

APPENDIX F

A 30-Year Review of Suicides in the District of Columbia (1972-2002)

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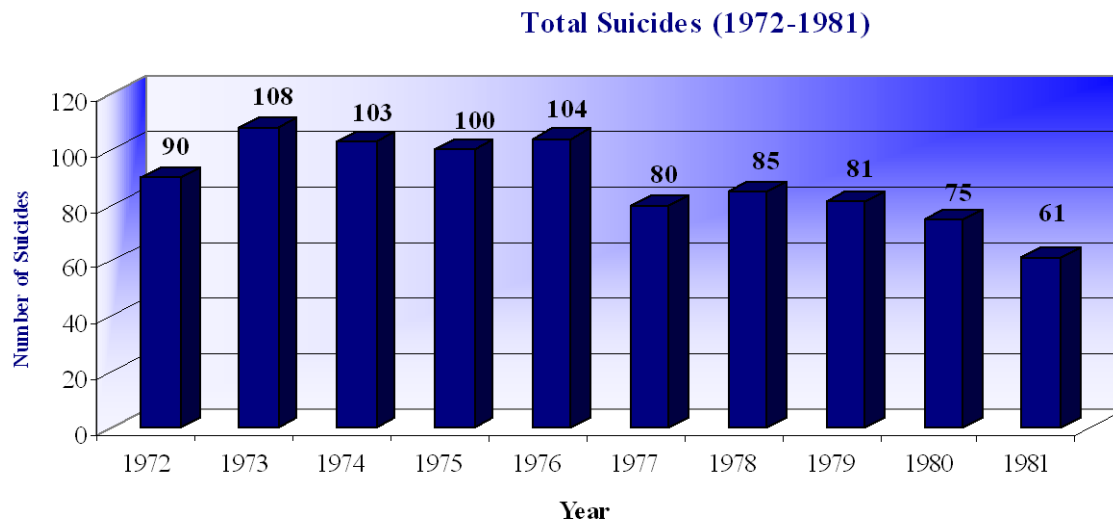
A 30-YEAR REVIEW OF SUICIDES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (1972-2002)

INTRODUCTION

During the years 1972 – 1981 Annual Reports for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) were available for statistical compilations needed to produce this suicide review. However, for calendar years 1982 – 2002, only one (1992) OCME annual report was published, so as a result a manual count was performed to provide the statistical information for these years. Like the special report "*Review of Homicides*" produced in the 2004 OCME Annual Report, the 2006 OCME Annual Report continues the effort of closing this gap by providing statistical compilations on total suicides with emphasis of those by gunfire, and demographics, along with a comparison of total suicides with the total number of autopsies performed by year. Peak incidents occurred in 1973, 1976, and again in 1986. The data will be presented primarily in segments of 10 years, but 20 and 30-year comparisons are presented as well.

CALENDAR YEARS 1972 THROUGH 1981

From 1972 to 1981, 887 suicides occurred in the District of Columbia, 520 of these decedents were White and 366 were Black/African American with no other race represented during these years. The incidents peaked in the age groups 20-29 with 261 cases. Over half of the total decedents were male (543 men¹).



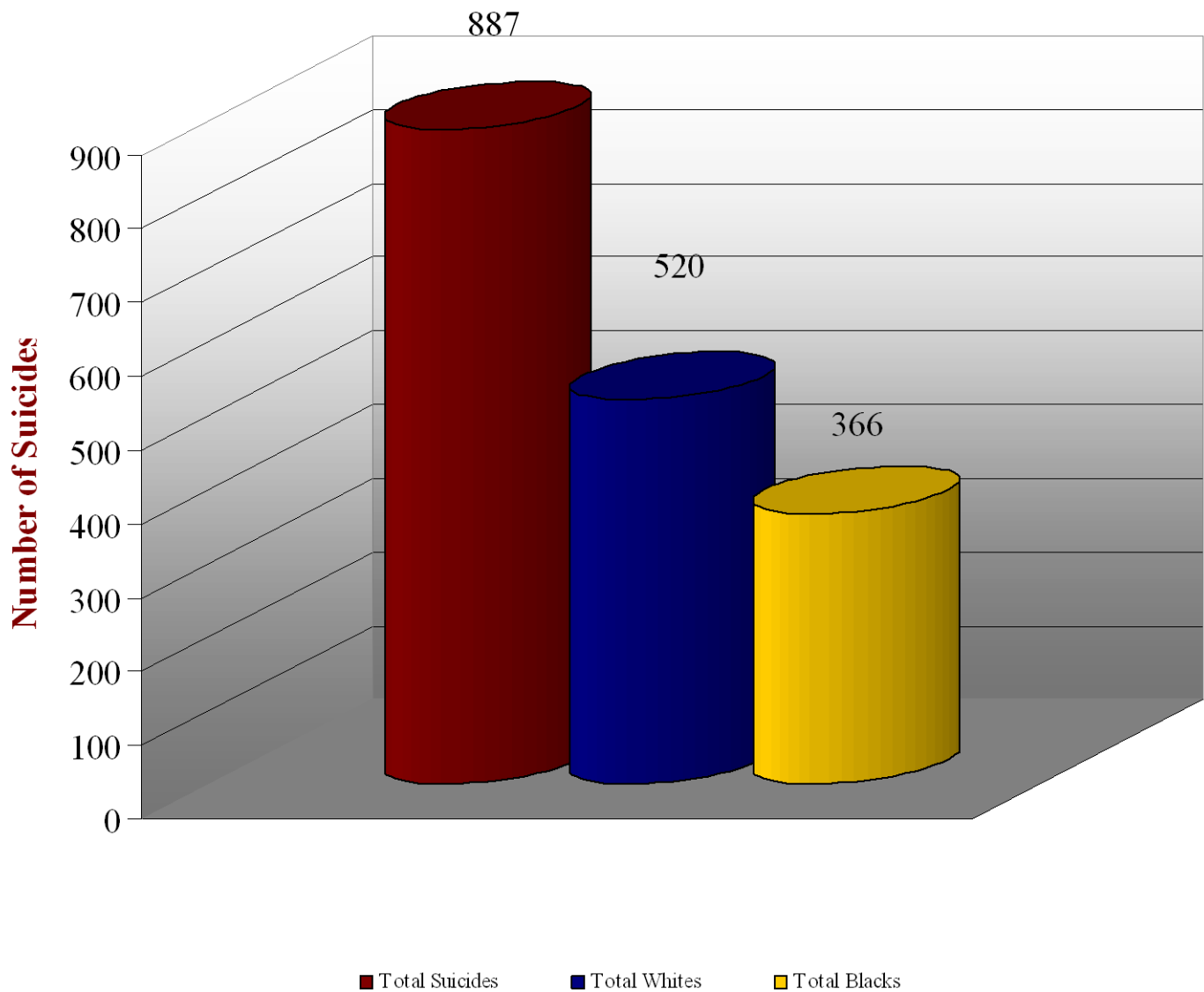
Although the suicide statistics for most years reported are less than half of what was reported in the "*30-Year Review of Homicides*" in 2004, death by gunfire is the most common cause of death in suicides and homicides alike in the District of Columbia.

¹ This number does not include data by gender from 1972 because gender was not computed in the annual report for calendar year 1972.

SUICIDE BY RACE AND GENDER (1972-1981)

The demographics of the affected population remained constant throughout this study period. The White population consistently represented 50% or more of the victims, and White males paid the highest toll over these 10 years, making up 36% of the total. Suicides in the White population peaked at 71 in 1973 (42 males and 29 females).

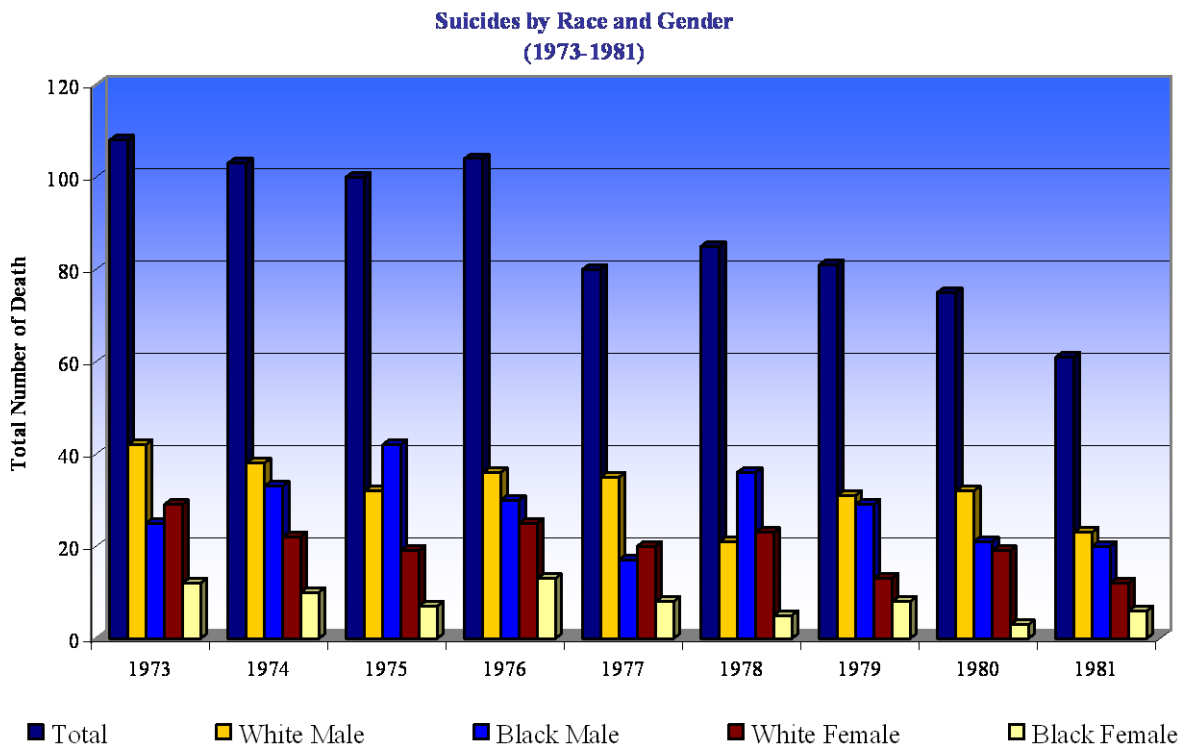
Suicides Compared by Race (1972-1981)



SUICIDE BY RACE AND GENDER (1972-1981)

SUICIDE BY RACE, AND GENDER OF VICTIM							
Year	Black Males	Black Females	Total Blacks	White Males	White Females	Total Whites	Total Suicides
1972 ²	*N/A	*N/A	41	*N/A	*N/A	48	90 ³
1973	25	12	37	42	29	71	108
1974	33	10	43	38	22	60	103
1975	42	7	49	32	19	51	100
1976	30	13	43	36	25	61	104
1977	17	8	25	35	20	55	80
1978	36	5	41	21	23	44	85
1979	29	8	37	31	13	44	81
1980	21	3	24	32	19	51	75
1981	20	6	26	23	12	35	61
Total	252	72	366	290	182	520	887

*N/A denotes data Not Available



² The Annual Report for 1972 does not provide a breakdown of the data for “Race” and “Gender”.

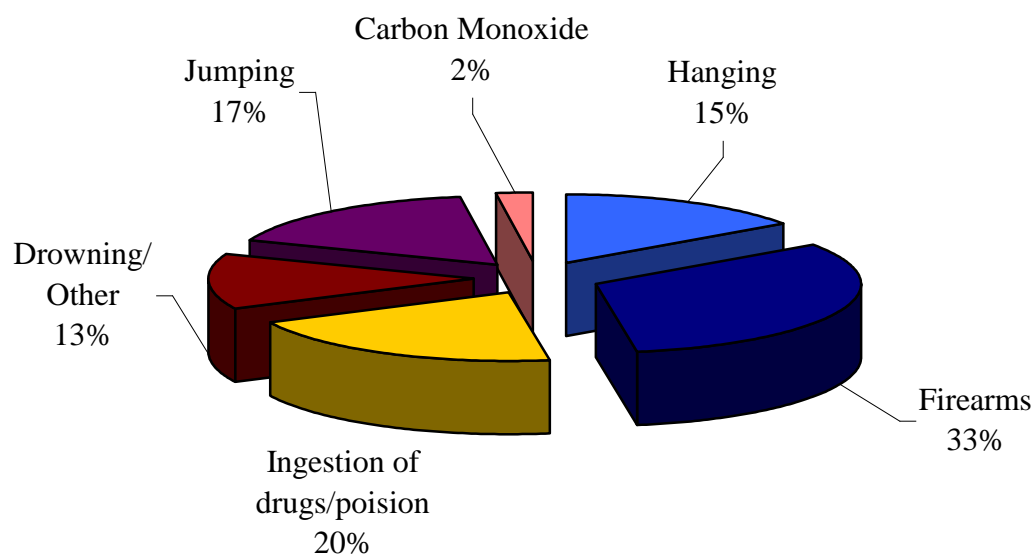
³ 1972 had 1 suicide with a race classification as “Other.” For the purposes of this illustration it was not included in the table.

SUICIDE BY METHOD (1972-1981)

Our records indicate that of the 887 suicides in the District of Columbia, the most prevalent method of suicide during these years was by gunfire (285 or 33%) followed by ingestion of drugs/poison (181 or 20%).

Year	Firearms	Ingestion of Drugs/Poison	Jumping	Hanging	Drowning/ Other	Carbon Monoxide	Total Suicides
1972	38	20	8	12	9	3	90
1973	26	27	25	11	16	3	108
1974	42	22	17	11	10	1	103
1975	32	23	13	21	11	0	100
1976	36	23	14	12	14	5	104
1977	22	16	15	16	8	3	80
1978	29	13	14	10	17	2	85
1979	20	13	21	18	7	2	81
1980	23	15	15	13	9	0	75
1981	17	9	8	12	15	0	61
Total	285	181	150	136	116	19	887

Suicides by Cause 1972-1981

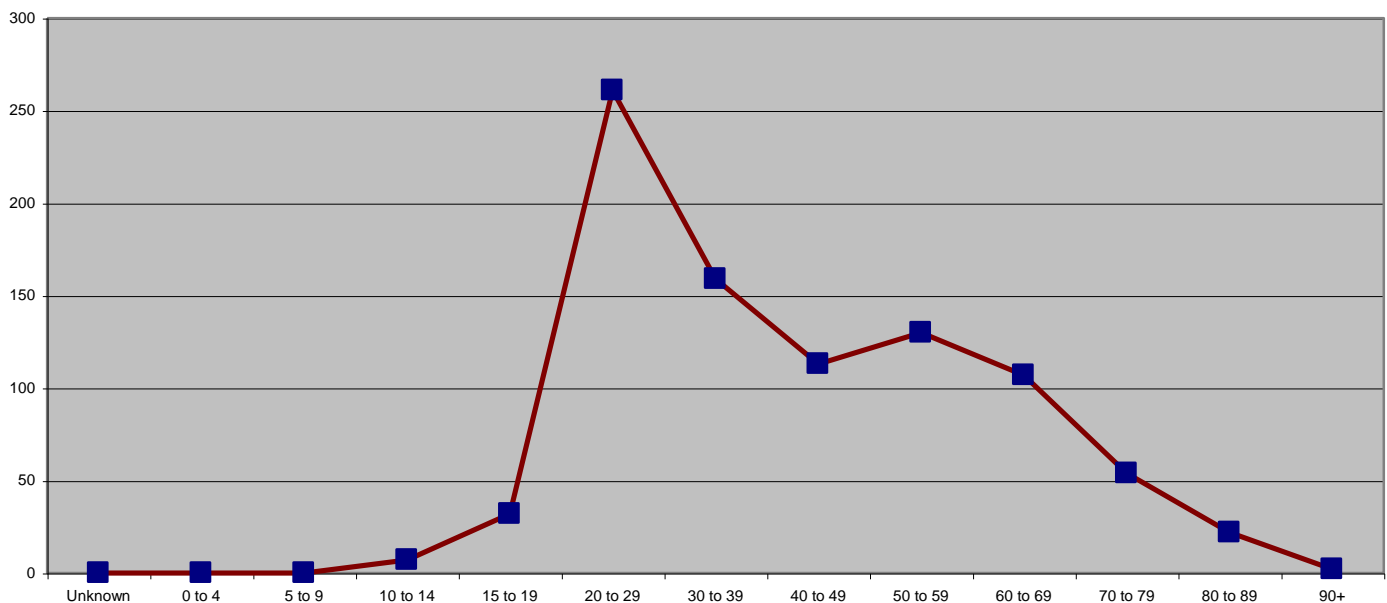


SUICIDE BY AGE (1972-1981)

A study of the data by age reveals that of the 887 suicides that occurred during this period, the age group most impacted was between 20 and 29 years old, with 261 deaths.

Year	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90+
1972	0	4	22	17	20	13	9	3	2	0
1973	2	0	31	17	19	21	9	6	3	0
1974	0	6	31	17	11	12	14	9	3	0
1975	1	6	31	18	8	12	13	7	4	0
1976	0	1	35	17	11	13	15	8	3	1
1977	1	6	23	14	11	10	12	3	0	0
1978	1	0	20	21	7	12	14	8	1	1
1979	1	1	31	13	6	15	10	3	1	0
1980	0	6	19	15	10	12	6	4	3	0
1981	1	2	18	10	10	10	5	3	2	0
TOTAL	7	32	261	159	113	130	107	54	22	2

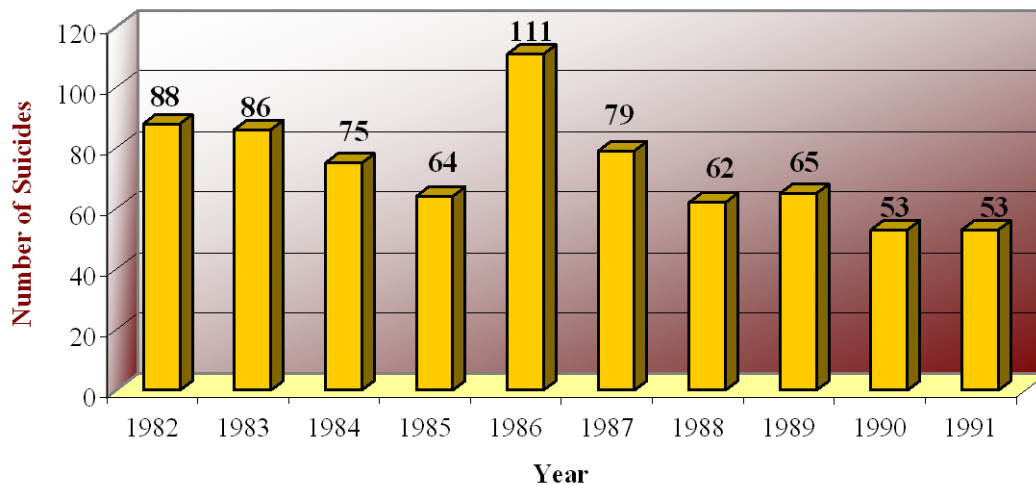
Total Suicides By Age (1972-1981)



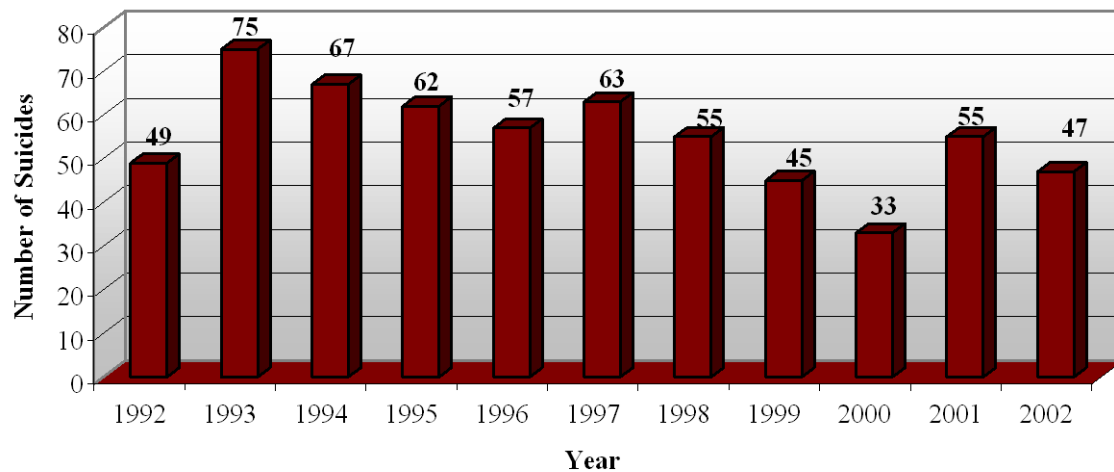
CALENDAR YEARS 1982 THROUGH 2002

From 1982 through 1991 there were 736 suicides; and from 1992 through 2002 there were 608 suicides in the District of Columbia for a total of 1,344 suicides over the course of these twenty-one years. Firearms continued to be the most common method of suicides in all categories. The charts below reveal that, on a whole, a significant overall decline (except 1986) occurred in suicides over the two most current decades particularly when compared to the previous decade (1972-1981), which will be discussed at the end of the report.

Total Suicides (1982-1991)



Total Suicides (1992-2002)



SUICIDE BY RACE AND GENDER

Throughout the entire period (1982-2002) reviewed, male suicides outnumbered female suicides in both races. During these two decades there were more suicide deaths amongst Black males than any other category for each year studied, except for 1985 and 2001, and the ethnicity and race of the decedents identified started to diversify

(1982-1991)

SUICIDES BY RACE, AND GENDER OF VICTIM							
Year		Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Other/ Unknown	Total Suicides
1982	Male	36	29	1	0	0	66
	Female	3	18	1	0	0	22
Total by Race		39	47	2	0	0	88
1983	Male	35	25	0	0	2	62
	Female	6	18	0	0	0	24
Total by Race		41	43	0	0	2	86
1984	Male	27	21	3	0	1	52
	Female	8	13	0	1	1	23
Total by Race		35	34	3	1	2	75
1985	Male	22	23	1	0	0	46
	Female	5	13	0	0	0	18
Total by Race		27	36	1	0	0	64
1986	Male	42	25	1	2	2	72
	Female	20	19	0	0	0	39
Total by Race		62	44	1	2	2	111
1987	Male	36	20	0	4	1	61
	Female	8	9	0	0	1	18
Total by Race		44	29	0	4	2	79
1988	Male	28	20	1	0	1	50
	Female	6	6	0	0	0	12
Total by Race		34	26	1	0	1	62
1989	Male	37	14	0	0	1	52
	Female	5	7	0	1	0	13
Total by Race		42	21	0	1	1	65
1990	Male	26	14	0	0	0	40
	Female	9	4	0	0	0	13
Total by Race		35	18	0	0	0	53
1991	Male	19	17	5	0	0	41
	Female	2	7	1	1	1	12
Total by Race		21	24	6	1	1	53
Total 1982 – 1991		380	322	14	9	11	736

(1992-2002)

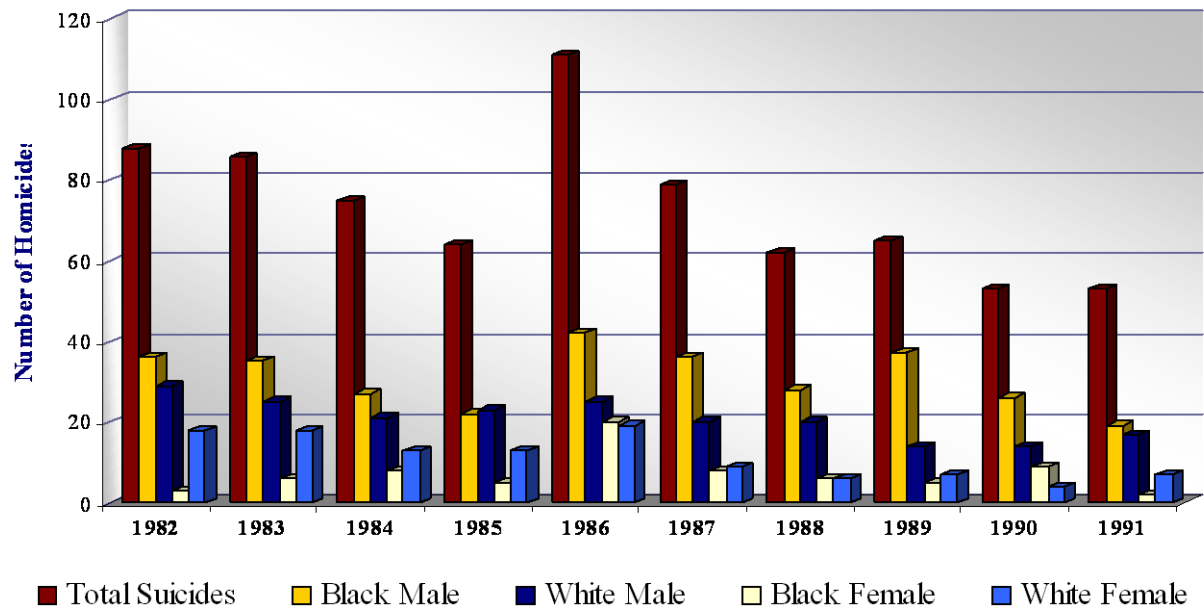
SUICIDES BY RACE, AND GENDER OF VICTIM							
Year		Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Other/ Unknown	Total Suicides
1992	Male	21	15	1	1	0	38
	Female	6	4	0	1	0	11
Total by Race		27	19	1	2	0	49
1993	Male	36	21	2	0	0	59
	Female	4	10	0	2	0	16
Total by Race		40	31	2	2	0	75
1994	Male	29	26	0	0	0	55
	Female	6	6	0	0	0	12
Total by Race		35	32	0	0	0	67
1995	Male	34	12	3	0	0	49
	Female	4	9	0	0	0	13
Total by Race		38	21	3	0	0	62
1996	Male	18	17	1	4	0	40
	Female	11	5	0	1	0	17
Total by Race		29	22	1	5	0	57
1997	Male	25	20	2	2	2	51
	Female	6	6	0	0	0	12
Total by Race		31	26	2	2	2	63
1998	Male	22	18	3	0	1	44
	Female	1	10	0	0	0	11
Total by Race		23	28	3	0	1	55
1999	Male	16	15	5	1	0	37
	Female	1	6	0	1	0	8
Total by Race		17	21	5	2	0	45
2000	Male	12	11	2	0	2	27
	Female	2	2	2	0	0	6
Total by Race		14	13	4	0	2	33
2001	Male	19	20	0	3	0	42
	Female	6	5	2	0	0	13
Total by Race		25	25	2	3	0	55
2002	Male	19	15	2	2	0	38
	Female	4	3	0	2	0	9
Total by Race		23	18	2	4	0	47

Total 1992 - 2002	302	256	25	20	5	608
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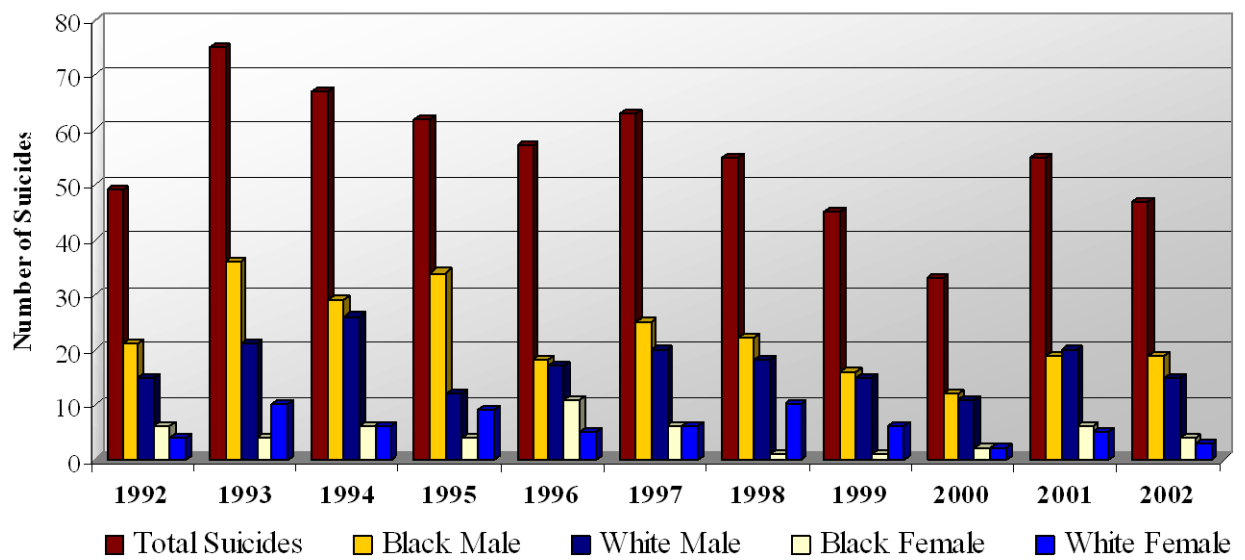
GRAND TOTAL	682	578	39	29	16	1344
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CHARTS - TOTAL SUICIDES COMPARED BY RACE AND GENDER

(1982-1991)

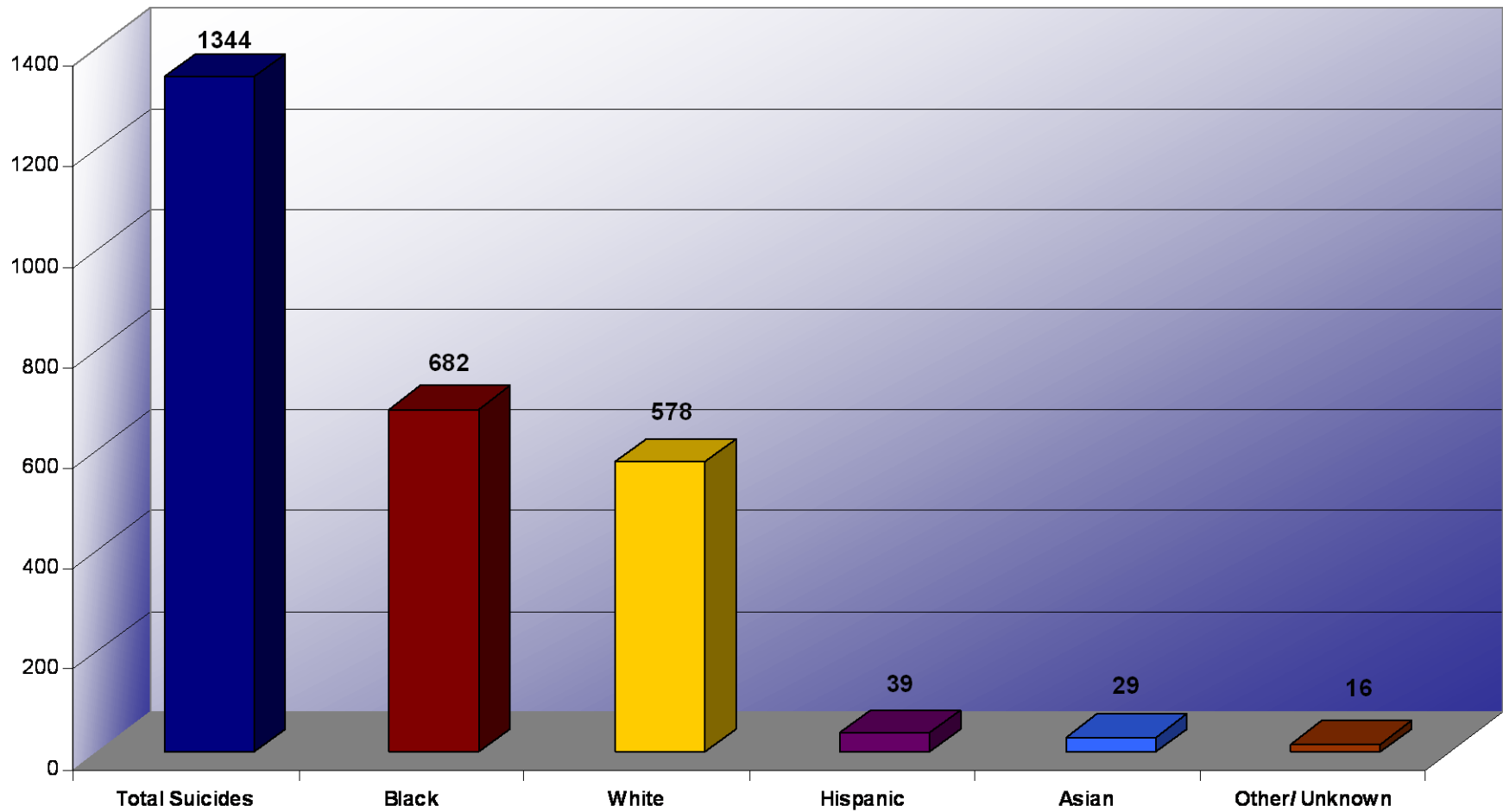


(1992-2002)



Note: For visual purposes, only the statistically higher races are compared in this chart

Total Suicides Compared by Race (1982-2002)



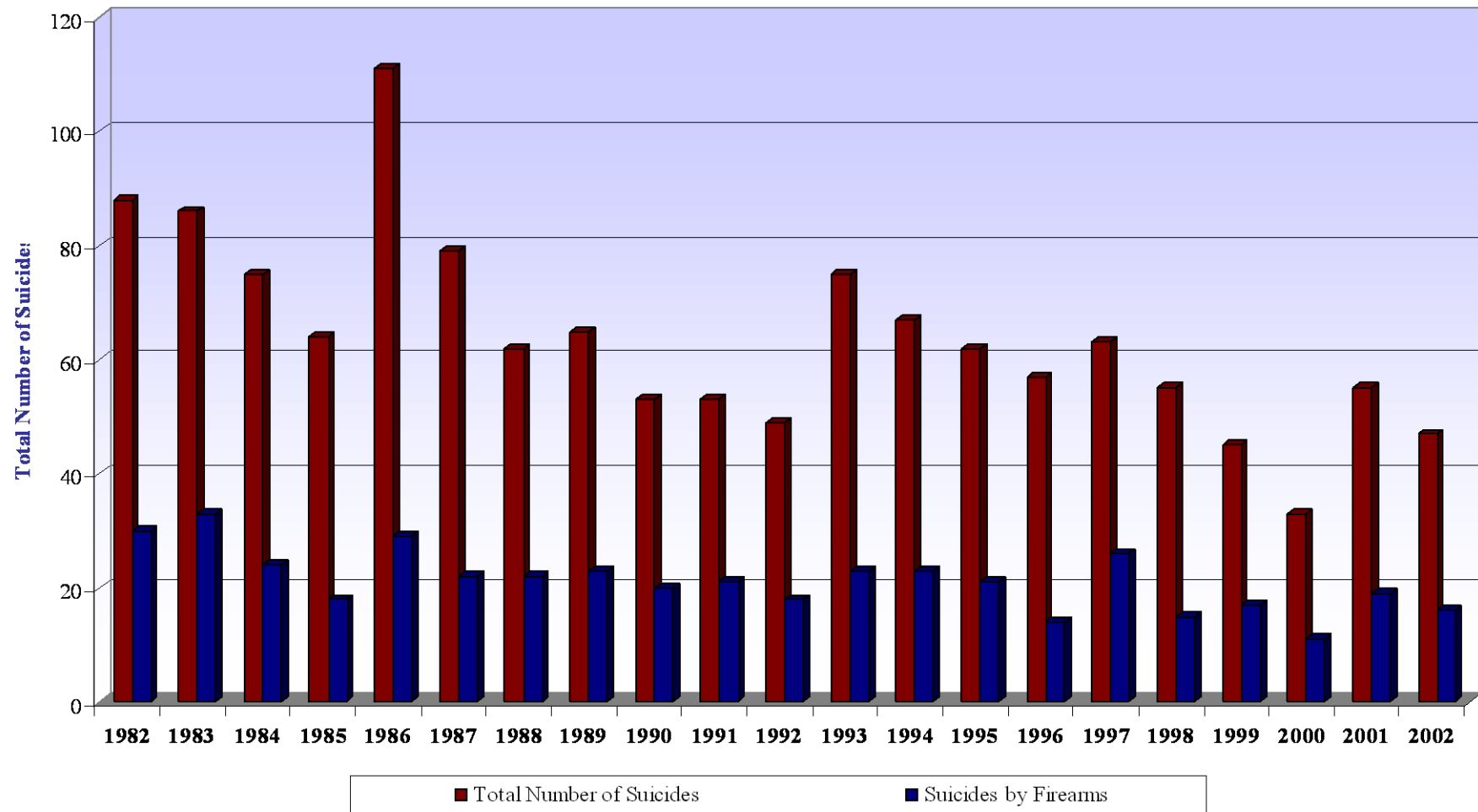
SUICIDES BY FIREARMS (1982-2002)

Out of the 1,344 suicides that occurred the most prevalent method of death is a direct result of Gunfire (445 or 33%), followed by Asphyxia (276 or 21%).

Year	Firearms	Intoxication	Asphyxia	Hanging	Blunt Impact Trauma	Thermal Injury	Sharp Force Injuries	Carbon Monoxide	Total Suicides
1982	30	7	15	12	16	3	2	0	88
1983	33	12	12	15	10	2	2	0	86
1984	24	4	20	19	5	0	0	3	75
1985	18	4	17	11	11	1	0	2	64
1986	29	7	24	22	21	2	2	4	111
1987	22	9	21	12	12	2	1	0	79
1988	22	7	14	12	7	0	0	0	62
1989	23	5	6	18	9	1	1	2	65
1990	20	5	9	13	5	1	0	0	53
1991	21	3	3	14	7	4	1	0	53
1992	18	1	11	13	5	0	0	1	49
1993	23	3	35	4	9	1	0	0	75
1994	23	0	16	17	9	1	0	1	67
1995	21	1	15	14	5	2	3	1	62
1996	14	6	14	12	8	0	1	2	57
1997	26	9	8	14	5	0	0	1	63
1998	15	1	12	14	11	0	1	1	55
1999	17	5	5	5	6	3	4	0	45
2000	11	1	4	10	4	0	2	1	33
2001	19	9	7	8	10	2	0	0	55
2002	16	5	8	8	7	3	0	0	47
Total	445	104	276	267	182	28	20	19	1,344

Note: There were 3 suicides in 1982 due to “*Blast Injury*” that have not been included as part of this chart because this cause of death is exclusive to 1982.

Total Suicides vs. Suicides by Firearms 1982-2002



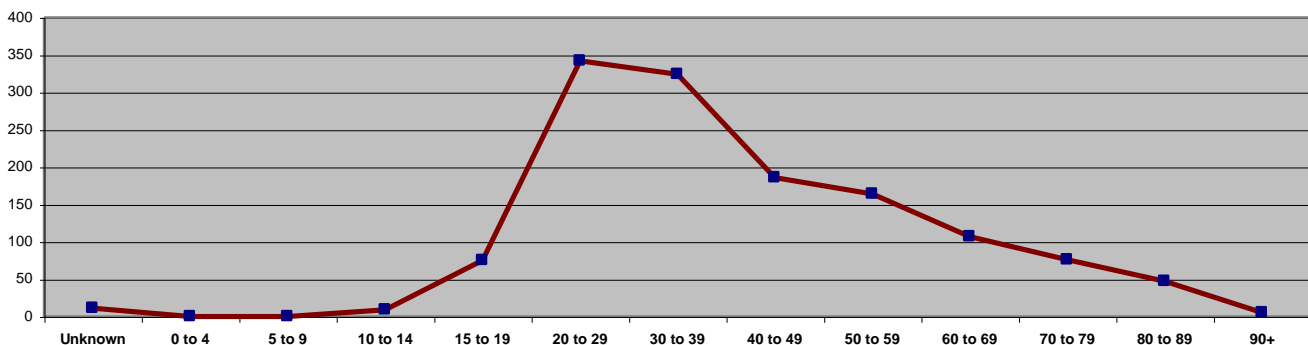
SUICIDES BY AGE (1982-2002)

The number of Suicides from 1982-1991 primarily affected the age groups 20 to 29, 30 to 39 and 50 to 59, but from 1992-2002 a slight shift occurred and the age groups most affected were 20 to 29, 30 to 39 and 40 to 49. The number of cases for this manner of death peaked in 1986 at 111, but has been below 100 for each year that followed through 2002.

SUICIDES BY AGE

Year	Unknown	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90+	Total
1982	0	2	5	22	20	11	13	5	6	6	0	88
1983	0	0	2	24	23	4	13	10	7	3	0	86
1984	3	0	1	18	22	9	9	8	2	3	0	75
1985	1	1	2	24	12	5	13	3	3	0	0	64
1986	0	0	7	35	20	17	13	11	5	3	0	111
1987	1	0	5	25	24	7	4	4	5	3	1	79
1988	0	0	2	16	14	6	8	8	2	6	0	62
1989	1	0	3	22	18	8	6	2	4	1	0	65
1990	0	0	4	10	15	8	5	3	4	4	0	53
1991	1	0	4	12	11	8	6	9	0	1	1	53
Total	7	3	35	208	179	83	90	63	38	30	2	736
1992	0	0	5	15	10	9	0	4	5	1	0	49
1993	2	1	2	15	20	13	12	3	4	3	0	75
1994	0	1	4	19	23	6	4	3	2	4	1	67
1995	0	0	5	15	16	9	7	2	6	1	1	62
1996	1	0	2	9	14	10	11	4	3	3	0	57
1997	0	0	6	10	12	12	11	7	4	1	0	63
1998	1	0	4	12	14	7	7	7	1	2	0	55
1999	0	2	3	5	14	8	4	6	3	0	0	45
2000	0	2	2	10	4	7	3	2	3	0	0	33
2001	0	0	5	13	8	14	7	3	5	0	0	55
2002	0	0	2	11	10	8	8	3	2	2	1	47
Total	4	6	40	134	145	103	74	44	38	17	3	608
Grand Total	11	9	75	342	324	186	164	107	76	47	5	1344

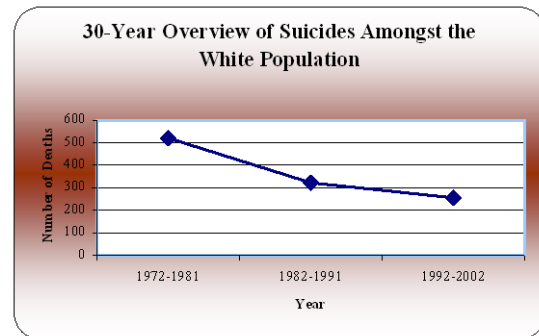
Total Suicides by Age (1982-2002)



30-Year Overview

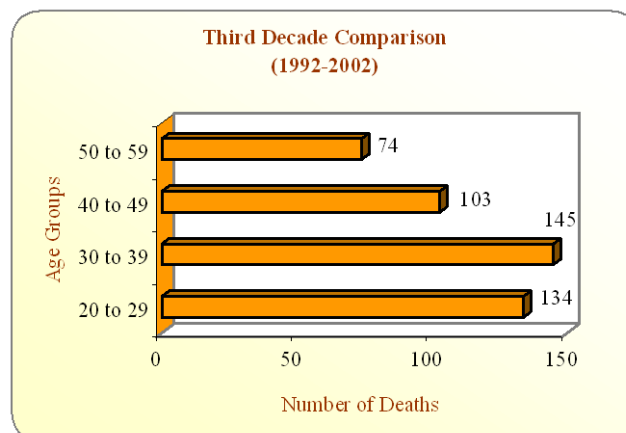
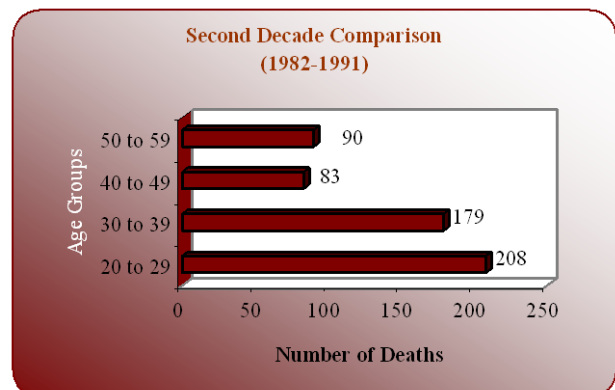
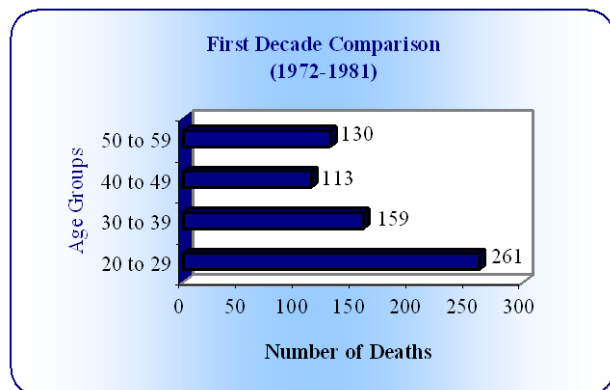
Summary of Overall findings for 1972-2002

From 1982-2002 there was a sharp decrease of suicide deaths amongst Whites. The sharpest decline in suicides for Whites occurred during 1992-2002 with the total number of suicides being 285 compared to 520 during 1972-1981. However, the statistics for Blacks remained somewhat static 324 (72-81), 380 (82-91), and 302 (92-02). On page 15 you will find a chart that provides an overlay comparison of the total number of suicides over the 30-year period broken down into increments of 10-years.

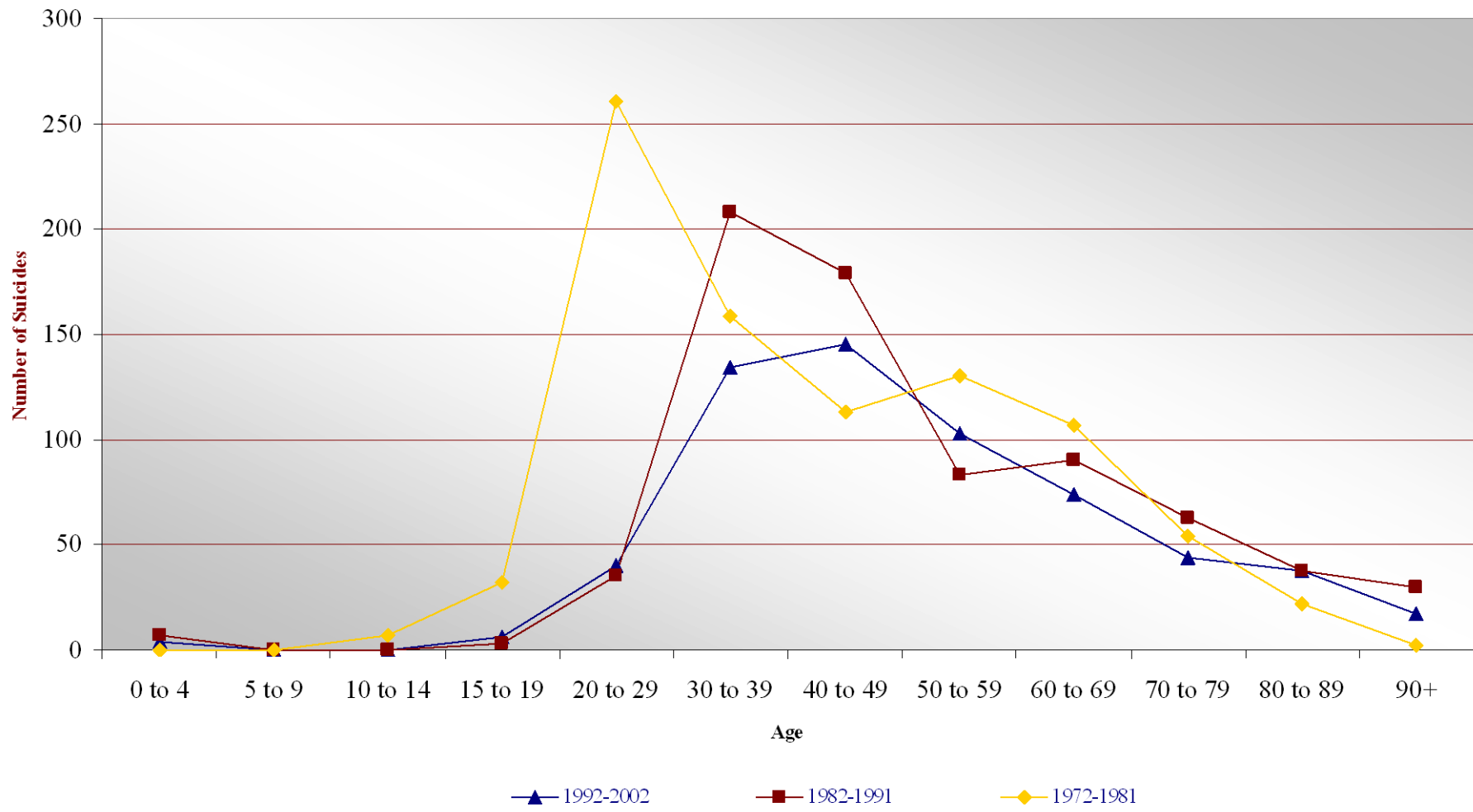


Summary of findings by the Ages primarily affected by Suicide

The number of Suicides during the first decade (**1972-1981**) primarily affected the age groups that were between 20-59. From **1982-1991** the age groups most affected were 20-29, 30-39 and 50-59, as in the previous decade, however during **1992-2002** a slight variation occurred and the age groups most affected were 20 to 29, 30 to 39 and 40 to 49. As demonstrated in a special study included at the end of this report, the most notable change that was seen during 1982-2002 was in the age group 10-19 years old where overall Black suicide deaths outnumbered Whites by 47% (Blacks, 57 and Whites, 27), and suicides amongst Black males and White females in this age category more than doubled in some cases.



SUICIDES BY AGE A 30-YEAR COMPARISON



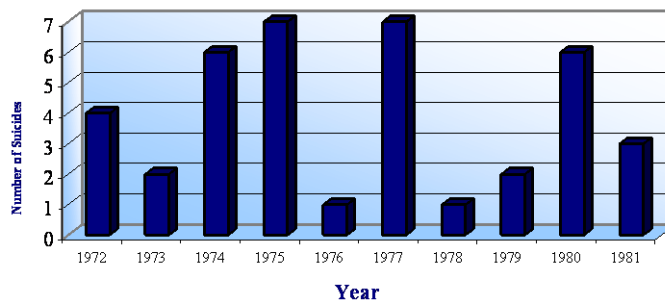
A SPECIAL LOOK AT SUICIDES AMONGST YOUTH (10-19 years)

A CDC Report (2004) titled “*Methods of Suicide Among Persons Aged 10-19 Years – United States, 1992-2001*” reported the following:

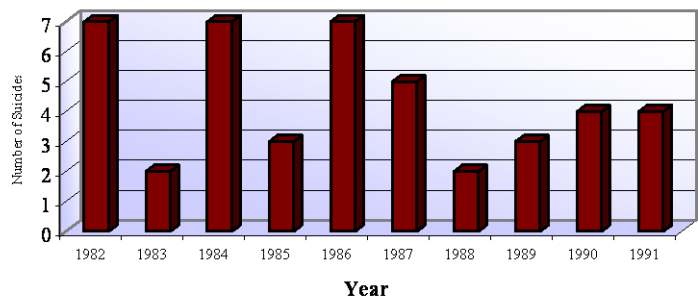
IN 2001, SUICIDE WAS THE THIRD LEADING cause of death among persons aged 10-19 years⁴. The most common method of suicide in this age group was by firearm (49%), followed by suffocation (mostly hanging) (38%) and poisoning (7%). During 1992-2001, although the overall suicide rate among persons aged 10-19 years declined from 6.2 to 4.6 per 100,000 population, methods of suicide changed. A substantial decline in suicides by firearm and an increase in suicides by suffocation in persons aged 10-14 and 15-19 years. Beginning in 1997, among persons aged 10-14 years, suffocation surpassed firearms as the most common suicide method. (JAMA, 2004, vol. 292, 4, p.427)

In light of the above CDC report the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner decided to review this age group specifically over the course of our 30-year period of study. The total number of decedents for this age group in the DC population is very small, but our findings do not indicate a decline of suicides. However, overall an increase is realized in this segment of suicides that occurred, in the District of Columbia, when the data is analyzed by decade. From 1972-1981 there were 39 youth suicides; from 1982-1991 there were 44; and from 1992-2002 there were 46.

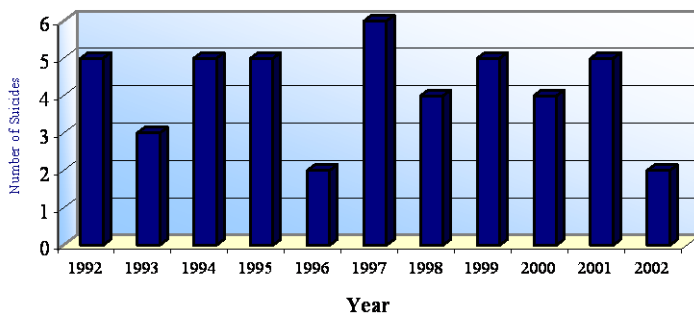
**Total Youth (10-19 years) Suicides
(1973-1981)**



**Total Youth (10-19 years) Suicides
(1982-1991)**



**Total Youth (10-19 years) Suicides
(1992-2002)**

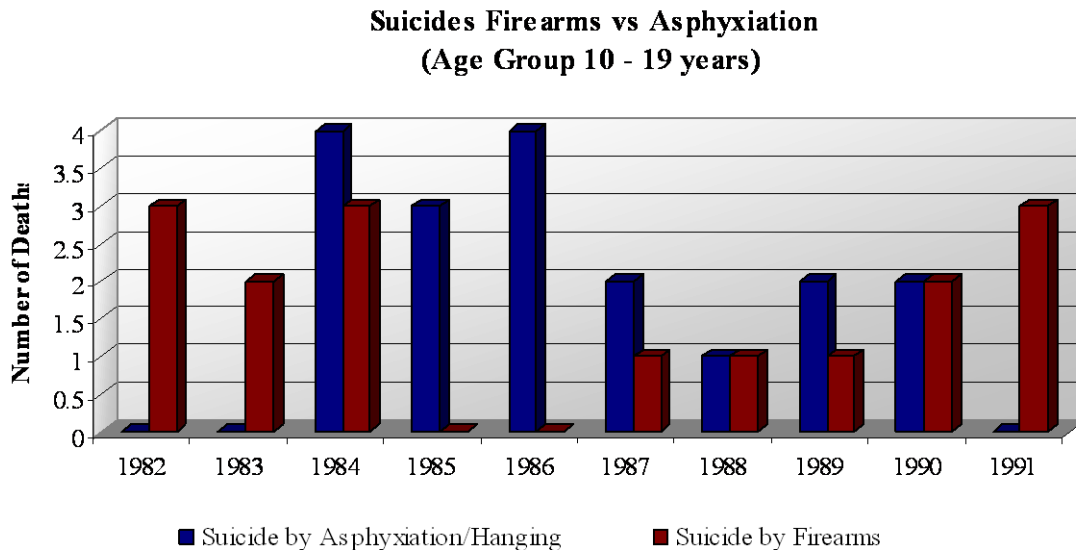


⁴ CDC. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS™). Atlanta, Georgia:U.S.

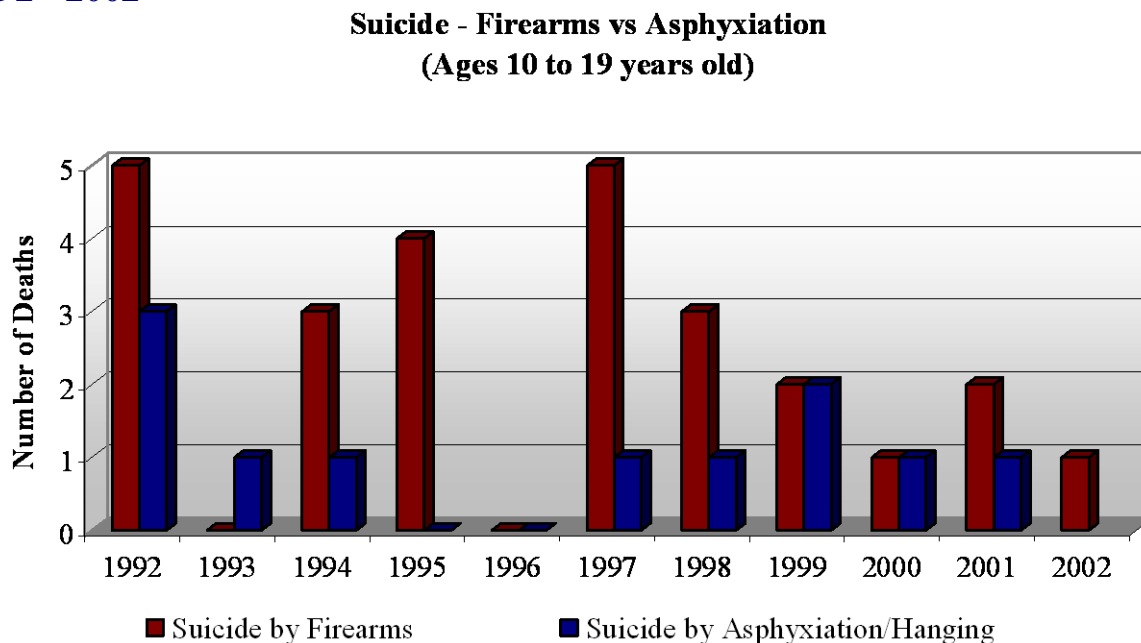
Age 10-19 years – A Look at the Most Common Method of Suicide

The data for method by age is not available for years 1972 through 1981. Our data shows asphyxiation was the most prevalent method of suicide from 1984 through 1990, while 1988 and 1990 both show equal numbers for deaths by asphyxiation and firearms. However, unlike the CDC report our data concludes that from 1992 through 2002 firearms remained the dominant method of suicide, and not asphyxiation, with the exception of 1993.

1982 – 1991

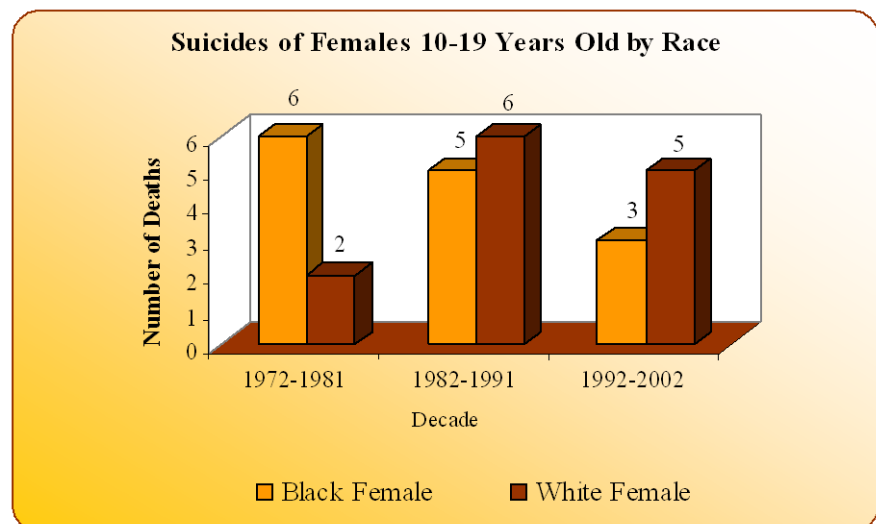
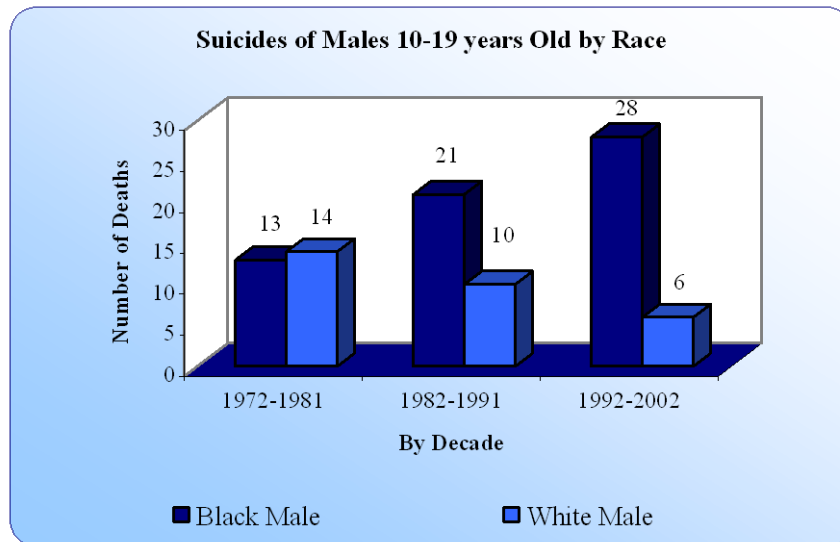


1992 - 2002



Suicides of Persons Age 10-19 Years Old by Race and Gender

The below illustrations indicate – when reviewed by decade – that deaths amongst both Black male and White female youths more than doubled in some instances over the course of this 30-year study. In fact, although the numbers are low, in the second decade the number of suicides tripled for White females; whereas with White males and Black females a decline in suicides occurred. It is important to note that there was only one other race category for this segment of data and it was "Other"; however, because the statistics are low ($n = 4$) for the entire 30-year period they are not measured for the purpose of this review.



The following statistics are compelling when Black males and White females are compared directly with the total number of suicides and each other:

1972-1981

Black males were 33% of the total number of suicides, and White females were 5%.

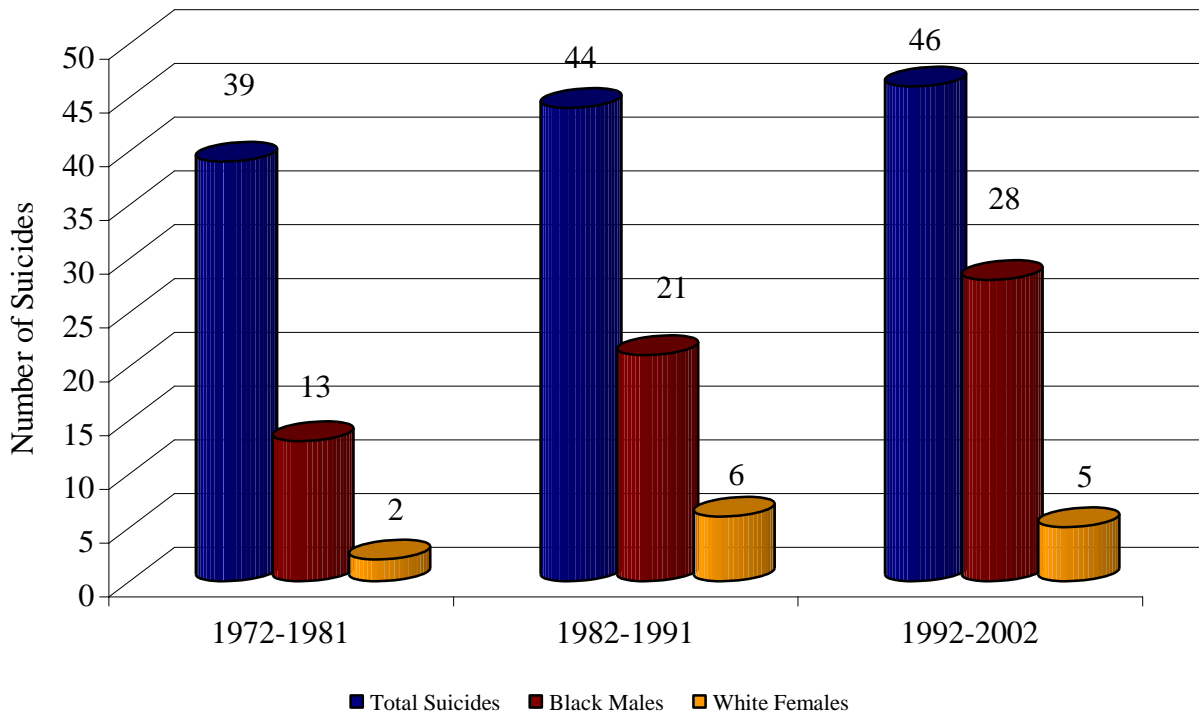
1982-1991

Black males were 48% of the total number of suicides, and White females were 14%.

1992-2002

Black males were 61% of the total number of suicides, and White females were 11%.

**Total Suicides Compared to
Black Males and White Females**



TOTAL SUICIDES AND AUTOPSIES PERFORMED (1972-2006)

Presented below are the total number of suicides and the number of autopsy examinations performed between 1972 and 2006.

Year	Total Number of Suicides	Total Number of Autopsies
1972	90	1,142
1973	108	1,147
1974	103	1,112
1975	100	1,105
1976	104	1,040
1977	80	1,066
1978	85	978
1979	81	1,005
1980	75	1,041
1981	61	1,040
1982	88	1,092
1983	86	940
1984	75	1,010
1985	64	1,126
1986	111	1,147
1987	79	1,283
1988	62	1,383
1989	65	1,380
1990	53	1,385
1991	53	1,333
1992	49	1,234
1993	75	1,088
1994	67	1,339
1995	62	1,140
1996	57	1,129
1997	63	1,118
1998	55	1,129
1999	45	1,297
2000	33	1,367
2001	55	1,303
2002	47	1,328
2003	51	1,337
2004	35	1,137
2005	44	1,142
2006	35	1,017