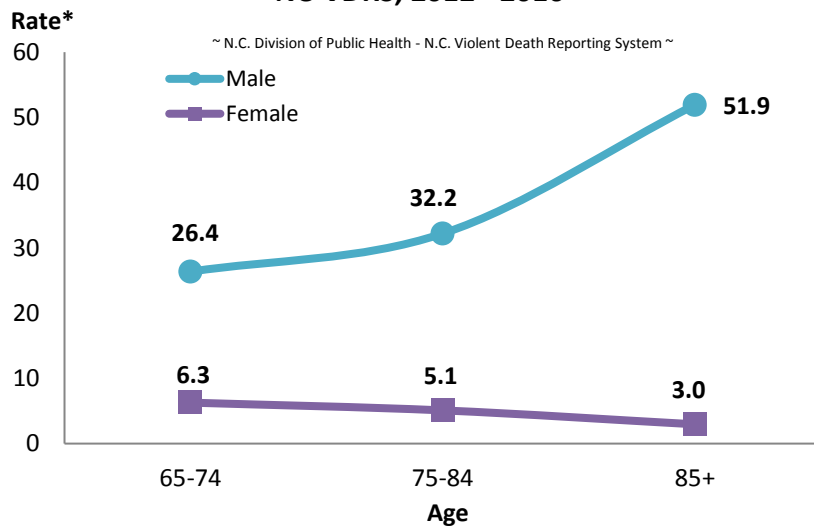


# ELDER SUICIDE IN NORTH CAROLINA, 2012 - 2016

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 2012 - 2016.

**Elder Specific Suicide Rates\* by Age Groups:  
NC-VDRS, 2012 - 2016**



- From 2012 to 2016, 1,428 North Carolina residents ages 65 and older died as a result of violence. Of these violent deaths, 1,183 were suicide (82.8%).

- The elder suicide rate was 16.2 suicides per 100,000.

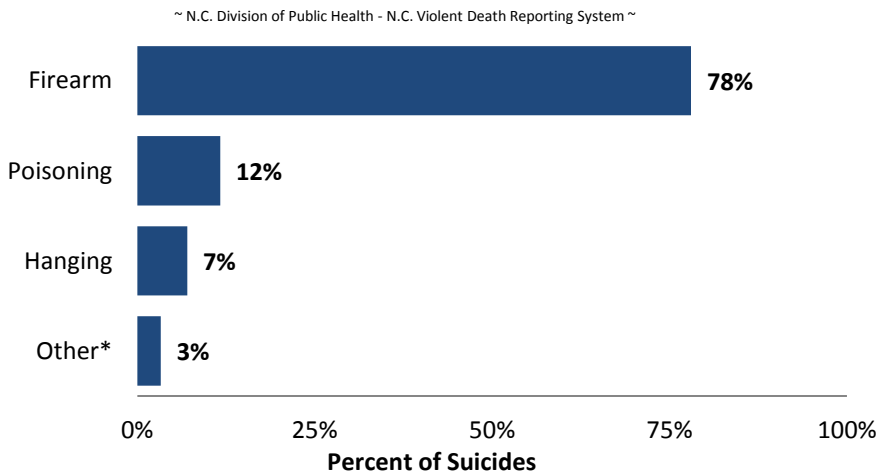
- 81 percent of elder suicides were among males.

- 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.

- 93.5 percent of elder suicide victims were identified as non-Hispanic (NH) white. The remaining 6.5 percent were identified as NH black, NH Asian, NH American Indian, or Hispanic.

**Elder Suicide Method of Death: NC-VDRS, 2012 - 2016**



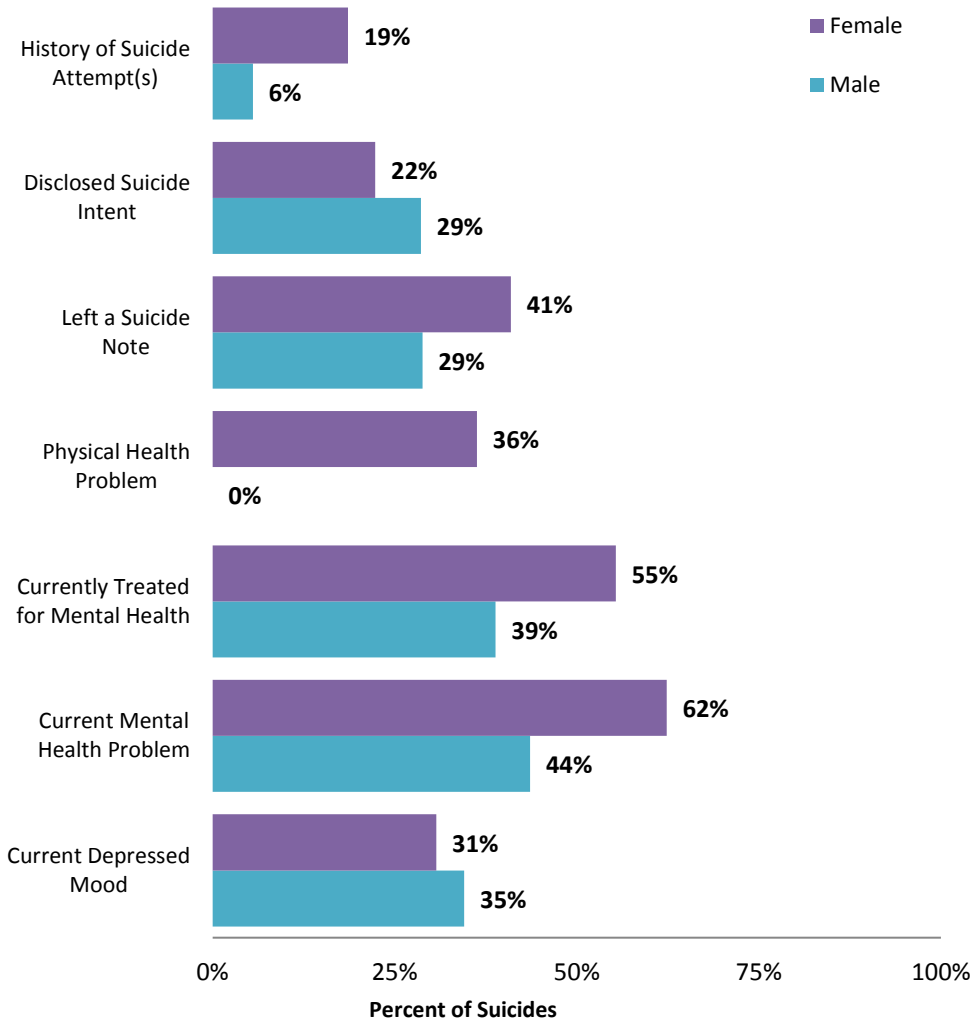
- Overall, the most common method of suicide among elder suicide victims was firearms (78.0%), followed by poisoning (11.7%) and hanging/strangulation/suffocation (7.0%).

- 3.3 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, 2012 - 2016

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



- Less than half (34.6%) of elder male suicide victims with circumstance information were characterized as having a current depressed mood at the time of death compared to 30.7 percent of females.

- 62.3 percent of elder female and 43.6 percent of elder male suicide victims had a current mental health problem when they completed suicide.

- 18.6 percent of elder females had a history of prior suicide attempts, whereas only 5.5 percent of elder males had a history of prior suicide attempts.

- 54.4 percent of males and 36.3 percent of females had a physical health problem.

\*Circumstances are known for 95% males (n=906) and 95% females (n=215).

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  
**North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**  
www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov  
**The Triangle Coalition for Suicide Prevention**  
Contact: Phil Morse  
www.trianglesuicideprevention.org  
**North Carolina Mental Health and Aging Coalition**  
www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgec/nc-mental-health-and-aging%20

### National Resources

**The Suicide Prevention Resource Center**  
www.sprc.org  
**The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**  
www.afsp.org  
**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
(for suicide crisis calls)  
1-800-273-8255

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NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

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

N.C. Division of Public Health / 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  
N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 2012 - 2016 FINAL Data 11/18

Please see the NC-VDRS 2016 Annual Report for additional data and technical information.