

Suicide Accounted For 31% Of Jail Deaths & 6% Of Prison Deaths In 2016

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In 2016, suicide accounted for 30.7% of all deaths in local jails (333 of 1,071 deaths), and 6.2% of all deaths in state and federal jails (255 of 4,117 deaths). Between 2015 and 2016, the trend in overall deaths and suicide deaths differed by incarceration setting. Overall jail deaths declined as did suicide deaths. State prison deaths rose as did suicide deaths. Federal prison deaths declined while suicide deaths remained static.

Additional findings about the trends between 2015 and 2016 were as follows for each setting:

- Overall, jail deaths due to any cause declined by 1.9% between 2015 and 2016. Jail deaths due to suicide decreased 10% from 2015 to 2016; the suicide rate declined from 52 to 46 deaths per 100,000 jail inmates.
- State prison deaths due to any cause rose by 1.3%, from 3,682 in 2015 to 3,729 in 2016. State prison deaths due to suicide rose by 16.7% from 2015 to 2016, the rate rose from 18 to 21 deaths per 100,000 state prison inmates.
- Federal prison deaths due to any cause declined by 15%, from 455 deaths in 2015 to 388 in 2016. Federal prison deaths due to suicide remained the same at 12 deaths per 100,000 federal inmates in 2015 and 2016.

Long-term trends by setting also varied, as follows:

- Jails: From 2000 through 2016, there were 5,207 jail suicide deaths out of a total of 16,962 deaths, for a long-term suicide rate of 31%. The overall jail mortality rate remained similar from 2000 to 2016, with 151 deaths per 100,000 jail inmates in 2000 to 149 deaths per 100,000 in 2016. From 2000 through 2016, jail suicide rates ranged from a low of 25.4% of total deaths in 2002 to a high of 35.0% in 2011. Jail inmate suicides in general housing units accounted for 46.7% of all inmate suicides from 2000 to 2016.
- State prisons: From 2001 through 2016, there were 3,300 suicide deaths in state prisons out of a total 53,051 deaths, for a long-term suicide rate of 6.2%. State prison suicide rates between 2001 and 2016 ranged from a low of 5.5 % of total deaths in 2011 and 2013 to a high of 7.1% in 2014.
- Federal prisons: During the same period, in federal prisons, there were 260 suicide deaths out of a total 5,985 deaths, for a long-term suicide rate of 4.3%. Federal prison suicide rates between 2001 and 2016 ranged from a low of 6 per 100,000 inmates in 2010 to a high of 14 per 100,000 inmates in 2014.

The jail findings were reported in “Mortality in Local Jails, 2000-2016 – Statistical Tables” by E. Ann Carson, Ph.D., a statistician with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and Mary P. Cowhig, a former BJS statistician. The state and federal prison findings were reported in “Mortality in State and Federal Prisons, 2001-2016 – Statistical Tables” by Dr. Carson and Ms. Cowhig. The researchers analyzed local jail, state prison, and federal prison data from the BJS Mortality in Correctional Institutions data collection from 2000 through 2016. The goal was to report data regarding mortality in local jails, as well as in state and federal prisons.

A link to the full text of “Mortality in Local Jails, 2000-2016 – Statistical Tables” may be found at www.openminds.com/market-intelligence/resources/021520bjsjailmortality.htm.

A link to the full text of “Mortality in State and Federal Prisons, 2001-2016 – Statistical Tables” may be found at www.openminds.com/market-intelligence/resources/021520bjsprisonmortality.htm.

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