Unemployment, Foreclosures, Poverty, and Suicide Rates

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New research suggests that poverty itself, rather than unemployment and foreclosures, contributed to the rise in the suicide rate during the Great Recession of 2008 to 2009. These findings were based on an analysis of county-level data from 16 states in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) from 2005 to 2011. Although poverty rates were found to be strongly associated with suicide death rates among men and women above the age of 20, foreclosure and unemployment rates were not correlated with an increase in suicide independent of poverty.

The authors of this study suggested that unemployment may contribute to the suicide rate by increasing the rate of poverty, and that lack of resources and opportunities in impoverished areas may contribute to suicide risk. They also suggested that their research shows the importance of suicide prevention in communities with high rates of poverty, especially during economic downturns.
