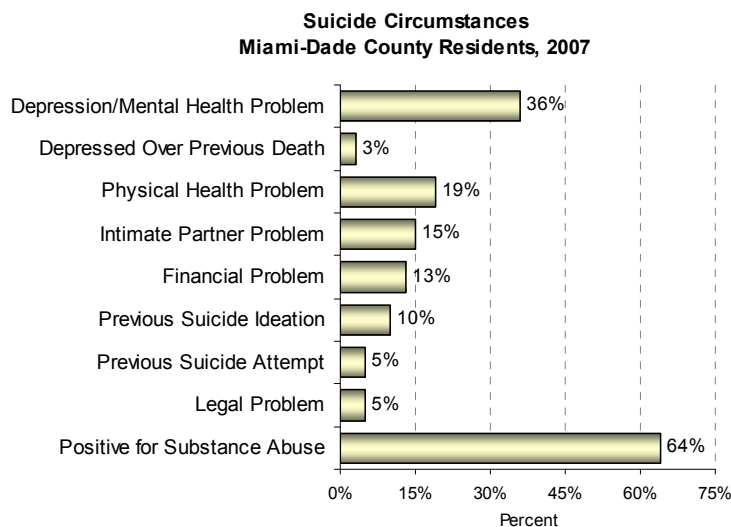
- Firearms were the most common method used to complete suicide (43%), followed by hanging (28%) and poisoning (18%).
- Firearms were the most common method used by men (49%) while women were more likely to use poisons (44%).

Mechanism of Suicide	All Suicides		Males		Females	
	#	Percent	#	Percent	#	Percent
Firearm	116	43%	106	49%	10	19%
Suffocate: Hanging	74	28%	65	30%	9	17%
Obstructed Airway	2	<1%	1	<1%	1	2%
Poisoning: Drugs, Medicinals	39	15%	18	8%	21	40%
Gas	5	2%	3	1%	2	4%
Other, Unspecified	3	1%	3	1%	0	0%
Jumped from Building	14	5%	11	5%	3	6%
Cut, Stabbed Self	4	<1%	2	<1%	2	4%
Motor Vehicle Occupant Crash	3	<1%	2	<1%	1	2%
Set Self on Fire	2	<1%	1	<1%	1	2%
Drowning	2	<1%	2	<1%	0	0%
Sequelae of Previous Injury	2	<1%	1	<1%	1	2%
Pedestrian, Hit by Train	1	<1%	0	0%	1	2%
Unknown	1	<1%	1	<1%	0	0%
TOTAL	268	100.0%	216	100.0%	52	100.0%

Circumstances of Suicides

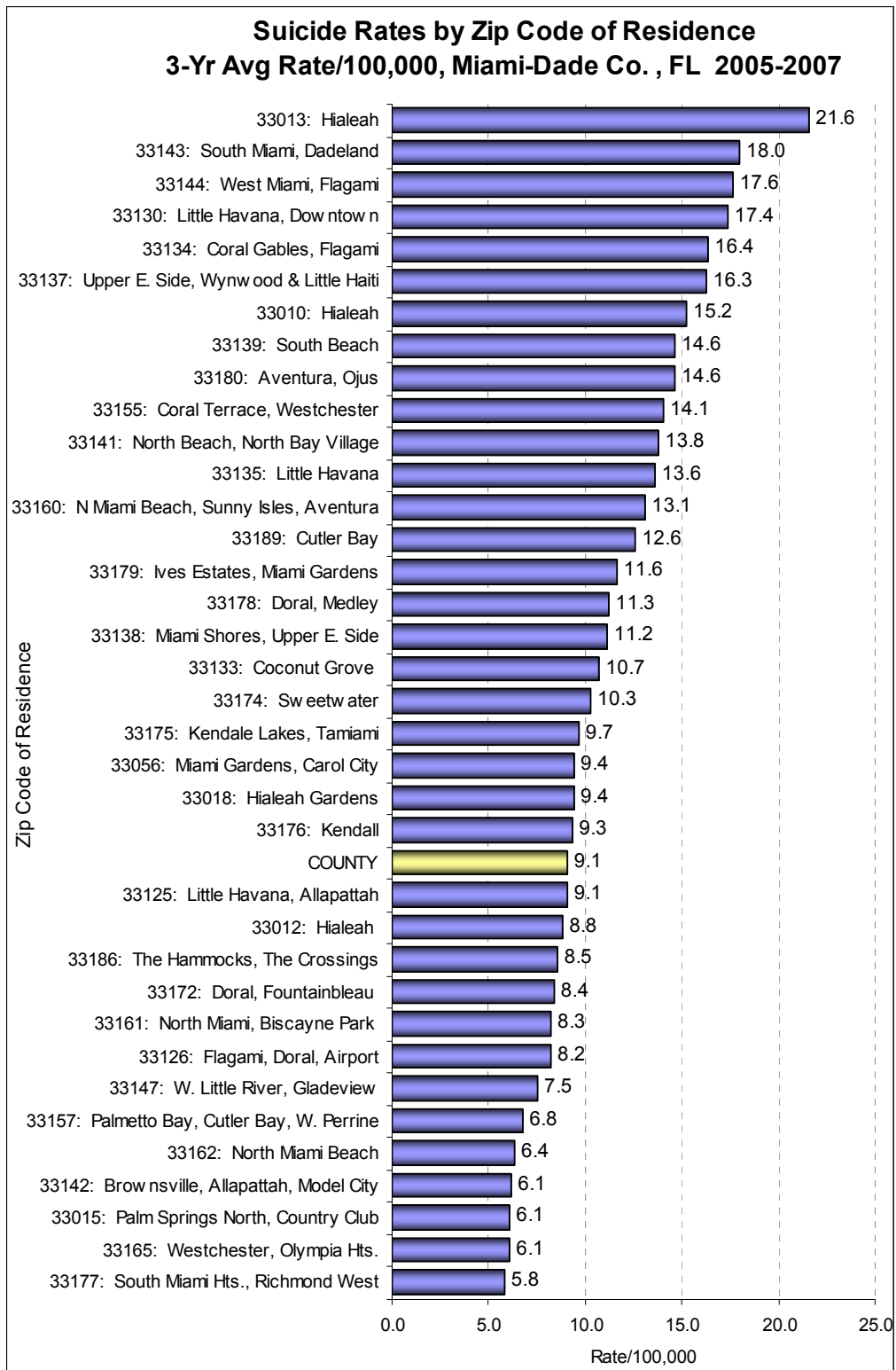
The circumstances for suicide presented below, with the exception of toxicology, likely represent the lower limit of true incidence because information could only be obtained from preliminary police investigations.

- 64% of the victims had positive toxicology tests: 41% tested positive for prescription drugs, 25% for alcohol and 12% for cocaine or cocaine derivatives.
- 39% of victims were reported to be depressed or had been treated for some form of mental health illness; 3% of victims were depressed over the recent death of a loved one.
- Nearly 1 in 5 suicide victims were despondent over a current physical health problem.
- 15% of victims were experiencing some type of intimate partner problems; there were 11 incidents of murder-suicide in 2007, 10 of which involved the deaths of intimate partners.
- 10% of victims had expressed previous suicide ideations; another 5% previously attempted suicide.



Zip code of Residence for Suicide Victims, 2005-2007

In order to generate stable suicide rates for zip codes of residence, the most recent 3 years of data were averaged for each zip code. Two zip codes in the Hialeah area (33013, 33010) had the 1st and 7th highest suicide rates during this period. Nine other zip codes had suicide rates that were at least 50% greater than the county rate of 13.7/100,000. They included South Miami (33143), West Miami (33144), Little Havana (33130), Coral Gables/Flagami (33134), the City of Miami communities of Upper East Side/Wynwood/Little Haiti (33137), South Beach (33139), Aventura (33180), Coral Terrace/Westchester (33155) and North Beach/North Bay Village (33141).



Preventing Suicide

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists several ways to prevent suicide (1).

- **Learn the warning signs of suicide.** Warning signs can include changes in a person's mood, diet, or sleeping pattern. Several factors can put a person at risk for attempting or committing suicide. But, having these risk factors does not always mean that suicide is likely to occur. Some of the risk factors for suicide include:
 - History of depression or other mental illness
 - Alcohol or drug abuse
 - Family history of suicide or violence
 - Previous suicide attempt(s)
 - Physical illness
 - Feeling alone
- **Get involved in community efforts.** Suicide can adversely affect the health of communities. Family and friends of suicide victims can feel shock, anger and guilt. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention lays out a plan for action. It guides the development of programs and seeks to bring about social change. For more information, go to www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/suicideprevention/strategy.asp.
- For a list of CDC activities, see *Preventing Suicide: Program Activities Guide*: (www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Preventing_Suicide.pdf).
- The American Association of Suicidology (www.suicidology.org) also has detailed information on what to look for and how to respond to suicide.

1. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Injury Center,
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/suicide_factsheet2008.pdf

Produced by the Miami-Dade County Injury Surveillance System

Data Sources: Death Certificates, Office of Vital Statistics, FL Dept. of Health

Medical Examiner Records, Miami-Dade Co. Medical Examiner Dept.

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<http://dadehealth.org/injury/INJURYintro.asp>

