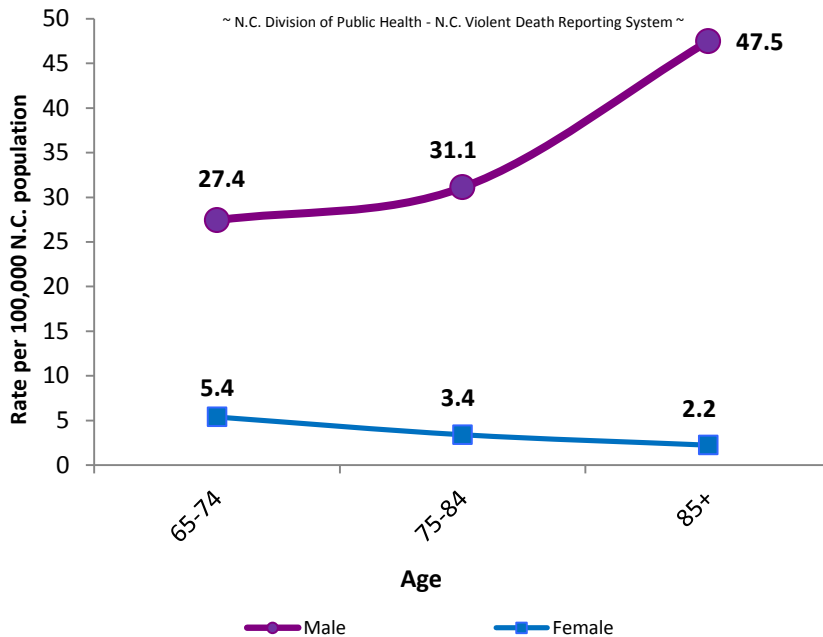


# ELDER SUICIDE IN NORTH CAROLINA, 2009-2013

The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) is a CDC-funded statewide surveillance system that collects detailed information on deaths that occur in North Carolina resulting from violence: homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention and deaths for which intent could not be determined. NC-VDRS is a multi-source system that gathers information from death certificates, medical examiner reports and law enforcement reports. The goal of this system is to aid researchers, legislators and community interest groups in the development of public health prevention strategies to reduce violent deaths. NC-VDRS began collecting data in January 2004. This document summarizes deaths among North Carolina residents ages 65 and older completing suicide for the years 2009-2013.

**Elder Specific Suicide Rates by Age Groups:**



- From 2009 to 2013, 1,204 North Carolina residents ages 65 and older died as a result of violence. Of these violent deaths, 993 were suicide (82.5%).

- The elder suicide rate was 15.4 suicides per 100,000.

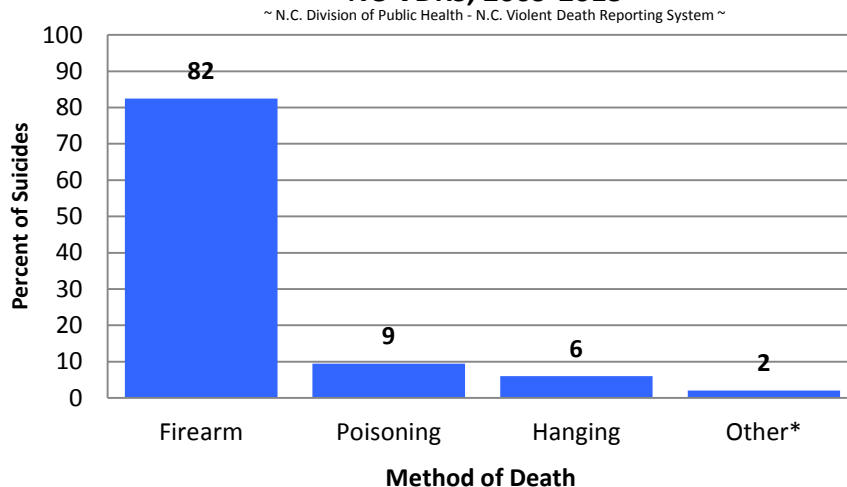
- Eighty-four percent of elder suicides were among males.

- The suicide rate peaked among males 85 and older, and the suicide rate was consistently higher for males compared to females for all age groups.

- Among females, the suicide rate peaked among those ages 65-74.

- Ninety-five percent of elder suicide victims were identified as white. The remaining five percent were identified as black, Asian, or American Indian.

**Elder Suicide Method of Death:  
NC-VDRS, 2009-2013**



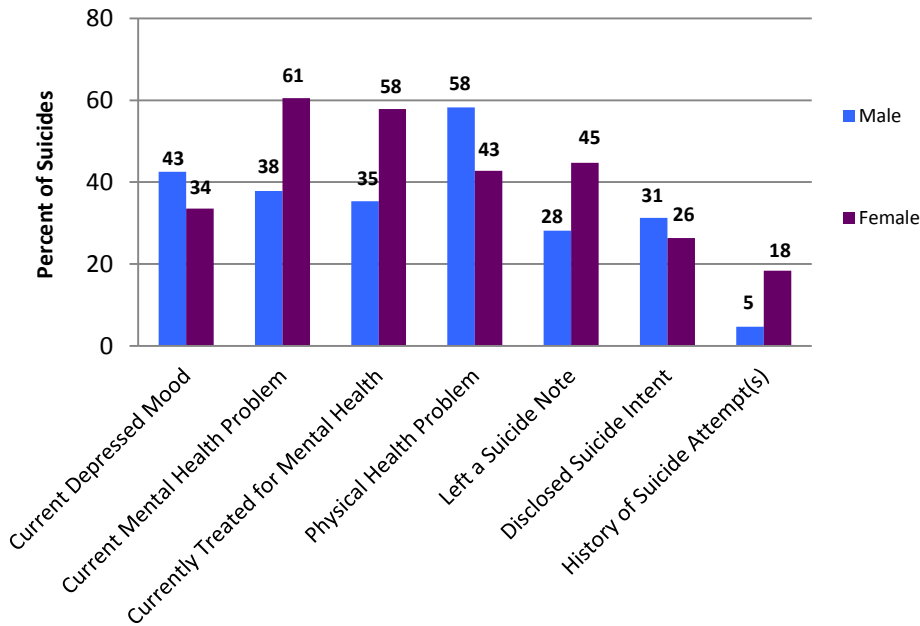
- Overall, the most common method of suicide among elder suicide victims was firearms (82.5%), followed by poisoning (9.5%) and hanging/strangulation/suffocation (6.0%).

- Two percent of suicides were completed using a method other than firearms, poisoning or hanging.

\*Other methods include: sharp instrument, fire/burns, motor vehicle and other.

## Elder Suicide Circumstances\*: NC-VDRS, 2009-2013

~ N.C. Division of Public Health - N.C. Violent Death Reporting System ~



\*Circumstances are known for 92% males (n=767) and 96% females (n=152).

- Nearly half (42.5%) of elder male suicide victims with circumstance information were characterized as having a current depressed mood at the time of death compared to 33.6 percent of females.
- Sixty-one percent of elder female and 37.8 percent of elder male suicide victims had a current mental health problem when they completed suicide.
- Eighteen percent of elder females had a history of prior suicide attempts, whereas only 4.7 percent of elder males had a history of prior suicide attempts.
- Fifty-eight percent of males and 42.8 percent of females had a physical health problem.

More information on suicide prevention efforts can be found at:

### State Resource Partners

**N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services**

[www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas)

**North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**

[www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov](http://www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov)

**The Triangle Coalition for Suicide Prevention**

Contact: Phil Morse

[www.trianglesuicideprevention.org](http://www.trianglesuicideprevention.org)

**North Carolina Mental Health and Aging Coalition**

[www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgec/nc-mental-health-and-aging%20](http://www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgec/nc-mental-health-and-aging%20)

### National Resources

**The Suicide Prevention Resource Center**

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

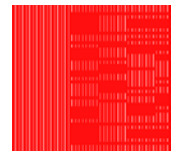
**The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

(for suicide crisis calls)

1-800-273-8255



North Carolina Violent Death  
**NC VDRS**  
Reporting System

The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System is supported by Cooperative Agreement 5U17/CE002613-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



N.C. Division of Public Health / [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425  
N.C. Violent Death Reporting System / 919-707-5432

State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)  
N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 2009-2013 FINAL Data 11/15

Please see the NC-VDRS 2013 Annual Report for additional data and technical information.

