

Suicide rises and falls with economy: US study

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More Americans have killed themselves in times of financial hardship than in times of prosperity, said a US study of suicide rates and the business cycle from 1928 to 2007 released Thursday.

Suicide rates among people of typical working age, 25 to 64, were highest during the [Great Depression](#) in 1932, and lowest around the time of the dot-com Internet boom in 2000, said the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

"Knowing suicides increased during economic recessions and fell during expansions underscores the need for additional [suicide prevention](#) measures when the economy weakens," said James Mercy, acting director of CDC's Injury Center's Division of Violence Prevention.

"It is an important finding for policy makers and those working to prevent suicide."

The CDC findings, published in the [American Journal of Public Health](#), show a series of higher suicide rates in times of trouble, such as during the oil crisis of 1973-75, and the double-dip recession of 1980-82.

[Suicide rates](#) were lowest when the economy was growing, such as the post World War II period (1939-1945) and during an extended period of financial expansion from 1991 to 2001.

"Economic problems can impact how people feel about themselves and

their futures as well as their relationships with family and friends," said Feijun Luo, lead study author and an economist in CDC's Division of Violence Prevention.

"We know suicide is not caused by any one factor -- it is often a combination of many that lead to suicide. But there are many opportunities for prevention."

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