



D19 Trends in Suicide in Geneva, Switzerland: 1983 - 2007

Romano La Harpe, MD*, *Institut Universitaire de Medecine Legale, Unite de Medecine Forensique, 9 Av de Champel (CMU), CH - 1211, Geneva, PQ 1206, SWITZERLAND*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand trends in suicide in Geneva during the last quarter of century.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by identifying the following: quantifying the lethality of suicide methods used in Geneva, Switzerland, over a period of twenty-five years, and examining method-specific case fatality by age, gender, religious confession, marital status, dates, suicide method, and co-morbidities (alcohol and other illicit drugs use and mental illness).

Methods: A review of all autopsies conducted at the forensic medicine facility from the year 1983 to the year 2007. All the cases of suicide in Geneva, a little city of 400,000 inhabitants, go through the Institut Universitaire de Medecine Legale.

Results: During this period, there were 2007 documented cases of suicide; this number represents an average of 80 cases per year at a rate of 16.72 per 100,000 inhabitants. Of these deaths, 62% occurred in males ($n = 1,243$) and 38% in females ($n = 764$), for a ratio of 1.6:1.

The methods used were in decreasing order: jumping (22.5%), hanging (20%), firearm (19%), poisoning (15.5%), drowning (13%), CO (2.5%), cutting (2%), and others (5.5%: mainly throwing themselves in front of a train).

The most common methods of suicide among men were gunshot (27%), hanging (24%), and jumping (18%). In females, the most common methods were jumping (30%), poisoning (24.5%), and drowning (18%).

The most common method of suicide among men was firearm in all age groups, whereas in females in the under 25 age group – jumping, poisoning among adult age, and jumping again in the 65 and over age group. Gunshot was the most common method among unmarried, divorced, and widowed men, while hanging was the most common among married men. Jumping from heights was the most common method among unmarried, divorced, and widowed women, while poisoning was the most common among married women.

A significant change was not seen with the changes of season. The rate of elderly people who committed suicide was considered high, but it was very low for young people.

Finally, co-morbidity like depression, illness, alcohol, and other illicit drugs use were analyzed.

Conclusion: Despite the rate of suicide in Geneva being quite high, this rate has remained stable during the last quarter of century and it is especially low for young people.

Suicide, Death, Geneva