Suicide among Veterans and Armed Forces

UTAH, 2010 - 2014

Data from the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)

Utah Violent Death Reporting System (UTVDRS)  Joined the NVDRS: 2004  First year of data collection: 2005

Utah has 29 counties covering 82,000 square miles. It is the 31st most populous state.

Types of violent deaths among veterans and armed forces in Utah (N=496)

- **80% Suicide** (395 deaths)
  - 3% Homicide (14 deaths)
  - >1% Unintentional firearm (2 deaths)
  - 1% Legal intervention (7 deaths)
  - 16% Undetermined (78 deaths)

SUICIDE was the most common type of violent death among veterans and armed forces in Utah, occurring more than 28 times as often as homicide during 2010-2014.

- Percent of all suicide victims in Utah in 2010-2014 identified as veterans or armed forces: 19% Males, 3% Females, 15% Total

Suicide rates in Utah**

Suicide rates were higher among veterans and armed forces in Utah in 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Veterans/Armed Forces</th>
<th>Non-Veteran Civilians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>35.5***</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***Rate based on <20 deaths.

Demographics of veterans and armed forces suicide victims in Utah (N=395)

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 96% White, Non-Hispanic
  - 2% Hispanic
  - 1% Black, non-Hispanic
  - 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic
  - 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic
  - 1% Two or more races, other, or unknown race

- **Marital Status**
  - 45% Married
  - 28% Divorced
  - 16% Never married
  - 7% Widowed
  - 4% Other/unknown status

**Includes civil unions and domestic partnerships

Education Status

- 61% Some college credit or college degree
- 32% High school or GED graduate
- 6% Less than a high school education
- 2% Unknown or missing education level

Percent may not equal 100% due to rounding. *All rates are occurrence ratios based on the number of resident and non-resident deaths that occurred in the state per 100,000 resident population. **Statistical testing was not conducted. Differences between veterans/armed forces and non-veteran civilians may not be statistically significant. Sources: 1 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2014; 2 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress; 3 U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Population estimates for Utah*
(Average annual estimate, 2010-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Veteran (Age 18+)</th>
<th>Armed Forces (Age 16+)</th>
<th>Non-Veteran/Civilian (Age 18+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140,942</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>1,823,842</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homeless Veterans2 (estimated)

317

Veteran Health Administration facilities in Utah3

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Annual number of suicide deaths among veterans and armed forces in Utah

Method of suicide deaths among veterans and armed forces in Utah
Firearm suicide rates among male veterans/armed forces and non-veteran civilians in Utah**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male veterans/armed forces had:</th>
<th>Firearm suicide rates* in Utah, 2010-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VETERAN/ ARMED FORCES</td>
<td>The highest firearm suicide rate was among males aged 18-54.</td>
<td>Males age 18-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm use</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-firearm use</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-VETERAN CIVILIAN</td>
<td>A firearm suicide rate 2.2 times higher compared to non-veteran civilians</td>
<td>Firearm use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm use</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-firearm use</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 98% of Utah’s suicide deaths among male veterans and armed forces, circumstances were documented in the records (N=370). More than one circumstance may have been noted in the record. The five most frequent circumstances by age group, as well as information about suicide intent, and a suicide note, are shown below. Circumstances by age group were not calculated for females due to small numbers.

### Suicide circumstances by life stage among male veterans and armed forces in Utah

- **AGE 18-34**
  - 13% (N=47)
  - 57% Recent/imminent crisis
  - 55% Current mental health problem
  - 51% Ever treated for mental health or substance abuse problem
  - 49% Intimate partner problems
  - 28% Job/financial problems
  - 45% Suicide intent disclosed within last month
  - 34% Left a suicide note

- **AGE 35-54**
  - 25% (N=93)
  - 67% Recent/imminent crisis
  - 56% Intimate partner problems
  - 48% Current mental health problem
  - 48% Ever treated for mental health or substance abuse problem
  - 34% Job/financial problems
  - 39% Suicide intent disclosed within last month
  - 45% Left a suicide note

- **AGE 55-64**
  - 23% (N=84)
  - 48% Recent/imminent crisis
  - 46% Current mental health problem
  - 44% Physical health problems
  - 44% Ever treated for mental health or substance abuse problem
  - 27% Job/financial problems
  - 29% Suicide intent disclosed within last month
  - 38% Left a suicide note

- **AGE 65+**
  - 39% (N=146)
  - 68% Physical health problems
  - 66% Recent/imminent crisis
  - 40% Current mental health problem
  - 39% Ever treated for mental health or substance abuse problem
  - 17% Intimate partner problems
  - 38% Suicide intent disclosed within last month
  - 39% Left a suicide note

### Diagnoses among suicide victims with a current mental health problem in Utah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Veteran/Armed Forces (N=179)</th>
<th>Non-Veteran Civilians (N=1056)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression/dysthymia</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-traumatic stress disorder</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety disorder</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar disorder</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages will not add up to 100% as individuals may have had more than one diagnosis.

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**National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) Special Report on Veteran Suicide**

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