



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2007

### I13 An Analysis of a Large Sample of North American Suicide by Cop Cases

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After attending this presentation, attendees will gain an understanding of the prevalence, dynamics, outcomes, risks, characteristics, and identifiers of suicide by cop among officer involved shooting cases. Recognizing that suicide by cop is a unique method of suicide that occurs at a significant rate among officer involved shooting cases. This large study has significant implications for those in forensic practice.

Suicide by cop occurs at a high rate among officer involved shootings. The use of deadly force is often litigated civilly and can also result in criminal prosecution of the subject, as well as the officer. This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating how understanding the latest research, as derived by this study-to date the largest empirical study of suicide by cop-is essential to those offering forensic psychological or psychiatric opinions.

This presentation provides an overview of a very unique threat faced by law enforcement: subjects who engage in behavior designed to provoke their violent death at the hands of police. Past studies indicate that up to 25% of all police shootings involve individuals who are suicidal yet engage in actions that pose or appear to pose a threat to others as they seek to commit suicide. Characteristics of suicidal individuals are discussed, and the unique dynamics of those who choose suicide by cop as their method of self-destruction will be highlighted, including the different types and motivations of such subjects. A particular emphasis will be on the dangerousness of such individuals and the overlap and parallels between homicidal and suicidal impulses. New data from a large sample of North American police shootings will be shared as it relates to this phenomenon. This data addresses the factors specifically associated with this threat potential. Coroners, medical examiners, police officers, detectives, attorneys, and mental health professionals will find this presentation informative in many ways-from helping to recognize situations that might pose such a threat to post event investigations and forensic proceedings.

**Suicide By Cop, Officer Involved Shootings, Subject Precipitated Death**