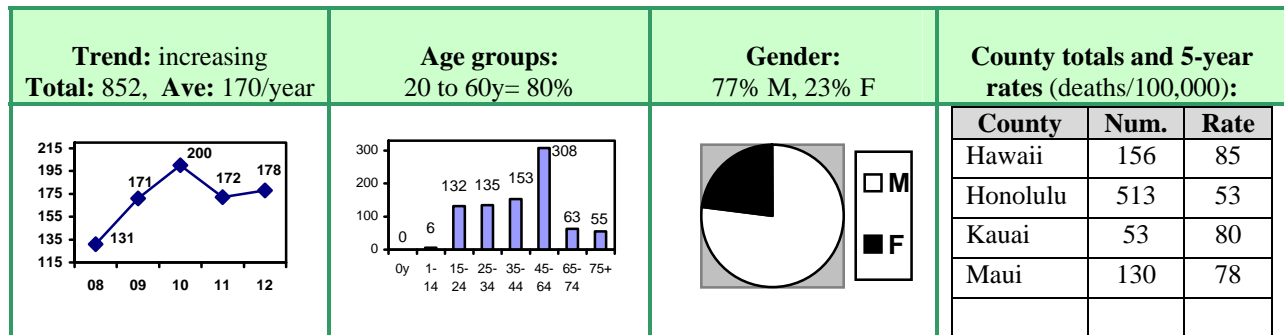


Suicides and suicide attempts

Fatal injuries

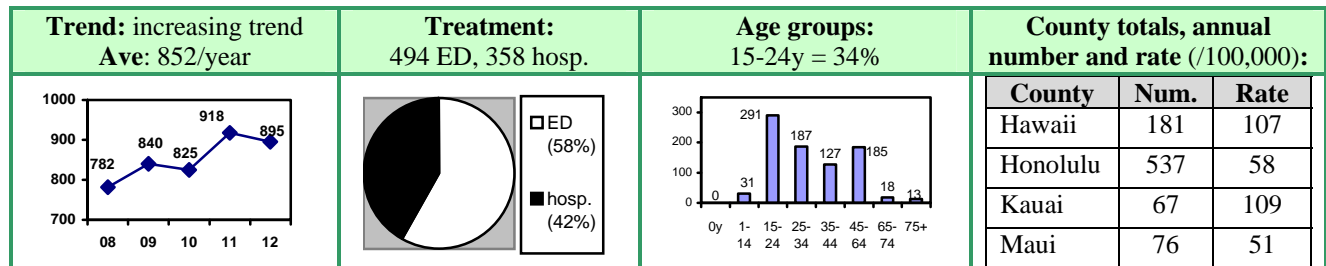
There was an annual average of 170 suicides in Hawaii, with a peak of 200 deaths in 2010, in the number of suicides in the state, by far the highest total in the 22-year period (1991-2012) for which data was available. Victim age was widely distributed, although almost all (96%) were 19 years or older. The highest fatality rates were computed for residents in the broad age range of 35 to 59 years of age. Male victims outnumbered females by approximately 3-to-1. More than half (60%) of the victims were residents of Oahu, but the fatality rate for Oahu (53/100,000 residents) was significantly lower than the rate for the combined Neighbor Islands (81/100,000).



The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (49% of the suicides), followed by firearm use (20%). Most (65%) of the Oahu victims had a documented history of mental illness (as variously defined), according to autopsy records from 2007 to 2010. The most common negative life events for the victims were related to intimate relationship problems (34%), usually a break-up or divorce (12%), or serious illness or medical issues (26%). The latter was documented for 60% of the senior-aged victims. Over one-third (37%) had a history of substance abuse, 19% had a BAC level over 0.08%, and 34% tested positive for illicit drugs. Nearly one-third (32%) of the victims had a previous suicide attempt documented in the record, and more than half (56%) had verbally threatened suicide to somebody.

Nonfatal injuries

There was an increasing trend in the number of nonfatal suicide attempts, which was only evident in the annual number of injuries that were treated in EDs. Slightly more than half (58%) of the injuries were treated in EDs, unlike most types of injuries. Most (60%) of the patients were under 35 years of age, and residents aged 15 to 19 years had the highest rates of hospitalizations and especially ED visits. The gender distribution of patients was similar for both settings, with females comprising 55% of the total.



Residents of Kauai and Hawaii counties had significantly higher rates of nonfatal self-inflicted injuries compared to residents of Honolulu County. Over half (56%) of the ED visits and most (84%) of the hospitalizations were caused by poisonings from drugs or medicinal substances, most commonly from the “analgesics, antipyretics, and antirheumatics” class (20% of ED visits, 33% of hospitalizations), which includes both narcotics (heroin, and other opiates), as well as aspirin and acetaminophen. Female patients were more likely to attempt by drug or medicinal poisonings (75%, vs. 59% for male patients).