Suicide Epidemic: Causes and Preventions
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ABSTRACT

In the past 20 years, the suicide rate has risen from 13% to more than 20%. For this reason, researchers and congressmen have come together to address what is known about suicide, its annual statistical rates, methods, current to future prevention strategies, policies and acts. Since the 1950s, the United States started to recognize that suicide was a growing problem across the nation. Thus, preventive matters and studies were set in place for the purpose of decreasing suicide rates. This counterattack on suicide was successful until around the late 1990s where the rate started to gradually increase once again. The main goal of this research is to show how suicide is yet again becoming a major problem. In order to achieve this objective, relevant research articles, ideas, policies and programs were gathered for the purpose of seeing where America is at in basic knowledge and understanding, and how close of a breakthrough in finding a more efficient preventive strategy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there a different social view of these factors today compared to several years ago?
2. Are there any new factors that have been recently explored that may give a new outlook on suicide?
3. Does the decline of civil society play a role in suicide?
4. If looked at historically, is there a problem with how suicide was viewed that could've influenced how suicide is today?
5. What strategies are in place today that try to reduce the suicide rate?
6. If there are any strategies, are they effective and can there be any strategies that can better replace the current ones?

METHODOLOGY

- Statistical data gathered mostly from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention organization (CDC), and the National Institute of Mental Health.
- Studies gathered from various databases such as National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), ResearchGate
- Other useful information gathered from organizations such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, The Lancet Journal, and various similar websites.

- Various factors were considered: the demographics which include age, gender, and race; the suicide rate in each year from 1950 to present; and the history of suicide prevention in each year

FINDINGS: CAUSES

•When looking into suicide, it is much easier to know how many deaths are a result of such an action. While even then, the actual amount of suicides each year is not officially known. The bigger problem that we as individuals have, is that we know close to nothing about the actual root causes of suicide. There are risk factors listed by the CDC, in which they update annually. These factors range from; what kind of family history an individual had, their history of alcohol or substance abuse, who they associate with and the environment that they're in, and any illness or disabilities they have. However, these risk factors cannot be labeled as the root causes to suicide. There are people amongst society who have, or used to have, dealt with similar problems. Yet, the difference is that they're still here, even with those problems. So, the risk factors are NOT a 100% assurance of suicide. Thus it begs the question, what is the real root cause? For now we know only the risks.

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Deaths by suicide per 100,000 resident population in the United States from 1950 to 2017, by gender
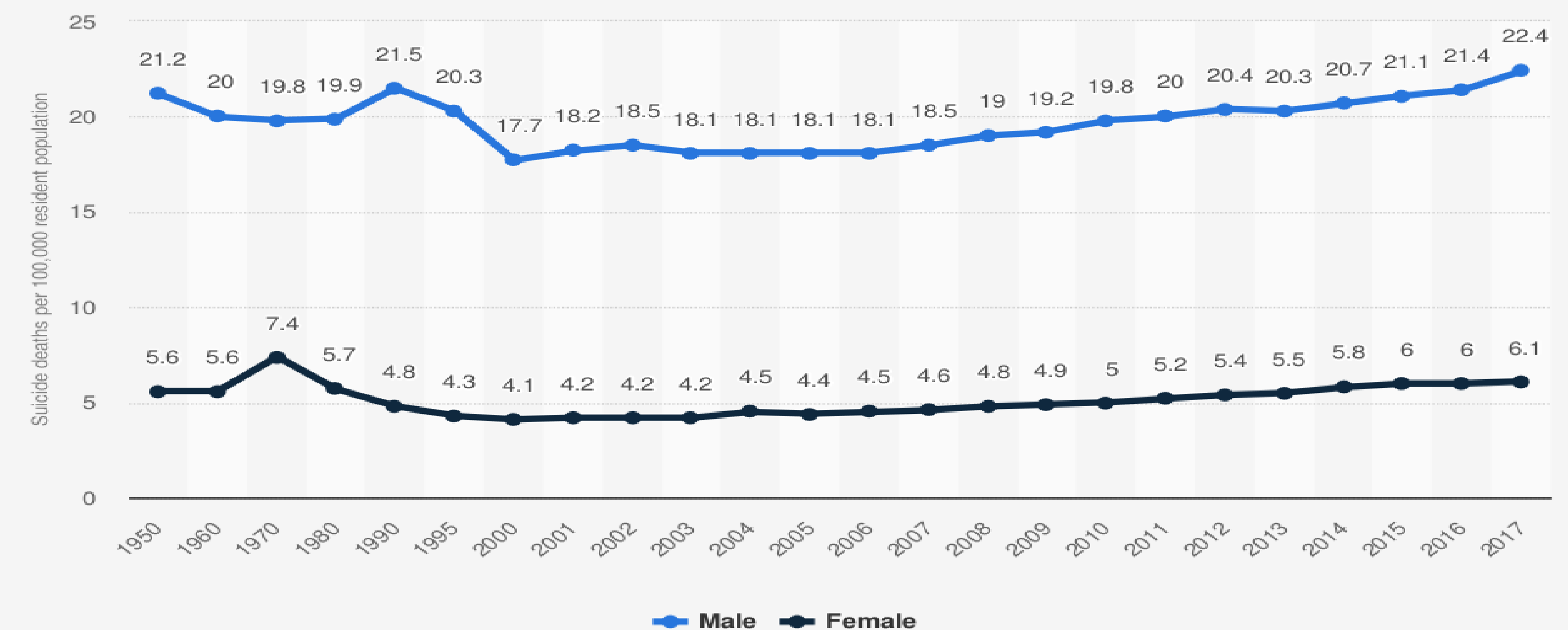
Sources
US Department of Health and Human Services; CDC
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Additional Information:
United States; CDC; NCHS; all ages

FINDINGS: PREVENTION

- Since the late 1900s, suicide rates has hit its highest and lowest peaks. However, it has been more than 20 years since then and the rates are rising once more. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention has been the prominent and most efficient guide for prevention thus far. It even underwent a revision to adapt to changes in society, as proof of its efficiency. Yet even with a guide as capable as this, the 20% increase in suicide means that prevention methods are still lacking. Each individual is unique, and that uniqueness halts the progression of prevention strategies. Politicians, namely one Congressman Anthony Gonzalez, have challenged researchers to find new prevention methods using technology. Research groups are working with social media org., such as twitter and Facebook, to produce a detection algorithm on those who use these sites. Hopefully, positive results would come as a fruition.

The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention summarized by the National Institute of Mental Institute states that there are 5 steps that YOU can take to help prevent the suicide of another:
- Ask
- Keep them safe
- Be there
- Help them connect
- Stay connected

Brief Interventions:
- Safety Planning
- Follow-up Phone Calls

Psychotherapies:
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy

Finally the last two steps, Collaborative Care Programs Medicine

Timeline

1st Suicide Prevention Center was created in L.A.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention established violence prevention unit that gave a spotlight to youth suicide; thus the Task Force on Youth Suicide was established.

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act established

revision of National Strategy

| 1958 | 1966 | 1983–1989 | 1999 | 2001 | 2004 | 2007 | 2010 | 2012 |

Center for Studies of Suicide Prevention established in National Institute for Mental Health

Reno Conference held – founding event of modern suicide prevention. Surgeon General David Satcher published, Call to Action To Prevent Suicide.

Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act enacted

formation of National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention