



## Suicide and Alcohol Use during the Great Recession

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According to a recent study, an increase in heavy alcohol use contributed to a rise in the suicide rate among men during the Great Recession. The study compared acute alcohol use and suicide rates before, during, and after the 2008 to 2009 economic downturn. Based on their findings, the authors suggested that policies to reduce heavy drinking might help prevent suicide among men during future economic crises.

A comparison of data from the National Violent Death Reporting System and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System indicated that acute alcohol use significantly increased among men who died by suicide during the economic downturn compared to men who did not die by suicide in that time period. This held true for men of all ages and ethnic groups with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders. The authors concluded that “the combination of alcohol intoxication and the economic downturn was a noteworthy suicide risk factor for men.” There was no significant difference in acute alcohol use among women who died by suicide and women who did not die by suicide during the study period.

Kaplan, M. S., Huguet, N., Caetano, R., Giesbrecht, N., Kerr, W. C., & McFarland, B. H. (2016). Heavy alcohol use among suicide decedents relative to a nonsuicide comparison group: Gender-specific effects of economic contraction. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 40(7), 1501–1506.

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