

UK suicide, homicide rates in mental health patients revealed

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(Medical Xpress) -- Suicide rates among people with mental illness in England and Wales have fallen over the last decade, latest figures show.

The 2011 Annual Report published today (Tuesday, 19 July) by The University of Manchester's National Confidential Inquiry (NCI) into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness reveals:

- Patient suicides have fallen from a peak of 1,315 in 2004 to 1,196 in 2008. The number of patient suicides has been under 1,200 for the last three years.
- In-patient suicides in England are at their lowest level since 1997 with 94 recorded in 2008 compared to 214 in the first year of the Annual Report.
- The number of suicides by [patients](#) who refused treatment fell over the decade from 245 in 1997 to 154, although there was a slight rise between 2007 and 2008.

The NCI reported a slight increase in patient [suicide rates](#) in England between 2007 and 2008 but the study's authors say the long-term trend is still downwards.

In Wales, patient suicide rates fell to their lowest rate since the NCI first began collecting data in 1997 with 2.0 suicides per 100,000 of the population being recorded in 2008 compared to a peak of 3.6 per 100,000 in 1999. The number of in-patient suicides has fallen from a peak of 17 in 2001 to just two in 2008.

Patient suicide rates in Scotland also fell in the latest year – from a high of 6.0 suicides per 100,000 of the population in 2007 to 5.0 in 2008 – but the authors say that suicide rates have remained relatively stable over the decade.

Alcohol and drug dependence among patients – defined as individuals that have had contact with [mental health](#) services in the 12 months prior to death – were significantly greater in Scotland than in England and Wales, as they were in [suicides](#) among the general population.

The publication of the NCI Annual Report, which also examines homicide rates by people with [mental illness](#) in England, Wales and Scotland, coincides with the launch of the government proposals to consult on the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England. The NCI provides data on patient deaths to the strategy.

Professor Louis Appleby, NCI Director and the Government’s National Clinical Director for Health and Criminal Justice, said: “We have seen a welcome improvement in patient safety over the last decade, particularly among patients in in-patient care and for those patients who are reluctant to accept treatment. However, every suicide is a tragedy and we must continue to be vigilant and improve safety for individuals in mental health care.”

A PDF copy of the report is available on request, or it can be viewed here: [www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/ ... Report July 2011.pdf](http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/.../Report_July_2011.pdf)

Provided by University of Manchester

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