

Suicide among Veterans in Oklahoma

- From 2005 to 2012, there were 1,018 veteran suicide deaths, an average of 127 deaths per year (average annual rate = 39.2 per 100,000 population) based on death certificate data.
- The veteran suicide rate was 2 times higher than the rate among non-veterans (39.2 and 18.2, respectively).
- The combined veteran suicide rate among 16 National Violent Death Reporting System states (including OK) from 2005 to 2011 was 28.4 per 100,000 population.
- The annual veteran suicide rate increased 34% from 2005 to 2012 (Figure 1).
- The mean age of veteran suicide victims was 58 years; the mean age of non-veteran suicide victims was 43 years.
- The veteran suicide rate among males was almost 3 times higher than the rate among females (41.2 and 14.9, respectively).
- Veterans aged 18-34 and 75 years and older were at greatest risk for suicide (Figure 2).
- The veteran suicide rate among American Indians was 19% higher than whites, 3 times higher than blacks and 2 times higher than Hispanics (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Annual Veteran Suicide Rate by Gender, Oklahoma, 2005-2012

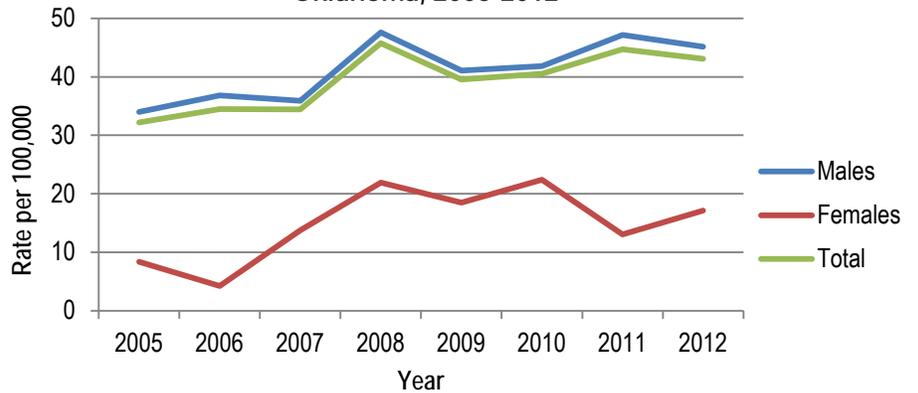


Figure 2. Age-specific Veteran Suicide Rate, Oklahoma, 2005-2012

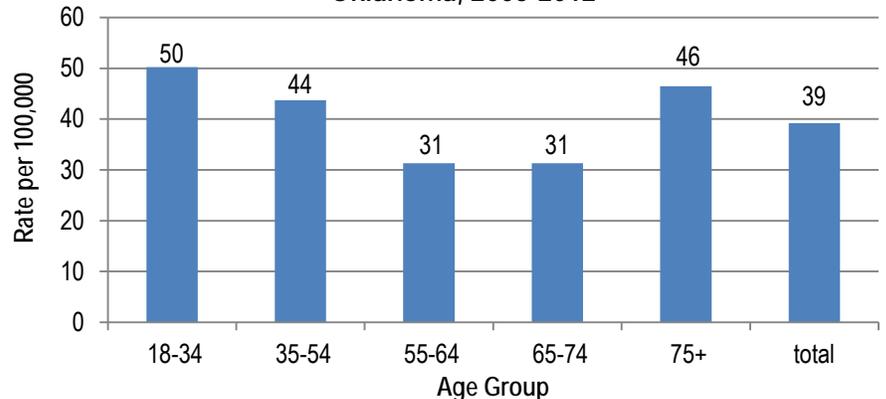
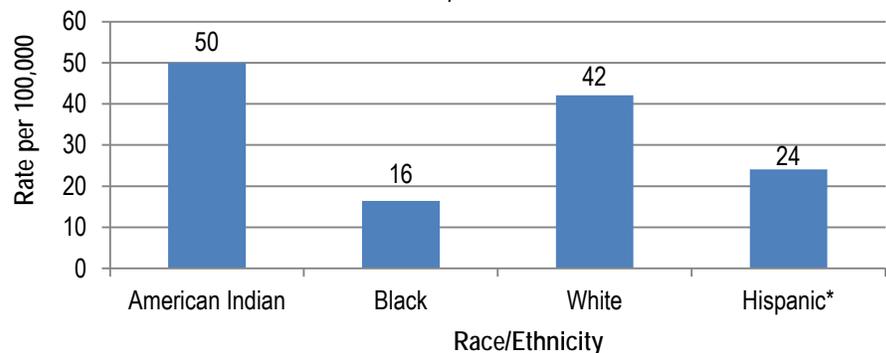


Figure 3. Veteran Suicide Rate by Race, Oklahoma, 2005-2012



*Hispanic ethnicity is a not a racial category.

- Veterans who had an educational attainment of high school graduate or less had nearly twice the rate of suicide as veterans with some college or a college degree (Figure 4).
- Physical health problems were a circumstance in twice as many veteran suicides compared to non-veteran suicides, 44% and 22%, respectively (Table 1).
- Intimate partner problems were cited in 38% of non-veteran suicides compared to 26% of veteran suicides (Table 1).
- Suicide circumstances varied by life stage. Physical health problems were cited more often with increasing age. Intimate partner problems were more common among younger veterans (Figure 5).
- 27% of veterans had a positive blood alcohol content (BAC) at the time of death; 21% of BACs were ≥ 0.08 mg/dL.
- Veterans had a higher percentage of firearm-related deaths than non-veterans (Table 2).

Figure 4. Veteran Suicide Rate by Educational Status*, Oklahoma, 2005-2012

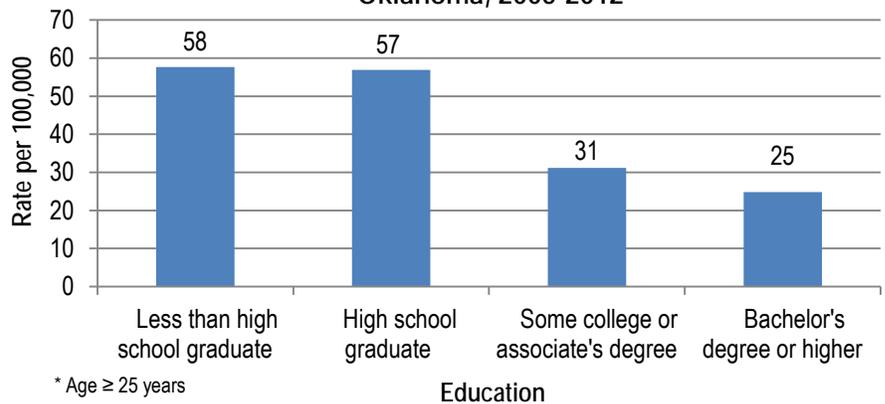
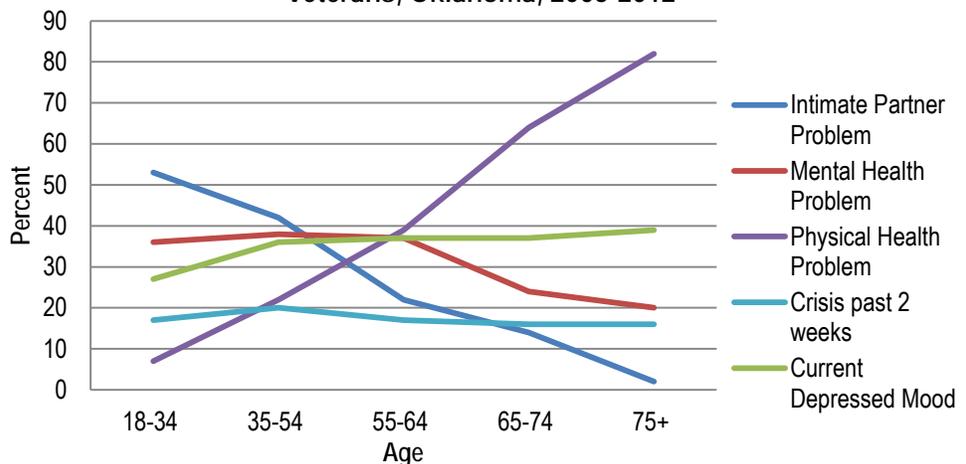


Table 1: Leading Circumstances by Veteran Status, Oklahoma, 2005-2012

Rank	Veteran	Non-Veteran
1	Physical Health Problem 44%	Intimate Partner Problem 38%
2	Current Depressed Mood 36%	Current Mental Health Problem 36%
3	Current Mental Health Problem 31%	Current Depressed Mood 35%
4	Intimate Partner Problem 26%	Physical Health Problem 22%
5	Crisis in past 2 weeks 18%	Crisis in past 2 weeks 18%

Figure 5. Suicide Circumstances by Life stage among Veterans, Oklahoma, 2005-2012



Note: All rates were calculated using U.S. Census Bureau populations for veterans and non-veterans in Oklahoma. All veterans were age 18 or older unless otherwise noted.

Table 2: Weapon by Veteran Status, Oklahoma, 2005-2012

Weapon type	Veteran	Non-Veteran
Firearm	74%	57%
Hanging	13%	22%
Poison	10%	16%
Other	3%	5%



The Oklahoma Violent Death Reporting System (OK-VDRS) is a statewide surveillance system for suicides, homicides, undetermined manner deaths, unintentional firearm injury deaths and legal intervention deaths. Data are collected from medical examiner reports, death certificates, law enforcement reports, and child fatality review data. The data are included in the National Violent Death Reporting System and can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>.