



About Southern University and A&M College

Southern University and A&M College is a comprehensive Carnegie Mellon Research II designated four-year institution offering undergraduate, graduate, professional, and doctorate degree programs, fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The Baton Rouge land mass is the flag ship campus of the five campus system. It is the only historically black Land Grant university systems in the United States.

Mission

To provide a student-focused teaching and learning environment that creates global leadership opportunities for a diverse student population where teaching, research, service, scholarly and creative expectations for students and faculty are achieved through the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs offered at the institution via different instructional modalities and via public service

Vision

To provide access and opportunity to students and matriculate graduates who are equipped to excel in a 21st century, knowledge-based, global economy.

About the Nelson Mandela College of Government and Social Sciences

The Nelson Mandela College of Government and Social Sciences is the only College of Government in the State of Louisiana if not in the region. It is named after the late honorable President Emeritus Nelson Mandela, who led the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The mission of the college is to provide opportunities for a diverse student population to achieve a high-quality educational experience, to engage in scholarly research, creative activities and meaningful public service to the community, the state, the nation, and global environment.

The college offers the following degrees: Bachelor of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology; Master of Criminal Justice, Public Administration, Arts in Social Science; Executive Master of Public Administration; and Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy. The college's Dean is Dr. Damien D. Ejigiri he is guided by the principles of excellence, accountability, community engagement and ethical practices in its programming, keeping with the principles of Mr. Mandela whose philosophy is outlined in the following quote, *"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation. We are steadily but surely introducing education that enables our children to exploit their similarities and common goals, while appreciating the strength in their diversity."* Its master's degree program in public administration is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and its degree in social work by the Council on Social Work Education.



HCR 84

Preliminary Discoveries

presented by

Nelson Mandela
College of Government and Social Sciences
Faculty Research Team

Dr. Maya R. Banks
Dr. Jocelyn Freeman
Dr. Vanessa Greenslade
Dr. Donovan Segura
Dr. Charmaine Williams

Background

Suicide is a pressing public health concern in the U.S., with its prevalence and causes varying across regions and demographics. Background information on suicides in the U.S., focusing on the South and specifically in Louisiana:

National Overview:

In 2022, suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., with an average of 130 suicides per day. Factors contributing to suicides nationwide include mental health disorders, substance use disorders, access to lethal means, isolation, lack of mental health services, stigma associated with seeking help, history of trauma or abuse, chronic illnesses, and previous suicide attempts.

The South and Louisiana in Context:

The South, historically, had lower suicide rates than the Western U.S., but in recent years, these numbers have been on the rise. Louisiana's suicide rate has been consistently higher than the national average. In 2019, Louisiana had a rate of 15.7 suicides per 100,000 individuals, compared to the national average of 14.5. Factors specific to Louisiana and some parts of the South that might contribute to higher suicide rates include higher rates of poverty, lack of access to healthcare and mental health services, and cultural stigmas associated with seeking help for mental health issues.

Demographics and Disparities:

Across the U.S., middle-aged white men have the highest suicide rates. However, as previously discussed, there's been a concerning rise in suicide rates among young Black males. In Louisiana, disparities exist based on race, gender, age, and urban vs. rural settings. Rural areas, which are common in the South, often experience higher suicide rates, potentially due to limited access to mental health services, social isolation, and economic challenges.

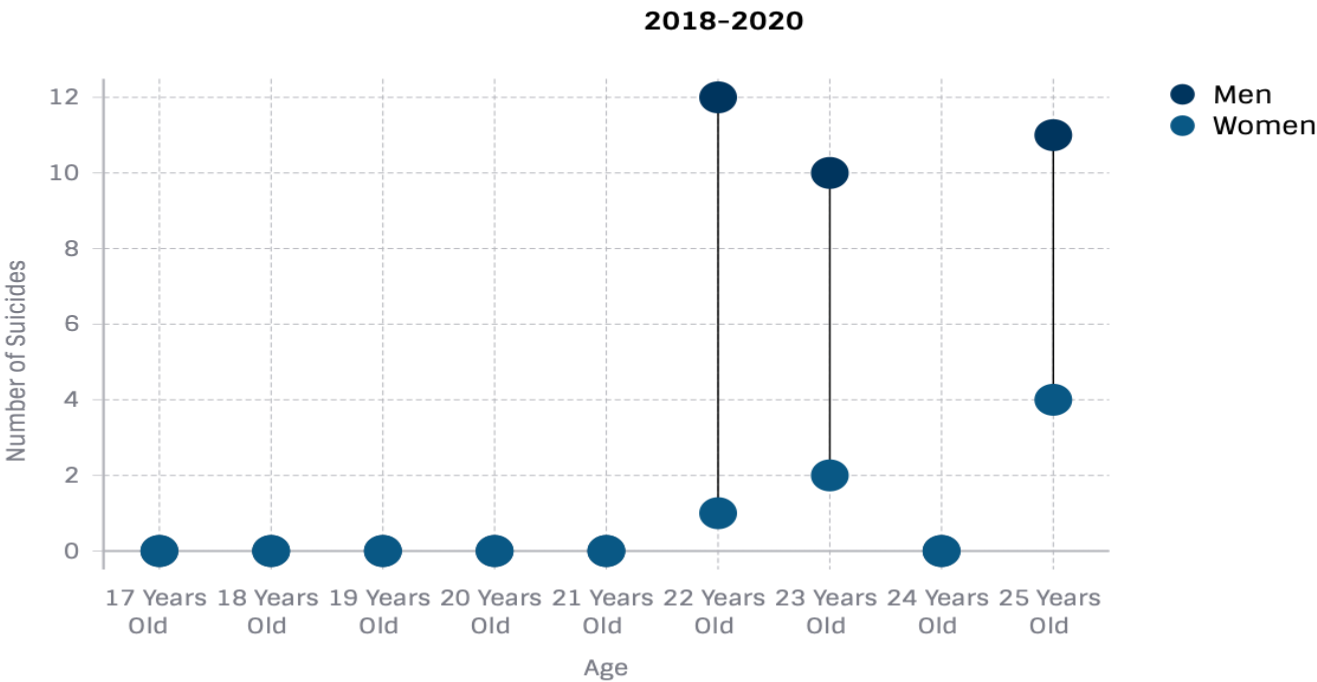
Methods and Means:

Firearms are a significant method of suicide in the U.S. In Louisiana, firearms account for the majority of suicide deaths, highlighting the importance of discussions around safe storage and access to lethal means.

Prevention and Support:

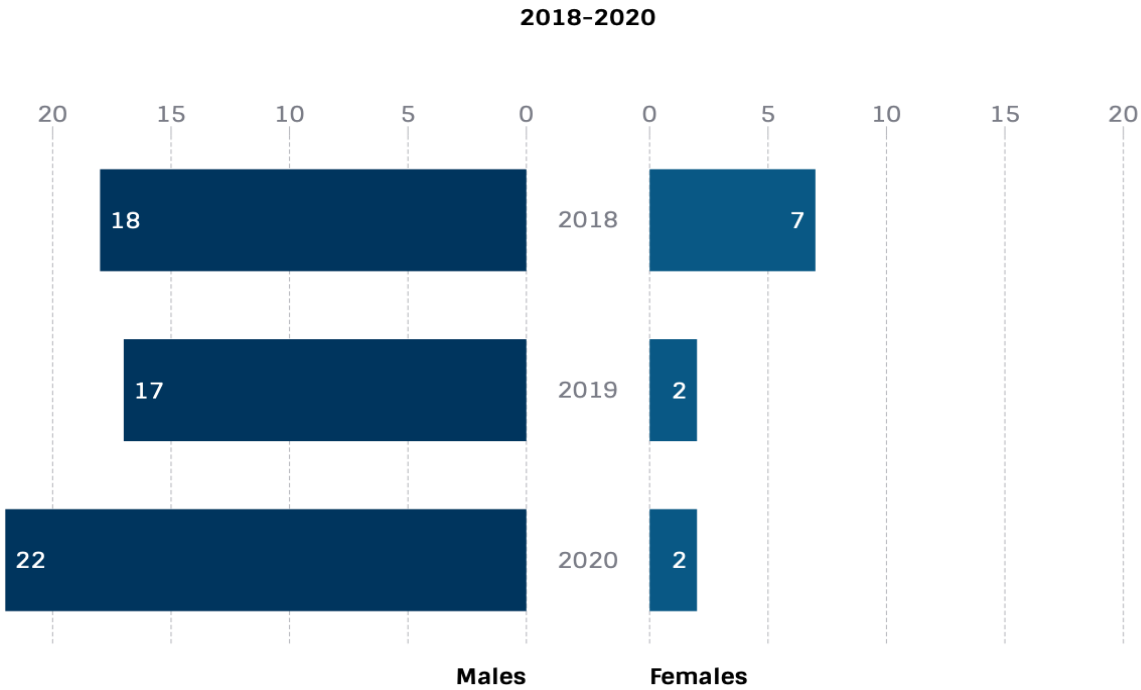
Efforts to prevent suicide in Louisiana include crisis helplines, community-based programs, and state-led initiatives aimed at mental health awareness and education. However, a need persists for more comprehensive interventions, increased accessibility to mental health services, and more substantial community and state support. Understanding the background and specifics of suicide in regions like Louisiana is crucial for tailored intervention efforts, providing support to at-risk individuals, and fostering communities where mental health is openly discussed and prioritized.

African American Suicides by Age and Gender



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based injury statistics query and reporting system (WISQARS) [online] National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC (producer); 2023. Available from: URL: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.

African American Suicides by Gender



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based injury statistics query and reporting system (WISQARS) [online] National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC (producer); 2023. Available from: URL: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.