



## Means of Suicide among People 50 and Over

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Researchers examined data from the National Violent Death Reporting System (2005–2014) on older adult suicide decedents to identify trends and risk factors associated with the three most common means of suicide: firearms, hanging/suffocation, and overdose. Data indicated that firearms were the most common suicide method among men ages 50 and older, and that overdose was the most common method among women ages 50 to 64. During the study period, hanging/suffocation increased among both genders in the 50-to-64-year age group, and overdose increased gradually among men over age 65.

Means of suicide differed according to sociodemographic and precipitating characteristics. Men and women who were more likely to use firearms were non-Hispanic, white, married, lacking a college education, and living in a region outside of the Northeast. Physical health problems increased the odds of overdose, and relationship problems were associated with increased odds of firearms use. Mental health and substance use issues; prior suicide attempts; and job, legal, or financial problems were associated with increased odds of hanging/suffocation.

The authors suggested that this research demonstrates the importance of educating primary and behavioral health care providers about the relationship between firearms and suicide, especially among older men who live in areas where firearm ownership is common. Increased overdoses among men 65 and older highlights the importance of medication education and counseling. More research is needed to better understand the connections between precipitating factors and suicide methods.

Choi, N. G., DiNitto, D. M., Marti, C. N., Kaplan, M. S., & Conwell, Y. (2017). Suicide means among decedents aged 50+ years, 2005–2014: Trends and associations with sociodemographic and precipitating factors. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. <http://doi.org/10.1016/J.JAGP.2017.06.001> [1]

### Links within this resource

[1] <http://doi.org/10.1016/J.JAGP.2017.06.001>

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