For over a decade, the suicide rate in Missouri has been higher than the national rate. In 2013, Missouri’s suicide rate was the 18th highest in the nation with an overall rate of 15.88 per 100,000 compared to the national rate of 13.02 per 100,000 (CDC, 2013). Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death with suicides outnumbering homicides by more than two to one.

Suicides and suicide attempts/intentional self-injuries are examined here in detail by age, race, and sex in order to increase our understanding of these behaviors. Data on special populations and the means by which suicides occur are also presented.

*Missouri data are from 2013 unless otherwise specified. Data specific to Missouri are from the Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA) from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Data comparing Missouri with the U.S. are from the CDC Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS).
Suicides by Age, Race, and Sex

Youth/Young Adults: 15-24

- Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death in Missouri among youth/young adults ages 15-24 in 2013 and accounted for 17% of all deaths in this age group.

- Among Missouri youth/young adults, those ages 20-24 had the highest suicide rate, with males accounting for 79% of these suicides.

- Risk of suicide is higher among youth/young adults 18-24 who are not attending college compared to those in college. Silverman et al., 1997; Drum et al., 2009).

- 11.7% of all Missouri high school students reported they seriously considered suicide in 2014. Rates for females were higher than for males (15.7% vs. 7.4%) (Missouri Student Survey, 2014).

- 15% of Missouri college students experienced suicidal thoughts within the 12 months prior to the 2014 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS, 2014).

- Among Missouri college students, LGBTQ students were almost three times as likely to have had suicidal thoughts during the previous year (31.5%) than students at large (13%) and were nearly four times as likely to have made a suicide attempt (MCHBS, 2014).

Adults: 45-64

- The suicide rate for adults 45-64 in Missouri increased from 14.6 to 22.1 from 1993 to 2013. Rates for males are increasing while rates for females remain the same.

- In 1993, 152 people in this age range took their own lives compared to 357 in 2013.

- The rate of suicide among white males and females in Missouri aged 45-64 is higher than any other age group.

- In Missouri, the rate of suicide among white males aged 45-64 is over three times higher than others in this age group.
Young Veterans

- Between 2005 and 2011, 1,260 Missouri veterans died by suicide. Almost all (98%) were male. Three-fourths (75%) of all suicides among non-veterans were male.
- In 2010, it was estimated that, on average, 22 veterans died by suicide every day in America (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs).
- From 2000 to 2011, among veterans under 25, 28% of all those who died, died by suicide. This is twice the rate of young males who were civilians.
- Around 7% of Missouri young adults 18-24 who died by suicide in 2009 were veterans (U.S. Census, 2009).

Means**

- The use of firearms is the primary means of suicide among both youth and adults in Missouri.
- Males were almost two times more likely than females to use firearms (63% versus 37% in 2013).
- Females are much more likely to use poisoning to end their lives than males (36% versus 10%) and somewhat more likely to use suffocation (22% versus 21%).
- From 2000 to 2011, among veterans under 25, 28% of all those who died, died by suicide. This is twice the rate of young males who were civilians.
- Poisoning as a means of suicide is much more common among adults than youth, while suffocation is much more common among youth.
- From 2010-2013, almost half of all suicides among 15-24 year olds are due to firearms, followed by suffocation and poisoning. However, younger youth (10-14) are more likely to use suffocation (56%) than firearms (40%).

Means data are from WISQARS. “Firearms” include pistols, rifles, and shotguns; “Suffocation” includes hanging and asphyxiation; “Poisoning” includes drug overdoses; “Other” includes jumping, cutting, drowning, and unspecified/other.
**Intentional Self-Injuries by Age, Race, and Sex***

- In 2012, 8,139 Missourians were treated in emergency rooms or were hospitalized for intentional self-injuries.
- Females ages 15-24 had the highest rate of intentional self-injury (310.9 per 100,000). This was more than double the rate for all Missourians (141.5 per 100,000).
- Poison or drug/alcohol overdose accounted for 81% of intentional self-injuries; 60% were female.
- The rate of intentional self-injury declined as age increased regardless of race or sex.

### Additional Facts

- Whites made up approximately 85% of the population of Missouri in 2013, but accounted for around 93% of all suicides.
- In 2012, there was one suicide for every nine suicide attempts/intentional self-injuries.***
- Overall, males took their own lives at over four times the rate of females, and represented 80% of all suicides in Missouri.

*** (MICA Injury Data, 2012) It should be noted that some but not all intentional self-injuries are suicide attempts and many suicide attempts do not result in hospital or ER admission.

---

**Missouri Institute of Mental Health at the University of Missouri-St. Louis**

This brief was produced by researchers at MIMH for the Missouri Suicide Prevention Project, a joint effort between the Missouri Department of Mental Health and MIMH. Production of this brief was made possible in part by grant numbers SM060377 and SM057376 with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA. For questions or more information about these data, email Missouri Suicide Prevention Project at MSPP@dmh.mo.gov.