



Substance Use Trend

Alert

January 2023

Alcohol, Drugs, and Suicide in the U.S. and Florida

Alcohol, drug, and suicide-related death rates are increasing in the U.S. and are a public health concern.¹ According to a recent study, all three death rates increased among individuals ages 20-64 during 2000 to 2017.¹ Direct causes for these increases are hard to pinpoint but researchers posit that worsening economic opportunities, especially among those with less education; availability and access to drugs, alcohol, and means of suicide; or feelings of despair are indicators for higher death rates.¹

Alcohol, Drugs, and Suicide in the U.S.

Deaths from alcohol, drugs, and suicide have been increasing and ultimately cost 186,763 American lives in 2020.² This is a 20% one-year increase in the combined death rate.² There was a 30% increase in drug-related deaths in 2020, which was largely driven by the use of synthetic opioids and psychostimulants.² Drug-related deaths continued to increase in 2021 but at a slower rate than in 2020.³ Deaths associated with alcohol increased 27% in 2020. Provisional data from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that alcohol-related deaths continue to increase and are up 34% from pre-pandemic levels.⁴ Suicide deaths decreased by 3% in 2020 but increased in 2021.^{2,5} Experts assert that the stress, anxiety, grief, and financial hardship that the COVID-19 pandemic brought upon individuals and families contributed to the increase in deaths associated with alcohol, drugs, and suicide.²

Alcohol, Drugs, and Suicide in Florida

In Florida, the number of deaths per 100,000 related to alcohol, drugs, and suicide combined was 60.4 in 2020.² This is a 21% increase from 2019.² The rate per 100,000 for alcohol-related deaths was 12.6 in 2020, a 25% increase from 2019.² For drug-related

deaths, the age-adjusted rate was 36.2 with deaths increasing by 35% from 2019.² Suicide deaths reached 13.2 in 2020 - a 9% decrease from 2019.²

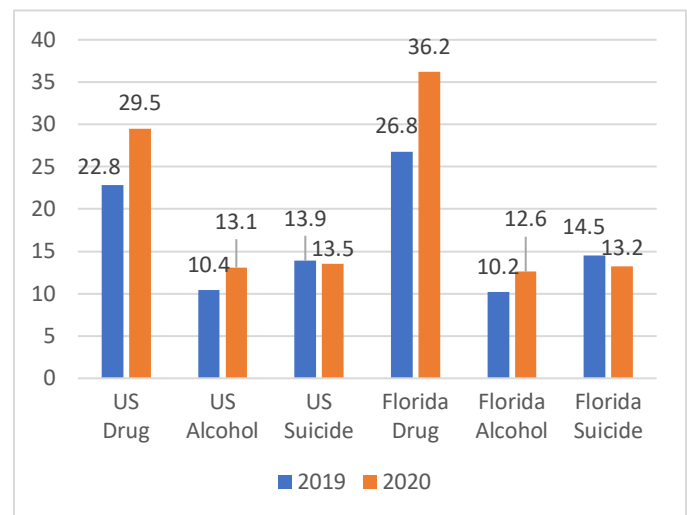


Figure 1: Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide rate per 100,000 in the U.S. and Florida from 2019-2020. Source: [TFAH](#)

Recommendations

Investing in programs that promote health and prevent substance misuse and suicide in schools may benefit individuals.² Interventions should focus on trauma-informed care, a continuum of crisis care, and expand comprehensive suicide prevention efforts to strengthen economic support, promote connectedness, and create protective environments.² Programs that address social determinants of health and promote resilience in individuals, families, and communities are also needed.² Lastly, policies that lower excessive alcohol use and limit where and when alcohol can be served or purchased can deter increases in alcohol-related deaths.² For more information, please visit the following websites:

Additional Information Sources:

- [Florida Department of Children and Families \(DCF\): Treatment for Substance Use](#)
- [SAMHSA: Evidence Based Practices Resource Center](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Evidence-Based Prevention Resources](#)
- [Zero Suicide](#)

References

1. Shiels, M. S., Tatalovich, Z., Chen, Y. Trends in Mortality from Drug Poisonings, Suicide, and Alcohol-induced Deaths in the United States from 2000 to 2017. *JAMA* 2020. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2770537>
2. Trust for America's Health (2022). Pain in the Nation 2022: U.S. Experienced Highest Ever Combined Rates of Deaths Due to Alcohol, Drugs, and Suicide During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.tfah.org/report-details/pain-in-the-nation-2022/>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). U.S. Overdose Deaths in 2021 Increased Half as Much as in 2020- But are still up 15%. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/202205.htm
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5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Suicide Increases in 2021 after Two Years of Decline. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/20220930.htm#:~:text=The%20findings%20are%20featured%20in,2020%20to%2047%2C646%20in%202021.