

6159 Suicides By Occupations

Which occupations are most prone to suicide?

High suicide mortality has been found to occur among physicians and dentists. Rates greatly above the average are also recorded for those engaged in the liquor trade. On the other hand, other professional workers, such as teachers and clergymen, have uniformly very low suicide rates. Skilled workers and agricultural laborers have the lowest rates. A high incidence also appears in the group of unskilled laborers.

6158 Between Sexes: Frequency Rates

Is suicide more frequent among men than among women?

Men are much more likely to kill themselves than are women. In the United States, male suicides have usually outnumbered female suicides by more than three to one. The excess of male suicides is found among both the white and colored races and prevails in most countries. At the advanced ages, the sex ratio often rises to about 10 to 1.

6156 Suicide Rate Growing

WASHINGTON—Every day an average of 60 Americans choose to take their own lives. Today, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in this country. It ranks third among persons aged 15 to 19 and second among college students. More than 20,000 Americans take their own lives each year. The worldwide figure may exceed 500,000.

6154 Suicidology

In the past 20 years, something called suicidology has flourished in the U.S. Many good studies and much bad prose have resulted. Since 1957, for instance, more than 1500 books on suicide have appeared. Suicide seems about to join teen-age druggery and air pollution as one of the glum preoccupations of the decade.

6160 Sweden And Suicide

Sweden, like the U.S., has a high standard of living and highly industrialized society. The small country already has what many American social planners say is their goal for the U.S.

Poverty and unemployment are almost unknown. Medical care is free for all. Government pensions are given from the cradle to the grave. For each child, a Swedish mother is given a grant at birth plus an annual allowance.

Sweden's "sex freedom" is known the world over. A not surprising eighty to ninety percent of youth are estimated to have had sex experience before marriage!

Yet Sweden has one of the highest suicide rates in the world—a larger percentage of Swedish women kill themselves than do U.S. women.

Church attendance has dropped, however, to an alltime low. Some say fewer than 10 percent attend regularly. One survey showed only fifty percent of the population believing in God and only twenty-five percent affirming a life after death.

6157 Between Sexes: More Attempts

Is suicide attempted by more men than women?

Women attempt suicide much more often than men, but they are less frequently successful. These failures may be largely the result of their choice of less violent and disfiguring methods, which are also less apt to prove fatal. It is an open question whether women choose less effective methods because they are not so determined to die, or because they are more accessible, or perhaps because they involve less violence.

Also, many women who attempt suicide may not be entirely sincere in their purpose; very frequently their suicidal arrangements seemed so planned that rescue is not only possible but even probable. They often call for help in distress.

6155 Suicide Rates

The World Health Organization furnishes the figures of suicide around the world. A thousand people a day commit suicide, or about 500,000 people a year, with ten times that number attempting it. Hungary has the highest rate with 34.9 per 100,000 population. Czechoslovakia is next with 24.5; Austria follows with 22.2; Sweden with 22, Canada and the United States have 10.9 and 10.7 respectively. The Latin American countries have the lowest. Venezuela has 7.3 and Chile 3.1.

Factors most commonly associated with suicide are bereavement, social isolation, chronic illness, psychotic disturbance, alcoholism and drug-addiction.

—Christian Victory