

# Rural Vs. Urban Suicide Rates Among Adolescents

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## Question

In adolescents, how does living in a rural community, compared to an urban community affect the number of suicides?

## Background

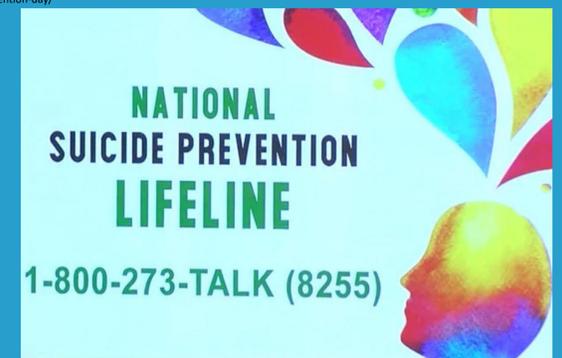
- Suicide is the act of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.
- Rural is an area where the population is 50,000 people or less.
- Urban is anything that is not rural or has a population greater than 50,000 people.
- Suicide rates are increasing and is becoming a worldwide problem.
- About 800,000 people die by suicide per year, or one person every 40 seconds (WHO, 2016).
- Adolescent's second leading cause of death is suicide (WHO, 2016).
- Suicide has a devastating effect for family, friends, and the community.
- In all articles analyzed, an adolescent is defined as an average of 15-24 years of age.

Study	Description	Results
Widening Rural-Urban Disparities in Youth Suicides, United States, 1996-2010 (Fontanella et al., 2015)	<b>Retrospective level III</b> study that analyzed adolescents (10 to 24 years old) suicide rates across the U.S through 1996 to 2010. The adolescent deaths by suicide were then categorized according to community population to identify any possible correlation related to the suicide rate based on population size that the individual lived in (rural vs. urban).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suicide rates in rural communities were nearly double urban area suicide rates.</li> <li>- Male suicide rates in urban areas decreased over time.</li> <li>- Female suicide rates increased in both rural and urban areas.</li> </ul>
Trend of Suicide Rates According to Urbanity among Adolescents by Gender and Suicide Method in Korea, 1997-2012 (Choi & Kim, 2015)	<b>Retrospective level III</b> study that analyzed Korean adolescents (15 through 19 years old) suicide rates between the years 1997 to 2015. Researchers organized the deaths by suicide based on population of the area that the individual lived in during the time that they completed suicide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suicide rates among both genders increased.</li> <li>- Male suicide rate was higher than the female suicide rate.</li> <li>- Suicide rate in urban areas increased in both genders.</li> <li>- Suicide rates have increased in both urban and rural areas, but rates remains higher in rural areas.</li> </ul>
Youth Suicide Trends in Australia Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Areas, 1988-1997 (Gunnell & Wilkinson, 2000)	<b>Retrospective level III</b> research study that looked at 15-34-year old's living in different populated areas. This study also looks at the differences in gender and method. They found their data in the Australian Bureau of Statistics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highest rates happen in non-metropolitan areas.</li> <li>- Males have the highest rates within the non-metropolitan area.</li> <li>- No significant difference in suicide rates between 15-24 and 24-34.</li> <li>- Suicide by hanging increased and firearm suicide had fallen.</li> </ul>
The Influence of Deprivation on Suicide Mortality in Urban and Rural Queensland: an Ecological Analysis (Law et al., 2014)	<b>Retrospective level III</b> study that looked the age ranges 15-59 and at the related factors in higher potential risk for suicide in urban and rural Queensland. They also looked and studied the types of deprivation (material and social). They found their data from the Queensland Suicide Register.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,191 suicides out of 2,803 were from rural locations.</li> <li>- Males were significantly higher than females.</li> <li>- This study incorporated the adolescent age group 15-24; however it did not find sufficient evidence to support a correlation in rural adolescent suicides.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Overall, some of the studies found potential relationships between rurality and adolescent suicide rates; however, the culmination of all four failed to sufficiently find a correlation between rate of adolescent suicide and living in a rural area.

<https://fox6now.com/2019/09/10/affects-far-too-many-families-walk-of-remembrance-held-in-milwaukee-on-world-suicide-prevention-day/>



## Nursing Application

- Nurses should recognize that regardless of age people living in rural areas have a higher risk of completing suicide.
- Nurses can provide patients with resources within the community that can help promote awareness, educate, and prevent suicide.
- Nurses should look and assess for signs and symptoms that could be associated or lead to suicide.
- Don't be afraid to ask the question!
  - Are you suicidal?



<https://www.thehouseshop.com/property-blog/rural-vs-urban-2/5541/>