Suicide in Utah, 2012
Young Adults (18-24 years)

Introduction
An average of 501 Utahns die from suicide1 and 3,968 Utahns attempt*2 suicide each year. Young adults ages 18 to 24 comprise 11.5% of the Utah population,3 11.8% of all suicides1 and 22.0% of all suicide attempts2.

*Suicide attempts include persons who are hospitalized or treated in an ED for self-inflicted injuries.

Two young adults are treated for suicide attempts every day in Utah.

More young adults are hospitalized or treated in an emergency department (ED) for suicide attempts than are fatally injured (Figure 1).

All suicide attempts should be taken seriously. Those who survive suicide attempts are often seriously injured and many have depression and other mental health problems.

Utah Trends
The 2012 Utah young adult suicide rate was 19.3 per 100,000 population ages 18 to 24-year-olds.1,3 Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for this age group.1

Utah and U.S.
Utah’s young adult suicide rate has been consistently higher than the national rate for more than a decade (Figure 2). Utah had the 8th highest young adult suicide rate in the U.S. for the years 2008-2010.4

My 23-year-old sister was hospitalized twice for suicide attempts. She was in an abusive relationship at the time. It’s hard to explain the roller coaster of emotions I went through as I tried to understand her situation. I felt totally alone until I began talking to others about it. It’s shocking how many other families have struggled with suicide and abuse, too.
Age and Sex
Males ages 18 to 24 had a significantly higher suicide rate (29.7 per 100,000 population) than females ages 18 to 24 (7.1 per 100,000 population). More females attempt suicide than males. In Utah, young adult females ages 18 to 24 had a significantly higher ED visit rate for suicide attempts compared to young adult males ages 18 to 24 (Figure 3).

The following small areas had significantly higher rates of suicide, hospitalization, and ED visits for suicide attempts than the state rate:

**Highest Young Adult Suicide Rates**
- Brigham City*

*Insufficient number of cases to meet the UDOH standard for data reliability, interpret with caution.

**Highest Young Adult Hospitalization Rates for Suicide Attempts**
- Riverdale, St. George, Tooele County, Holladay, and NE Sandy

**Highest Young Adult ED Visit Rates for Suicide Attempts**
- Sandy Center, Holladay, Brigham City, West Jordan Northeast, Midvale, Kears, Murray, West Valley West, Magna, Riverton/Draper, Carbon/Emery Counties, Taylorsville, Bountiful, West Jordan Southeast, and West Valley East

Method of Injury
Firearms were the most common method of young adult suicide (Figure 4). Poisoning was the most common method of injury leading to young adult ED visits and hospitalizations for suicide attempts (Figure 5).

Location of Injury
The majority of young adult suicides occurred at a residence (73.7%), followed by a motor vehicle (9.1%), and natural areas such as fields or mountains (6.3%).
Young Adult Suicide in Utah, 2012

**Risk Factors**

Risk factors for suicide may include:

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of depression or mental illness
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Easy access to lethal methods (such as guns or pills)
- Stressful life event or loss
- Relationship problems

**Suicide Death Circumstances**

Utah males ages 18 to 24 had significantly higher rates of the following when compared to at least one other age group (Figure 6):

- Substance abuse problems
- Intimate partner problems
- History of suicide attempts

Utah females ages 18 to 24 did not have any suicide death circumstances that were significantly higher than at least one other age group.

**Cost**

The average total charge per year for ED visits and hospitalizations for suicide attempts was $5.5 million for Utah young adults.2
Prevention Tips

- Call for help. Help is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. If you live in Utah, call the UNI Crisisline and Mobile Crisis Outreach Team at 801-587-3000 or call the National Suicide Prevention LifeLine at 1-800-273-TALK.

- Take any threat of suicide seriously.

- Do not leave the person alone.

- Listen to and don’t judge anyone you think may be in trouble.

- Take action. Remove guns or medications to prevent a suicide attempt.

Resources

- Utah Poison Control Center http://uuhsc.utah.edu/poison/ 1-800-222-1222
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center www.sprc.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Utah Chapter www.namiut.org
- Hope 4 Utah hope4utah.com

References


2 Utah Inpatient Hospital Discharge Data, Office of Health Care Statistics; Utah Emergency Department Encounter Database, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, Utah Department of Health; 2009-2011 data queried via Utah’s Indicator-Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) [cited 2014 January].

3 Population Data: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) through a collaborative agreement with the U.S. Census Bureau, IBIS Version 2012; data queried via Utah’s Indicator-Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) [cited 2014 January].

4 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), 2008-2010 data [cited 2014 January].


Last updated: May 2014