



Injury and Violence Prevention Branch

Older Adult Suicide in California, 2018

Background

Suicide is a major public health concern in California that can have both immediate and long-term emotional and economic impacts on individuals, families, and entire communities. Suicide rates peak at multiple stages throughout the lifespan in California, including young adulthood, middle age, and are highest at ages 85 and above. In order to address these issues, we need to create data-driven prevention efforts that focus on those most affected, including older adults.

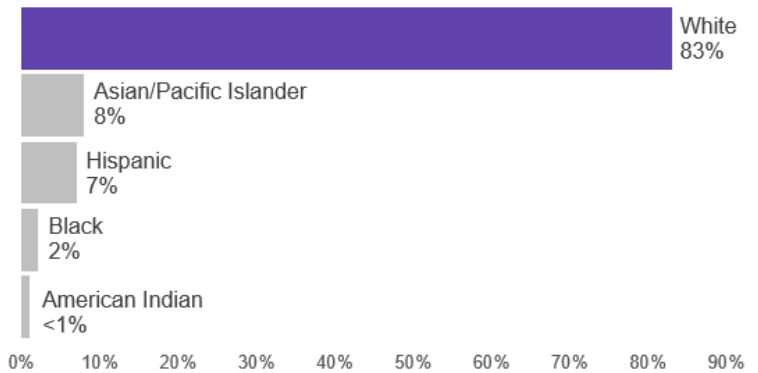
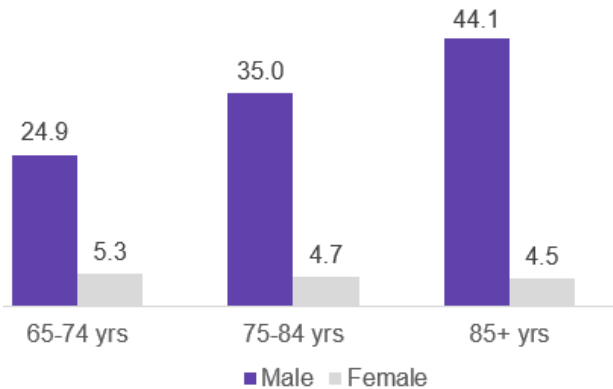
Older Adult Suicide (Age 65 and Older)

In 2018, there were 4,497 suicide deaths among California residents. Of these:

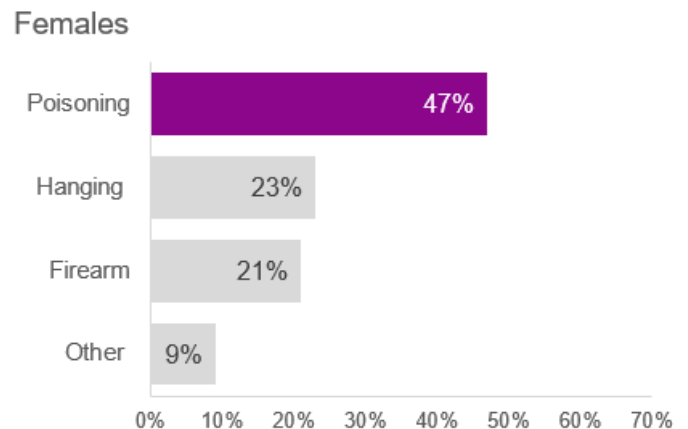
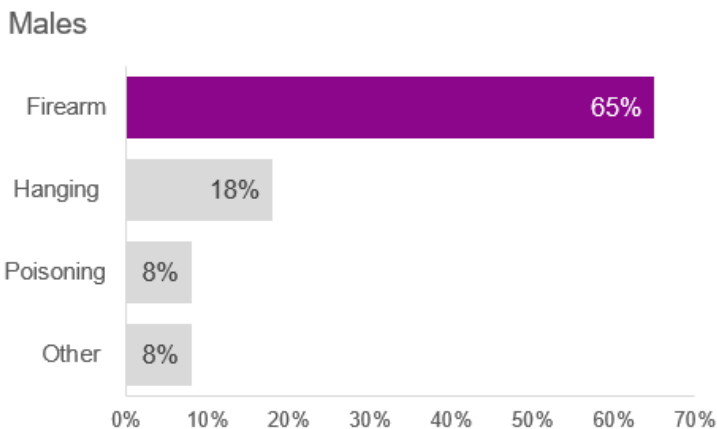
- 21% (962 suicides) were among older adults, for a rate of 16.3 deaths per 100,000 Californians age 65 and older.
- Approximately 83% of older adult suicides were males; 46% of which were veterans.
- For males, the rate of suicide increased with age and was nearly 10 times the rate of females in those 85 years and older.
- Firearms were used in 58% of all suicides to older adults.

Among California residents in 2018, male older adults had a much higher suicide rate (per 100,000) than female older adults.

Older adult suicides among California residents in 2018 were highest in individuals who are White.



Among California residents in 2018, firearm suicide rates were highest for older adult males, while suicides by poisonings were highest for older adult females.



What We Know and What We Can Do

The California Violent Death Reporting System (CalVDRS) conducts surveillance on violent deaths that occur in a subset of California counties participating in the program. CalVDRS combines data from death certificates with medical examiner/coroner, toxicology, and law enforcement reports. These data provide details on the circumstances of the deaths that can be used to help identify ways to prevent similar deaths from occurring in the future.

CalVDRS data on older adult suicide shows approximately 80% of suicides occurred at the person's home; 35% had a history of suicidal thoughts and/or plans; 10% had a family member or friend die recently; and more than 21% disclosed their suicide thoughts or plans to someone in their personal or professional circle.

Know the Signs

Everyone can play a role in suicide prevention by learning the warning signs of suicide, finding the words to reach out to a loved one, and knowing where to turn for help. To learn more about suicide prevention visit

www.suicideispreventable.org.

Additional Resources

California Department of Aging	Friendship Line: 888-670-1360
California Department of Health Care Services	CalHOPE Line: 833-317-4673
<i>In an emergency dial 911</i>	

About CalVDRS:

In 2018, 21 of 58 counties participated in CalVDRS. Supplemental multi-source CalVDRS data were abstracted for 474 of the 962 older adult suicides in California in 2018. Circumstances are reported as a percentage of deaths with at least one known circumstance; circumstances were known for 90% (n=426) of the older adult suicides. Together, the 21 participating CalVDRS counties represented 49% of the older adult suicides that occurred in California in 2018 and covered a mix of both urban and rural counties across the state.

Data Sources:

California Violent Death Reporting System (CalVDRS), Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, Center for Healthy Communities, California Department of Public Health (CDPH); California Comprehensive Master Death File (CCMDF), CDPH, 2018 (for vital statistics data); and California Department of Finance, Report P-3: State and County Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity, Detailed Age, and Gender, 2010-2060 (for population numbers used in the calculation of rates).

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For more information please contact: Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov.

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Older Adult Suicide Circumstances (in participating CalVDRS counties)



Crisis Help



Chat: [SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
 Talk: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 En español: 1-888-628-9454