

Suicide Attempts and Other Risky Behaviors in Service Members – Data from 2017 DoDSER

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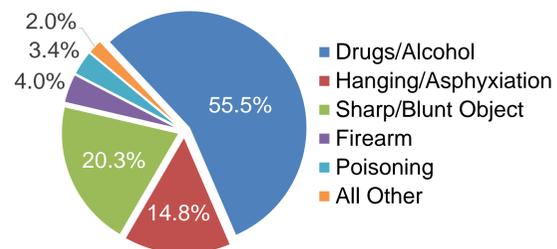
Introduction

- ❖ Suicide attempts could be considered one of the riskiest behaviors engaged in by our military service members
- ❖ Given their relative rarity of occurrence combined with the fact that only some attempts result in medical attention, these high-risk behaviors can be difficult to detect as well as difficult to track and treat
- ❖ To aid the military in tracking and understanding suicide attempts and deaths, the Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER) system was established in 2008 as an enterprise-wide, web-based surveillance system of suicide and related behaviors
- ❖ For this poster, we will focus on the suicide attempts and deaths reported via the DoDSER system for calendar year 2017 (the most recently released DoDSER data) in order to increase the audience's knowledge about this high-risk behavior category

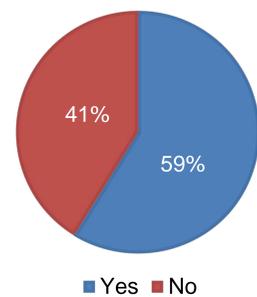
2017 DoDSER Suicide Attempt Findings

- ❖ Suicide attempts in the Active Component = 1,397
- ❖ Demographics:
 - ❖ Male = 976 (69.9%), Female = 421 (30.1%)
 - ❖ Age 20-24 = 754 (54%), Age 25-29 = 276 (19.8%)
 - ❖ Caucasian Race = 978 (70.0%)
 - ❖ Non-Hispanic Ethnicity = 1,139 (81.5%)
 - ❖ Never Married = 771 (55.2%), Married = 527 (37.7%)
 - ❖ Rank E1-E4 = 1,024 (73.3%), Rank E5-E9 = 319 (22.8%)
- ❖ Suicide Attempt Details:
 - ❖ In Barracks = 601 (43.0%), In Own Residence = 540 (38.7%)
 - ❖ Used Alcohol During Event = 463 (33.1%)
 - ❖ Used Substances During Event = 697 (49.9%)
 - ❖ Event Was Not Planned or Premeditated = 951 (68.1%)

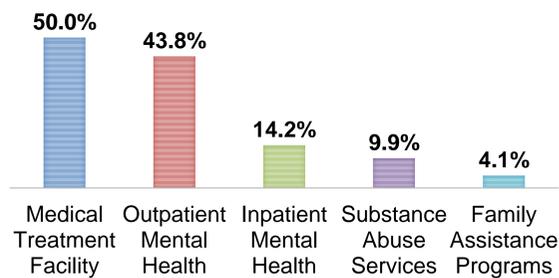
Method of Suicide Attempt



Mental Health Diagnosis



MHS Visit Settings

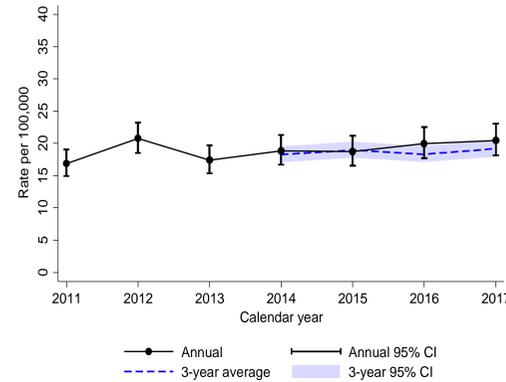


Overall, 59.3% of Service members who made a suicide attempt was seen in the Military Health System in the 90 days prior to the event.

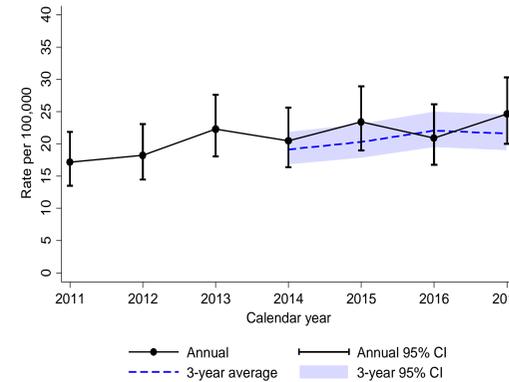
They were primarily seen in five settings and could have been seen in more than one setting.

2017 DoDSER Data: Military Suicide Mortality Rates and Comparisons

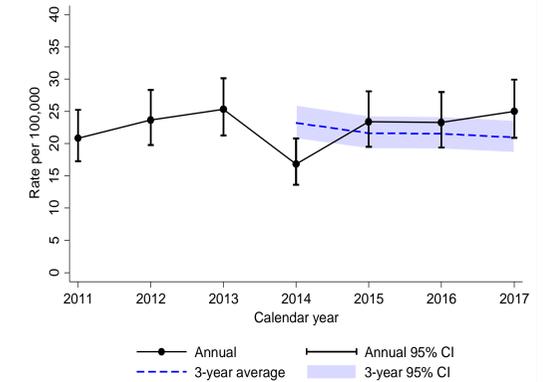
Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, Active Component, All Military Services



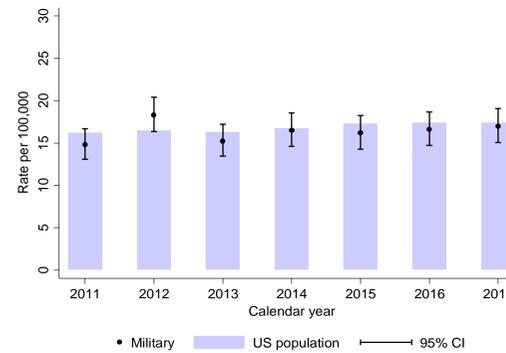
Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, Reserve Component, All Military Services



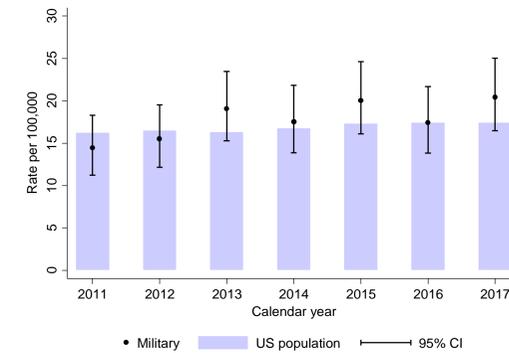
Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, National Guard, Air Force & Army



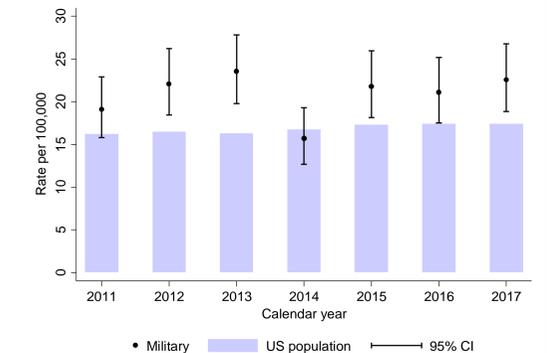
Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, Active Component vs. U.S. General Population



Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, Reserve Component vs. U.S. General Population



Adjusted Annual Suicide-Mortality Rates, National Guard vs. U.S. General Population



2017 DoDSER Suicide Death Findings

- ❖ Suicide Deaths by Component
 - ❖ Active = 284
 - ❖ Reserves = 92
 - ❖ National Guard = 130
- ❖ Active Component Demographics (for those with submitted DoDSERs; N=309)
 - ❖ Male = 293 (94.8%), Female = 16 (5.2%)
 - ❖ Age 20-24 = 107 (34.6%), Age 25-29 = 80 (25.9%)
 - ❖ Caucasian Race = 251 (81.2%)
 - ❖ Non-Hispanic Ethnicity = 266 (86.1%)
 - ❖ Never Married = 122 (39.5%), Married = 154 (49.8%)
 - ❖ Rank E1-E4 = 141 (45.6%), Rank E5-E9 = 143 (46.3%)
- ❖ Suicide Death Details (for those with submitted DoDSERs; N=309)
 - ❖ In Barracks = 48 (15.5%), In Own Residence = 141 (45.6%)
 - ❖ Method of Suicide
 - ❖ Firearm = 202 (65.4%)
 - ❖ Hanging/asphyxiation = 81 (26.9%)
 - ❖ Poisoning = 11 (3.6%)
 - ❖ All Other = 15 (4.2%)

Summary of Findings

- ❖ For suicide attempts:
 - ❖ Drug/alcohol overdoses accounted for 55.5% of all attempts
 - ❖ Over half of all Service members who made a suicide attempt in 2017 were seen in the MHS in the 90 days before the attempt
- ❖ For suicide deaths:
 - ❖ Firearm injuries accounted for 65.4% of all deaths
 - ❖ After adjusting for age and sex, suicide rates for the Active and Reserve Components were comparable to the U.S. general adult population rate. In contrast, the National Guard rate was higher than the U.S. general adult population rate.

Disclaimer

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Reference

Defense Health Agency. (2019) *Department of Defense Suicide Event Report - Calendar Year 2017*. Washington, DC: Psychological Health Center of Excellence.

