

The CBHSQ Report

Spotlight

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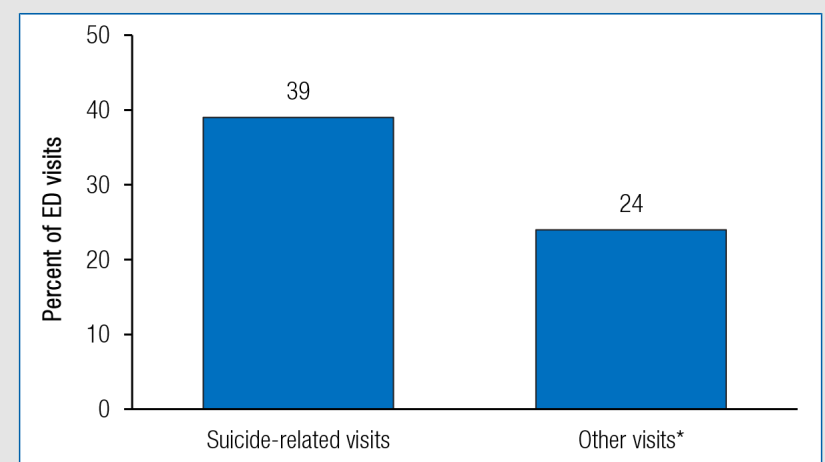
DRUG-RELATED SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BY MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS LIKELY TO INVOLVE ALCOHOL COMBINED WITH DRUGS

In 2013, an estimated 1.3 million adults aged 18 or older (0.6 percent of the population) attempted suicide in the past year, 2.7 million (1.1 percent) made suicide plans, and 9.3 million (3.9 percent) had serious thoughts of suicide.¹ The rate of death by suicide for middle-aged adults (aged 35 to 64) increased by 28.4 percent from 1999 to 2010.²

According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), an estimated 228,366 emergency department (ED) visits were for drug-related suicide attempts in 2011. Of these, middle-aged patients aged 35 to 64 accounted for 99,559 of these visits. About 39 percent (38,616 visits) of ED visits for drug-related suicide attempts by middle-aged patients involved alcohol combined with other drugs. In contrast, only 24 percent of other drug-related ED visits (excluding adverse reactions) by middle-aged patients involved alcohol combined with other drugs.

Although substance abuse problems are not always present in patients who visit the ED for drug-related suicide attempts, alcohol and drug use are commonly associated with suicidal behavior.³ People who are seriously considering suicide may have a lower risk of suicide attempts after they stop using drugs and alcohol, compared with those who are suicidal and are still using drugs or alcohol.⁴ Therefore, families, friends, clinicians, and suicide prevention programs should consider encouraging those at risk for suicide to abstain from using alcohol and drugs.

Involvement of alcohol combined with other drugs in emergency department visits for drug-related suicide attempts compared with other drug-related visits* for patients aged 35 to 64: 2011



*All other drug-related ED visits excluding adverse reactions.

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables* (Tables 2.77B and 2.79B). Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/DetTabs/NSDUH-DetTabsTOC2012.htm>
2. Sullivan, E. M., Anest, J. L., Luo, F., Simon, T. R., & Dahlberg, L. L. (2013). Suicide among adults aged 35-64 years—United States, 1999-2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 62(17), 321-325. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6217a1.htm>
3. Borges, G., Walters, E. E., & Kessler, R. C. (2000). Associations of substance use, abuse and dependence with subsequent suicidal behavior. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 151(8), 781-789.
4. Han, B., Compton, W. M., Gfroerer, J., & McKeon, R. (2015). Prevalence and correlates of past 12-month suicide attempt among adults with past-year suicidal ideation in the United States. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 76(3), 295-302.

Source: 2005-2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). DAWN was a public health surveillance system that monitors drug-related hospital emergency department (ED) visits and drug-related deaths to track the impact of drug use, misuse, and abuse in the United States.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The Data Spotlight may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.