

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?



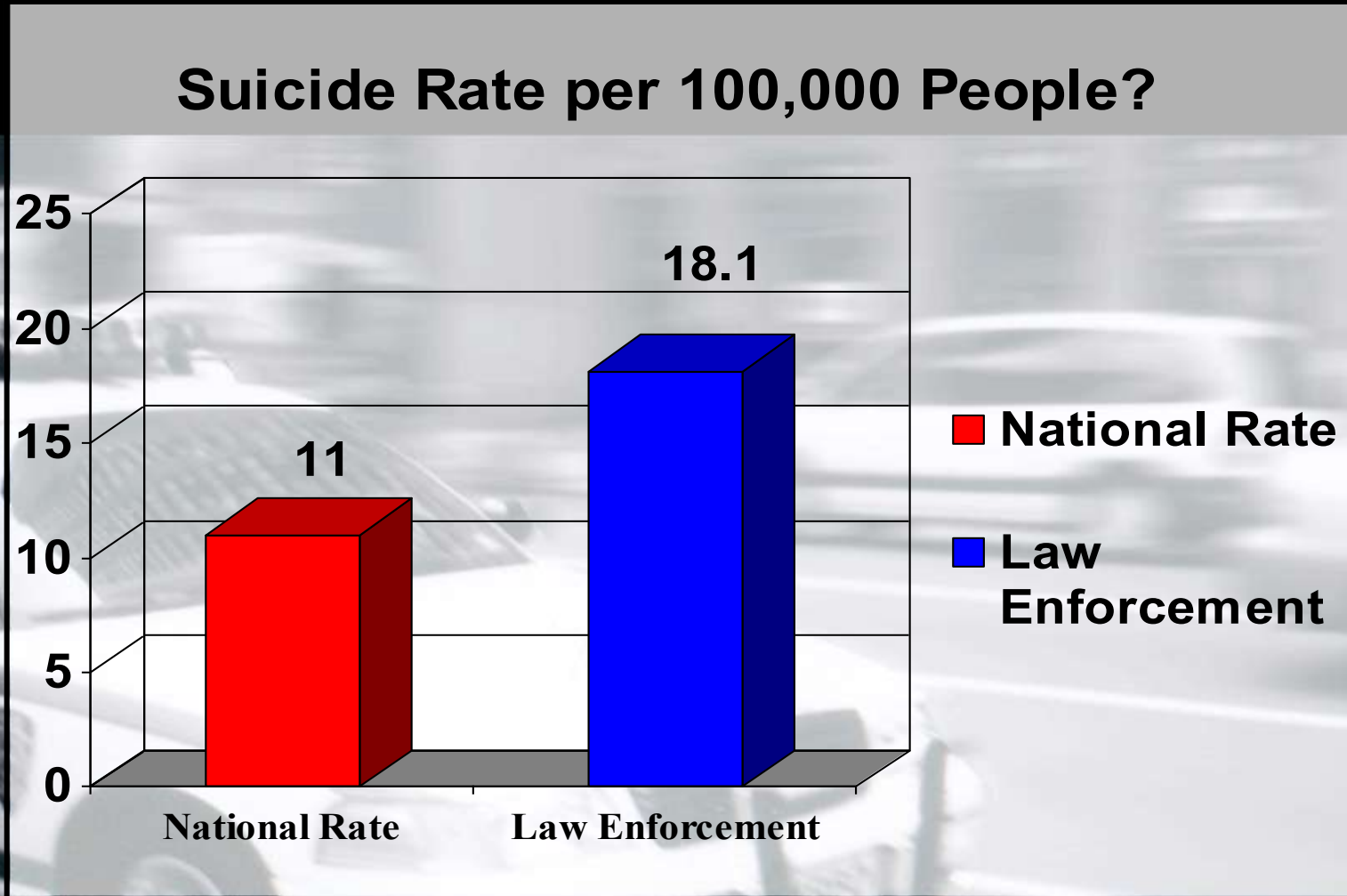
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

*Death by Their Own Hand:
Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors*

**Is Law Enforcement
Suicide an**

***“Epidemic”* or a
Terrible Tragedy?**

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

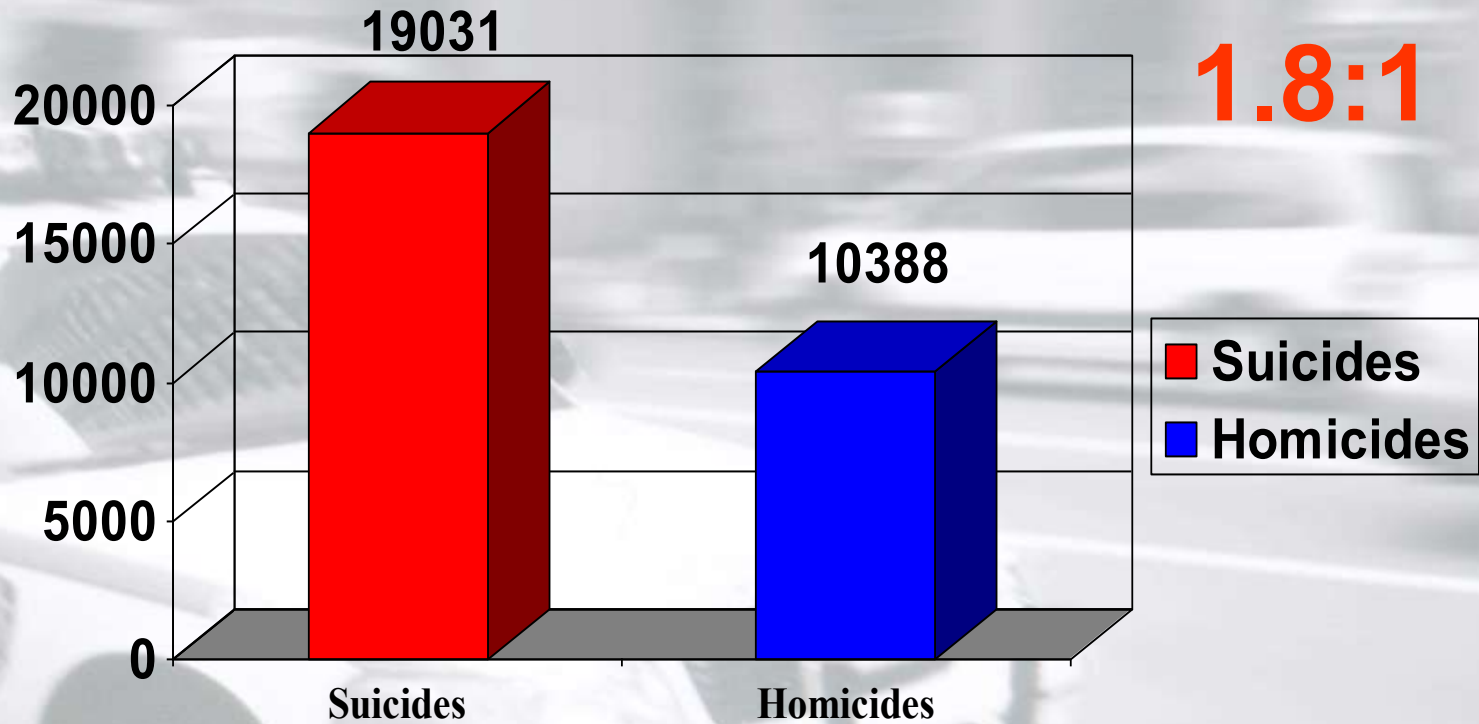


Death by Their Own Hand

“A peace officer is twice as likely to die by his or her own hand than the hand of a suspect!”

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

**Suicide/Homicide Ratio in 2002
General Population Males, Aged 21-65**



Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

**Estimates are
that each
suicide
severely
impacts at
least six
people.**

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

**Who is
impacted...?**



**Based on law
enforcement
suicide rates, an
agency the size of
the LASD can
expect to have 1-2
suicides a year**

- **Department a**

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

- ◆ Often compromises usual mourning rituals
- ◆ Typically not pathological but often complicated:
 - Leaves “unfinished business”
 - Often leaves a violent death scene
 - Scene is a “crime scene”
 - Media involvement
- ◆ Expect a 4-7 year recovery period
- ◆ Disrupts normal group performance for an extended period of time

Death by Their Own Hand: Have We Failed to Protect Our Protectors?

Greater impact on law enforcement...

- ◆ Increased sense of responsibility
- ◆ Increased cohesion increases loss
- ◆ Increased sense of personal identification
- ◆ Increased media attention due to profession of law enforcement

Death by Their Own Hand

OVERVIEW

- **Introduction**
- **General Confounding Variables**
- **Law Enforcement Confounding Variables**
- **Precipitating Factors**
- **Interventions**
- **LASD Suicide Intervention Model**

General Confounding Variables

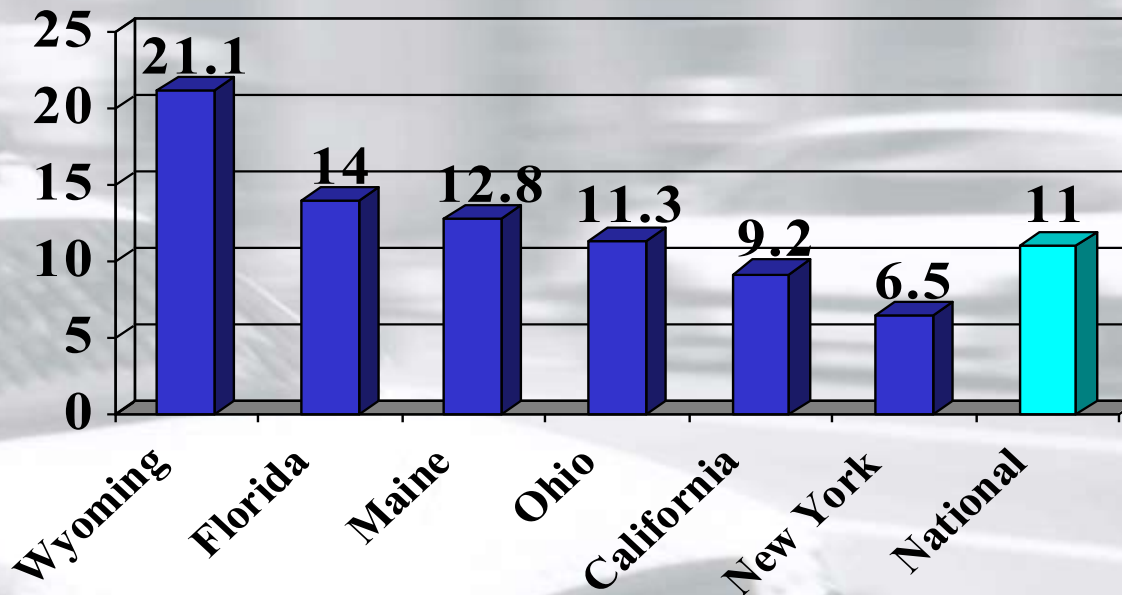
INTRODUCTION

- **Regional Variability**
- **Marital Status**
- **Methods of Suicide**
- **Alcohol and Suicide**

General Confounding Variables

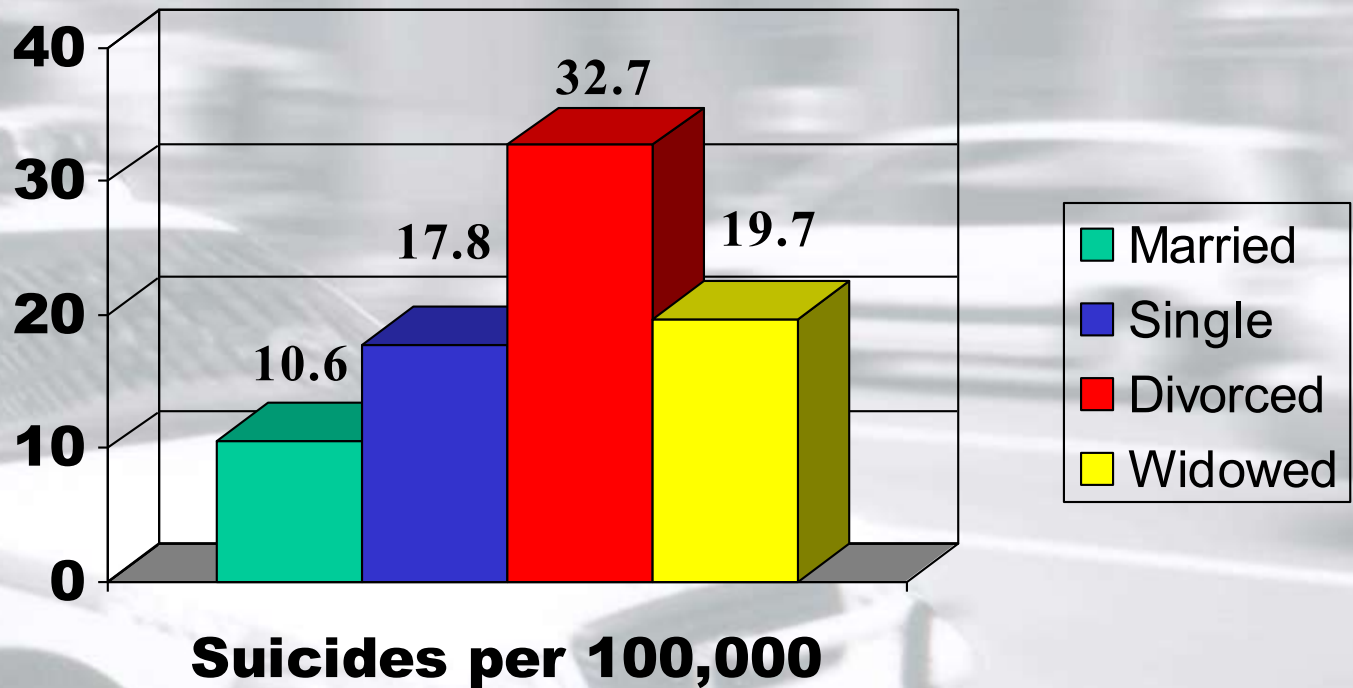
Regional Variability of Suicide Rate

Suicides per 100,000 in 2002



General Confounding Variables

Marital Status and Suicide Rate



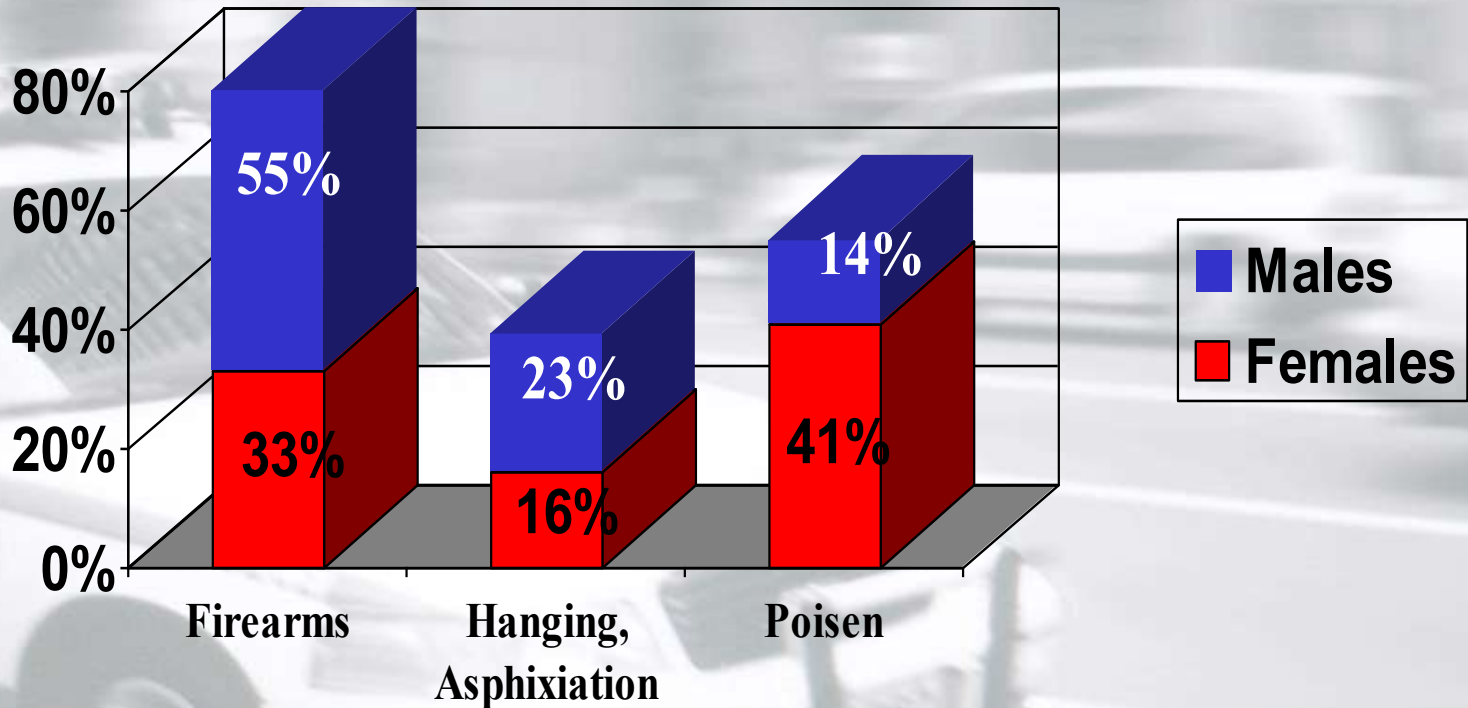
General Confounding Variables

WEAPON AVAILABILITY

**Having a firearm in
the home increases
your risk for suicide
five fold!**

General Confounding Variables

General Public Method of Suicide in 2002



General Confounding Variables

ALCOHOL AND SUICIDE

**The risk of suicide in
alcoholics is 50-70
percent higher than
the general
population!**

Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

INTRODUCTION

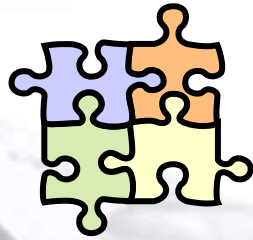
- **Law Enforcement Defined**
- **“Code of Silence”**
- **Comparison Groups**

Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

- **Alcohol and Law Enforcement Suicide**
- **Method of Law Enforcement Suicide**

Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

Who is a member of law enforcement?



- **Sworn peace officers**
- **Custody officers**
- **Reserve officers?**
- **Parole officers?**
- **Retired officers?**
- **Security**

Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

Code of Silence

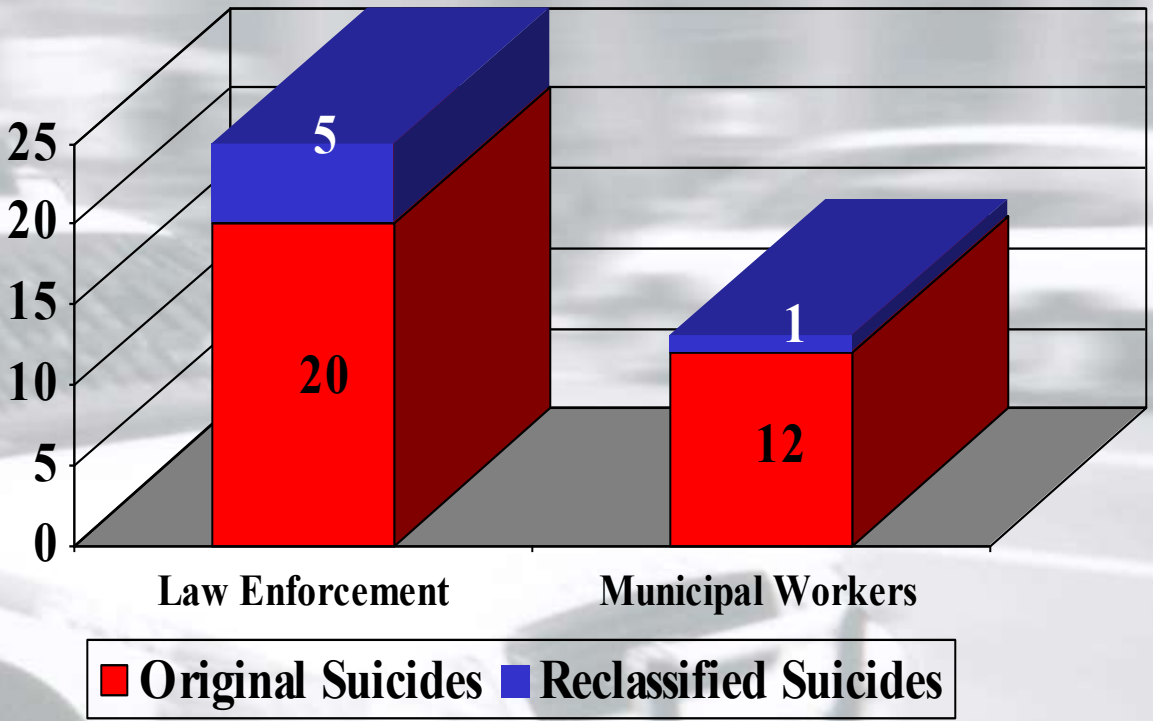
Confounding Variables
Police
Survivors sent
out 1000
ag...ng
survivors members
of peace no had
committed suicide



Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

Code of Silence

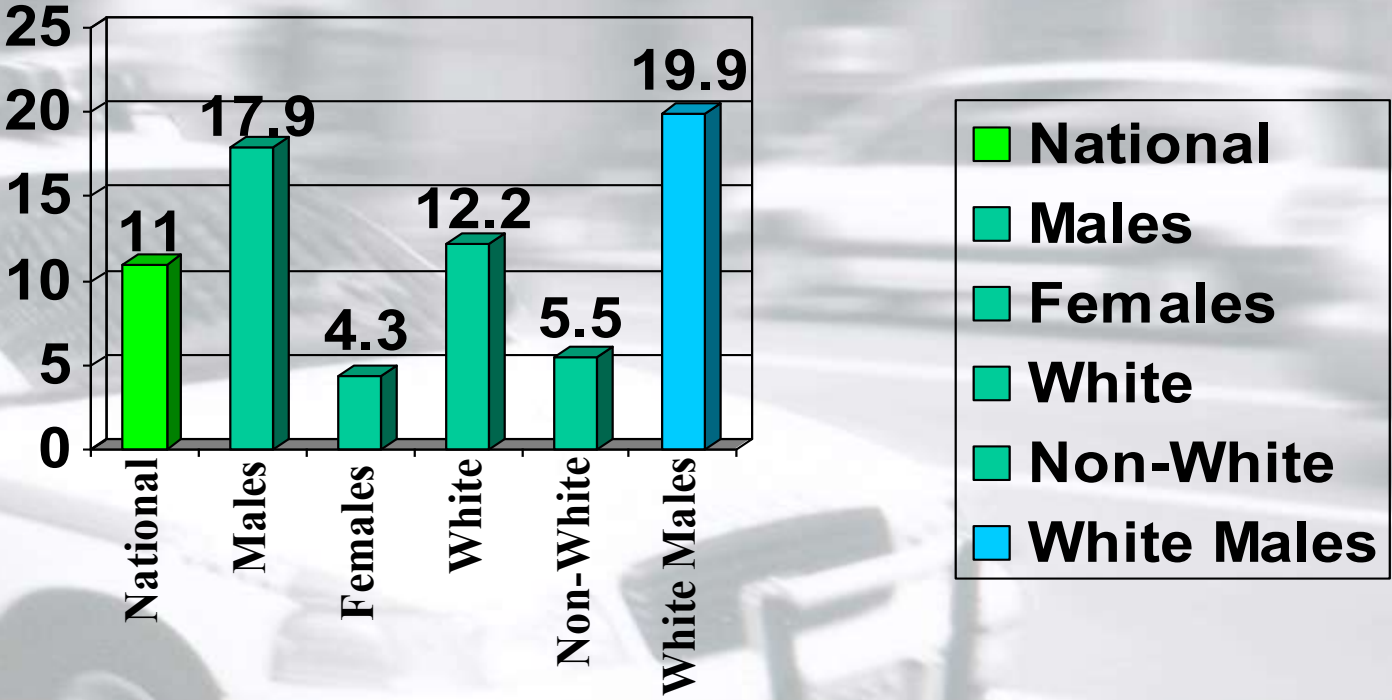
17 % of Police Suicides Misclassified



Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

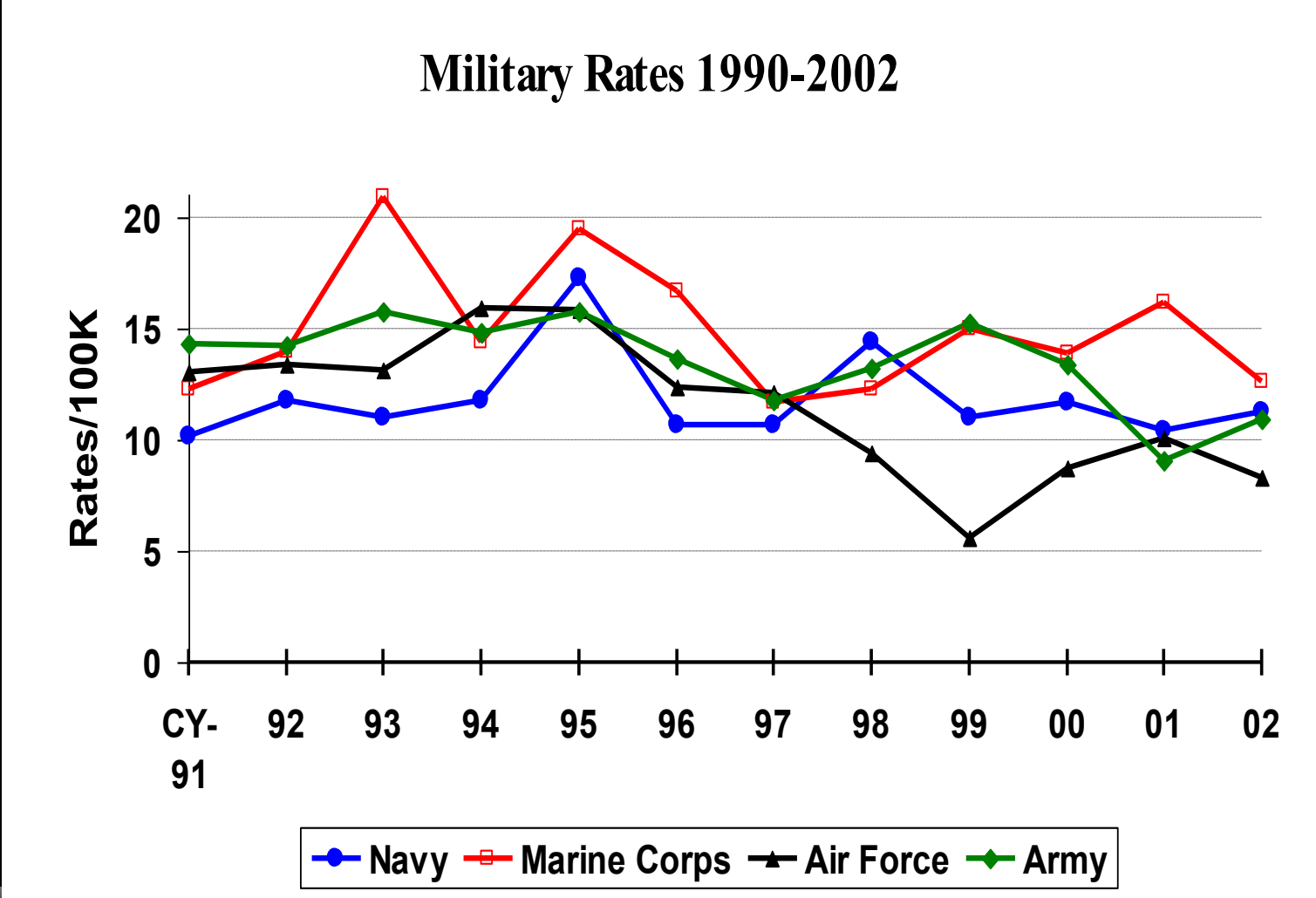
Comparison Groups

General Population Rates - Suicides per 100,000 in 2002



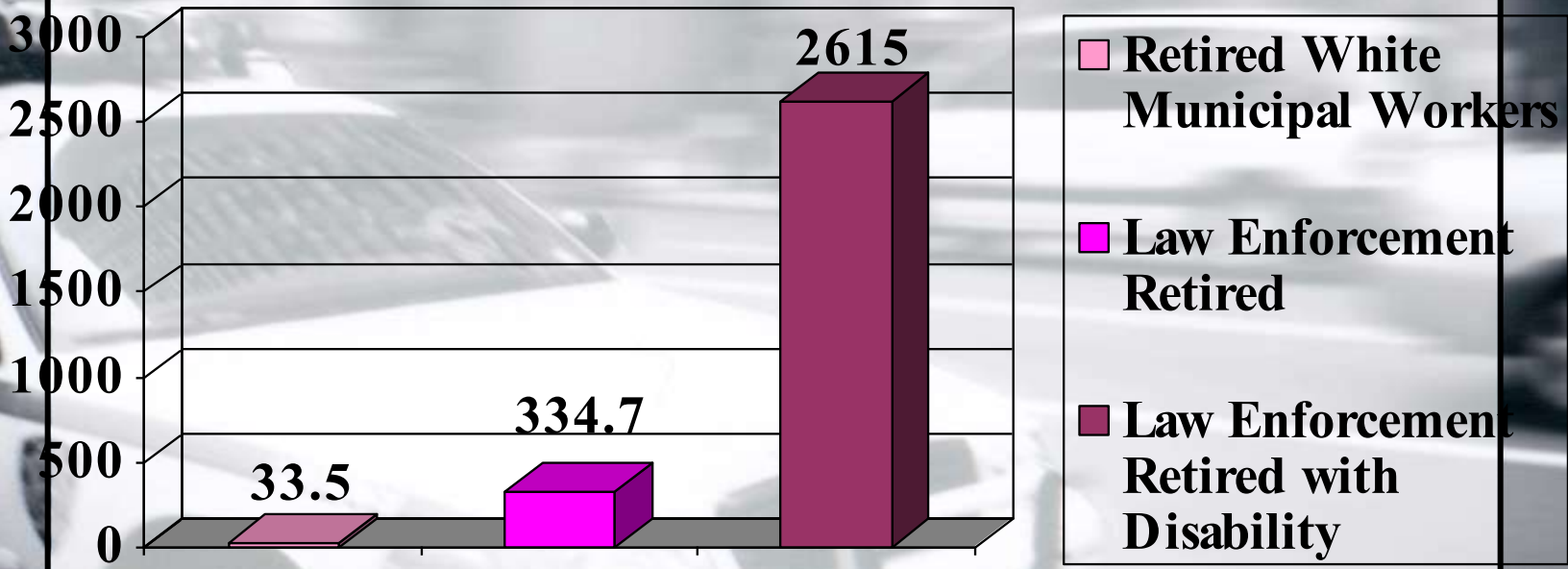
Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

Comparison Groups - Military Personnel



Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

Comparison Group - Retired Personnel
Suicides per 100,000



Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

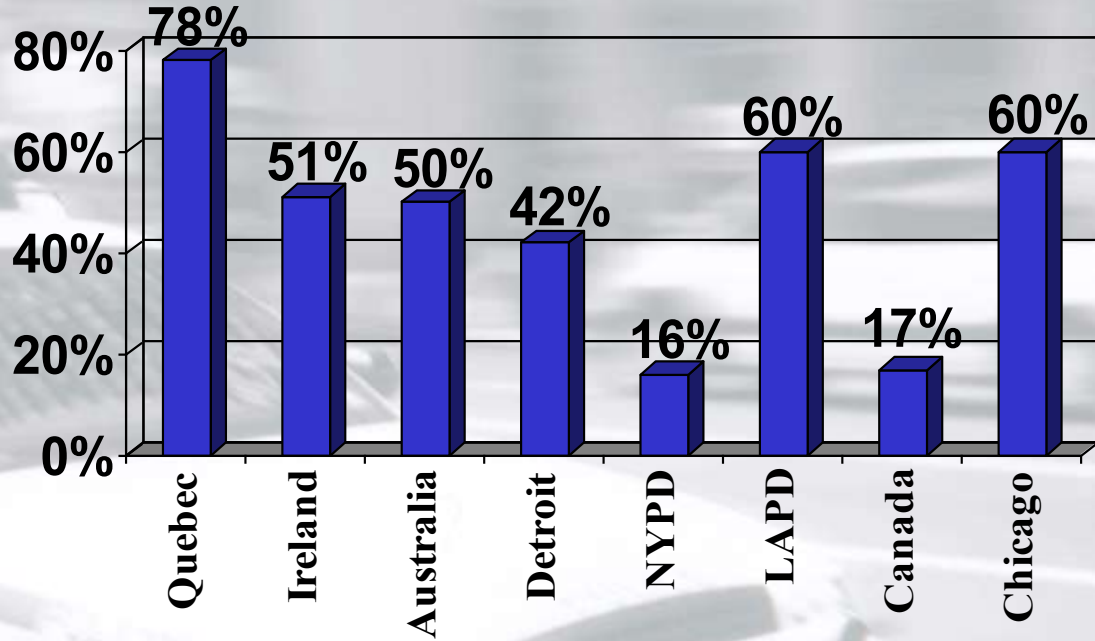
ESTIMATED LAW ENFORCEMENT RATES

- **Aamodt & Stalknaker (2001) - 18.1/100,000***
- **Loo (2003) - 22.99/100,000***
- **Campion (2001) - 18.1/100,000**

*** Reviewed multiple studies for a more accurate estimate**

Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

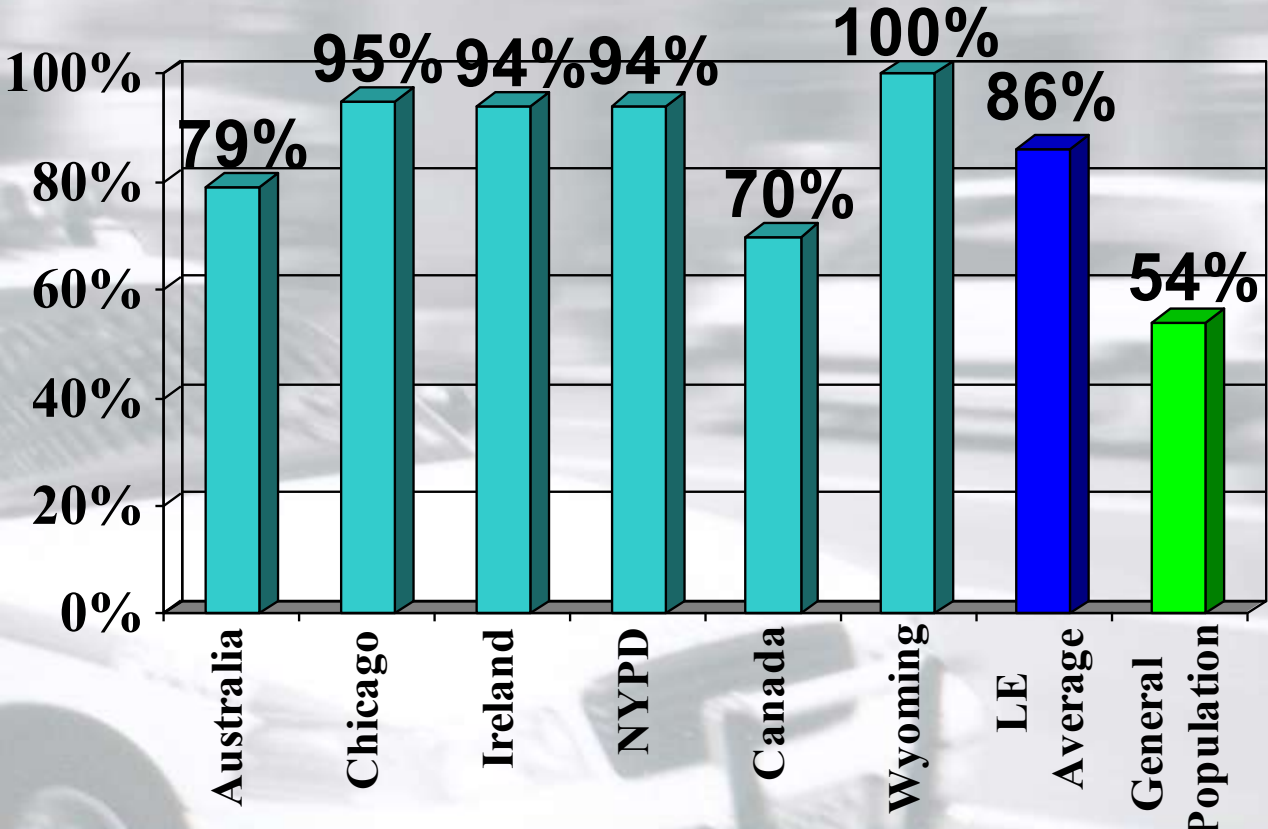
ALCOHOL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT



■ Percentages of law enforcement suicides involving alcohol

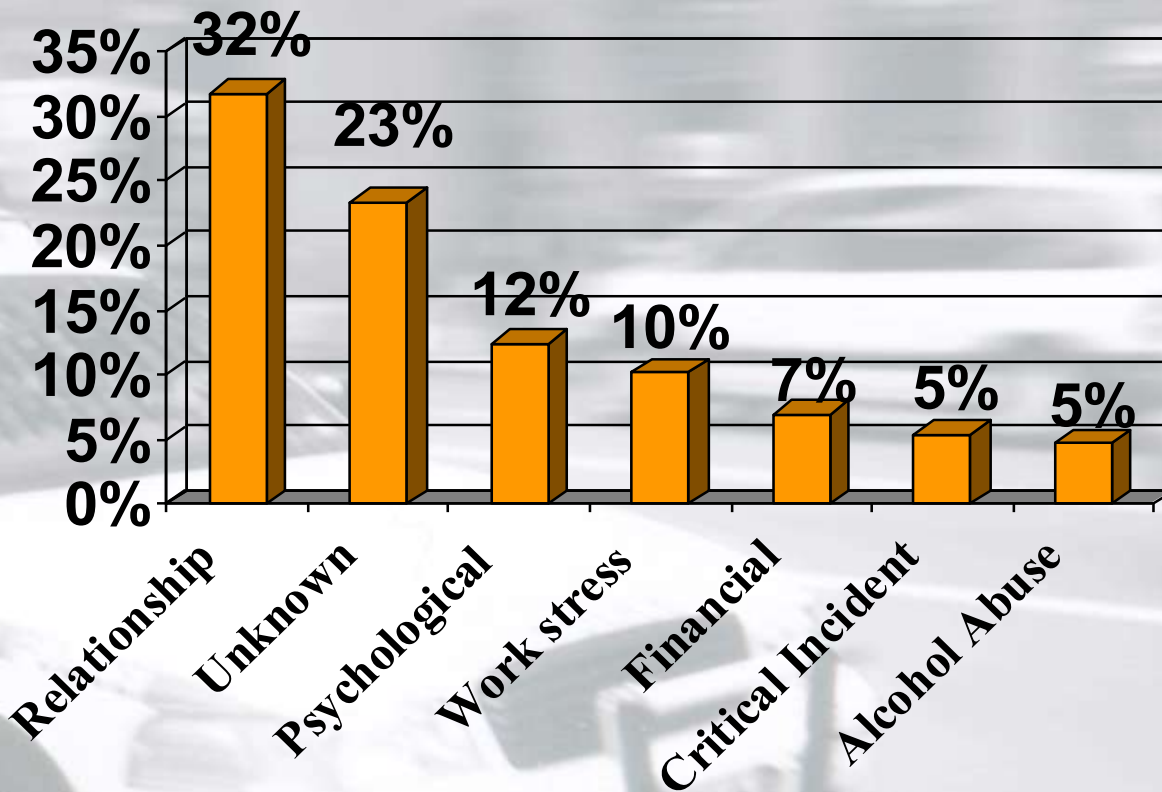
Law Enforcement Confounding Variables

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUICIDE BY FIREARM



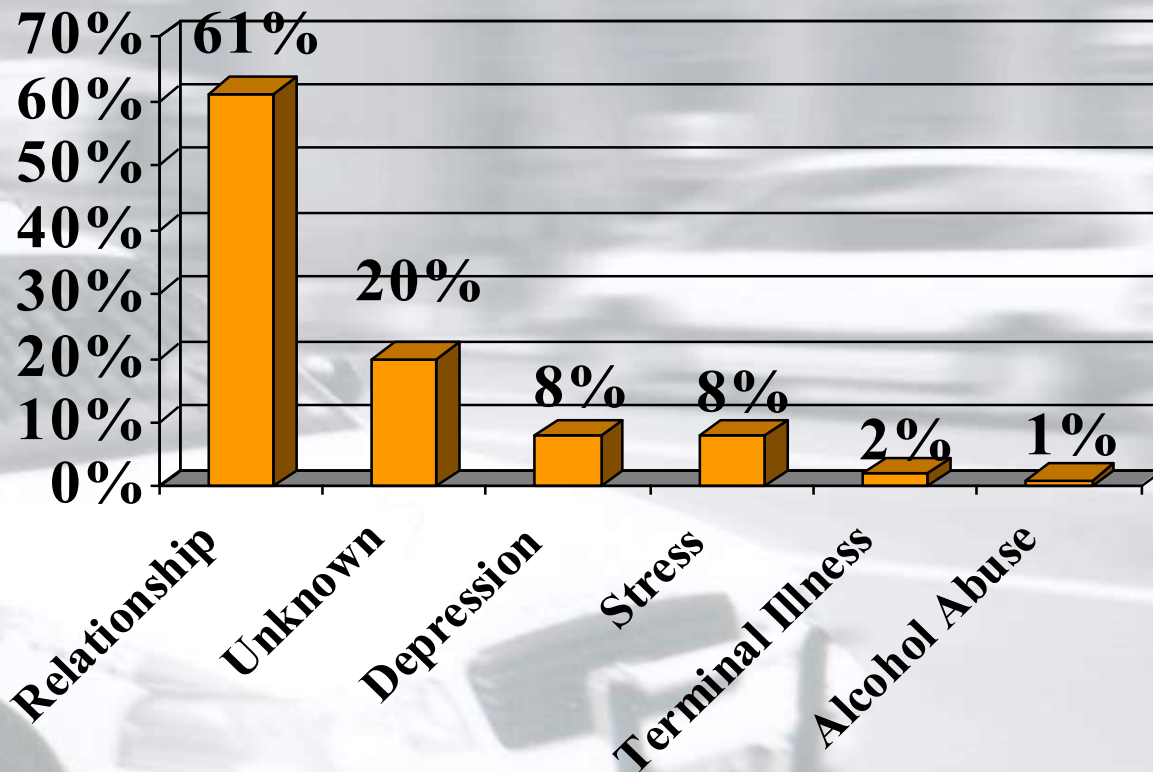
Precipitating Factors

Multiple Studies - Cross Regional



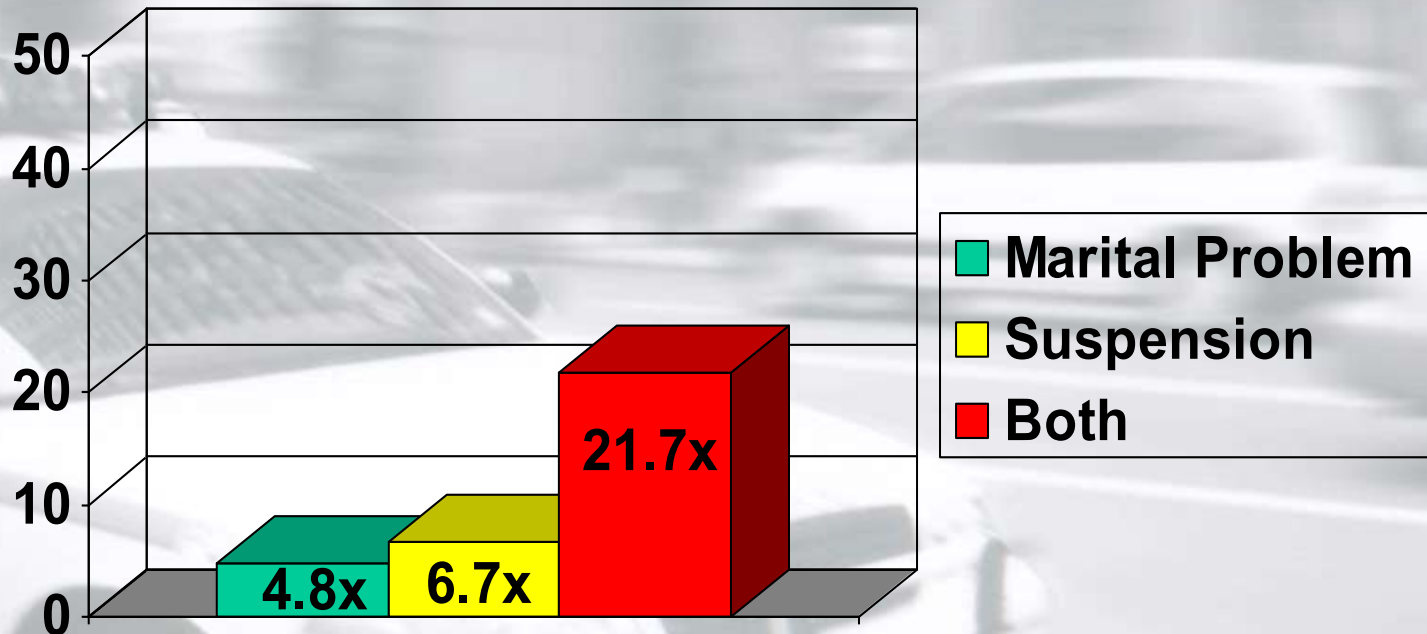
Precipitating Factors

NYPD 1985-1999 Rationale for Suicide



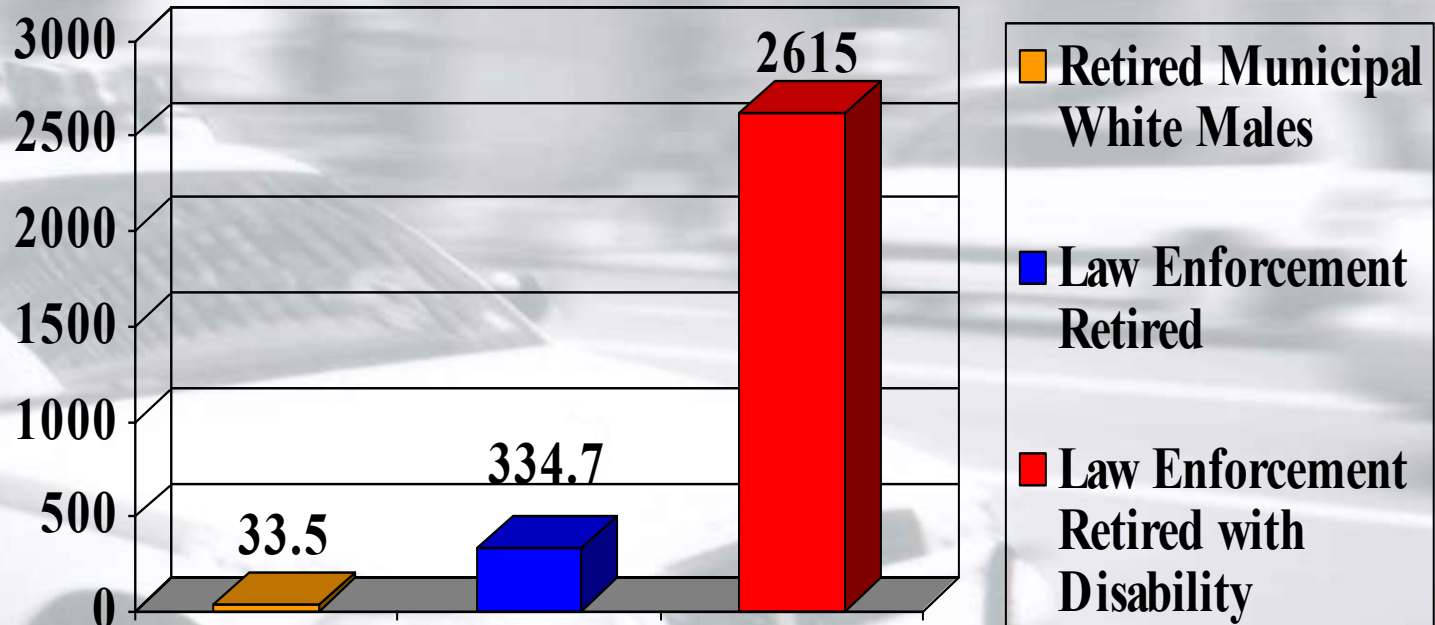
Precipitating Factors

Increase in Risk for Suicide



Precipitating Factors

Health Problems and Law Enforcement Suicide Rate per 100,000



Interventions

Education

- **Depression**
- **Suicide**
- **Stress Management**
- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Signs and Symptoms**

* Line Personnel & Supervisors

Interventions

TRACKING OF “AT RISK” PERSONNEL

- **Divorced/Separated**
- **Bereaved**
- **Injured/III**
- **Under Investigation**
- **Substance Use Problem**
- **Approaching Retirement**

Interventions

Availability of Resources

- **Law Enforcement Mental Health Professionals (MHP)**
- **Peer Support Program**
- **Chaplains' Program**
- **Health Insurance MHP's**
- **Self-Help Programs**
- **Peace Officer's Fellowship**

Interventions

Voluntary vs. Mandatory Referrals

- **Supervisor Referrals**
- **Settlement Agreements**
- **Supervisor Mandated**

Interventions

Critical Incident Interventions

- **Officer Involved Shootings**
- **Serious Threat to Life**
- **Secondary Traumatization Incidents**

Interventions

- **Pre-employment Psychological Screening**
- **High Risk Assignment Screening**
 - **Special Weapons**
 - **Undercover**
 - **Arson/Explosives**
- **Retirement Planning Seminars**

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

Top Down Roll Out

- **Upper managers support - introductory letter and commitment to saturation training**
- **“Personal touch” roll out to middle managers**

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

Top Down Roll Out

- **Preview presentation and training to peer support personnel & chaplains**
- **Availability of materials through computer feed as well as briefing/training**

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

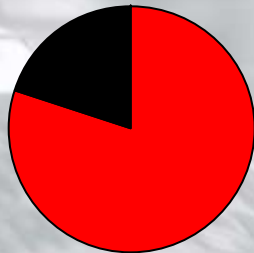
Top Down Roll Out

- **Distribution of materials to all units at line level**
- **Incorporation of video into all existing trainings - where appropriate**

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

Do People Communicate Suicidal Intent?

20%



80%

Warning

No Warning

Awareness

Assist line staff and supervisors to recognize signs & symptoms in colleagues/ subordi

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

- **I don't know what to look for.**
- **I don't know what to do or what is available!**
- **I don't want to ruin somebody's career!**
- **It's not my business – it's not work related...**

LASD Suicide Intervention Model

“Rolling Backup”



Officer Needs Assistance!



Will YOU Roll Backup?

Cops do not hesitate to protect fellow officers when a suspect is threatening them - even if it puts their own life at risk.

But what if the person threatening your colleague's life is him or herself?

If you think a co-worker is contemplating SUICIDE, will you take action? Will you have the courage to "roll backup?"

*Employee Support Services Bureau (ESSB)
(213) 738-3500*

SUICIDE PREVENTION



A Guide For Supervisory Staff

*Employee Support Services Bureau (ESSB)
(213) 738-3500*

AID LIFE

- A Ask.** Do not be afraid to ask, "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" or "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- I Intervene immediately.** Take action. Listen and let the person know he or she is not alone.
- D Don't keep it a secret.**

- L Locate help.** Seek out a professional at ESSB, peer support person, chaplain, friend, family member or supervisor.
- I Involve Command.** Supervisors can secure immediate and long term assistance.
- F Find someone to stay with the person now.** Don't leave the person alone.
- E Expedite.** Get help now. An at-risk person needs immediate attention from professionals.

Things To Do

Consider the following if you're with a suicidal individual (and not necessarily in this order):

- 1** Ask permission to secure weapon(s), including backup(s)
- 2** Immediately contact ESSB
- 3** Identify someone who can provide on-scene support
- 4 Do Not** leave person alone
- 5** Assess if **your** safety is in jeopardy
- 6** Assist individual with meeting responsibilities until situation is stabilized

WHEN THE CRISIS HAS STABILIZED, GET DEBRIEFED FOR YOUR OWN PEACE OF MIND!!!!!!



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9-11-01 OUR JOURNEY TO GROUND ZERO

BY MERCHANT JOHN HAYLEN

Merchant Sergeant Dennis Brown and I were in New York on September 8, 2001, to attend a conference on Corporate Security. I personally never dealt with any news questions about New York, especially since I am from Boston, and we had just been only taken the journey from the business view in the past 40 years.

In the conference, we were invited with other major retail business executives from around the world. On September 11, we were at the blocks away from the Twin Towers, seated at an uncomfortable banquet room with single food and drink along with 200 other executives. We were sitting in the quarters, while also watching from one of the best high-rise locations. We were at times shocked and at other times emboldened by speakers who kept our attention and provided worthwhile information.

Initially, the speaker was being tight and the news coverage of the Twin Towers was not on the big screen, as the second plane had just crashed into Tower One.

That powerful day and our lives were forever changed. My partner and I watched with our jaws open. We could not believe what was occurring approximately one hour later, as we in great disbelief in the fire of the towers were watching from a hotel and "Up and Down our day!"

Continued on page 6



Back view of Tower #1 with another bridge.



Building #1, Bank and Trust Building on the ground level is being going back in its path. Note National Bank on right.



Building #1 partially Tower #1 and partly the Twin Towers of Tower #1 and #2 are emboldened in the view.



One of many 2010 for trucks that were damaged.



Star & Shield

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFFS, PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Professional, Dedicated, Proudly Represented. We Do It Your Way!

True Patriots

One year ago, our nation endured one of the greatest tragedies ever witnessed on American soil. The aftermath left us dealing with thousands of shattered lives, all in while embracing countless losses of loved ones and freedom.

Today, real American heroes can be found in our own law enforcement family. As of now-August, the Sheriff's Department reported that 55 of its employees remained on Active Duty with the military, many their part to defend this nation.

Among those on Active Duty are the PFOA members listed at right. We thank them for their heroic and for their ongoing American spirit.

Samuel Alvarez	Custody Assistant	Army
Kenneth Brooker	Deputy	National Guard
Gregory Bugtosian	Deputy	National Guard
John Canillo	Deputy	Marines
Juan Carvajal	Deputy	National Guard
Rafael Castro-Ramirez	Security Officer	Marines
David Elyria	Security Officer	National Guard
Carlos Filardi	Deputy	Air Force
Thomas Geronzi	Sergeant	Army
Daymond Insua	Sergeant	Coast Guard
Mark Jennings	Sergeant	National Guard
Paul Kaser	Sergeant	National Guard
Anthony Lopez	Deputy	National Guard
Kevin Lottberman	Deputy	National Guard
Jorge Lopez	Deputy	Marines
Thomas McCannell	Security Officer	National Guard
Christopher Murr	Deputy	Army
Larry Richards	Deputy	Marines
John Terribian	Security Officer	Army
Mark Van Lier	Custody Assistant	Army

Proudly Representing Los Angeles County Employees:

- Department of the Coroner
- Sheriff's Marriage Office
- Office of Public Safety
- Sheriff's Department

More Than 6,700 Members Strong

this issue September '02

Put Your Name in Order

Security Officer Issues

Honors Honored

Wanted for Murder

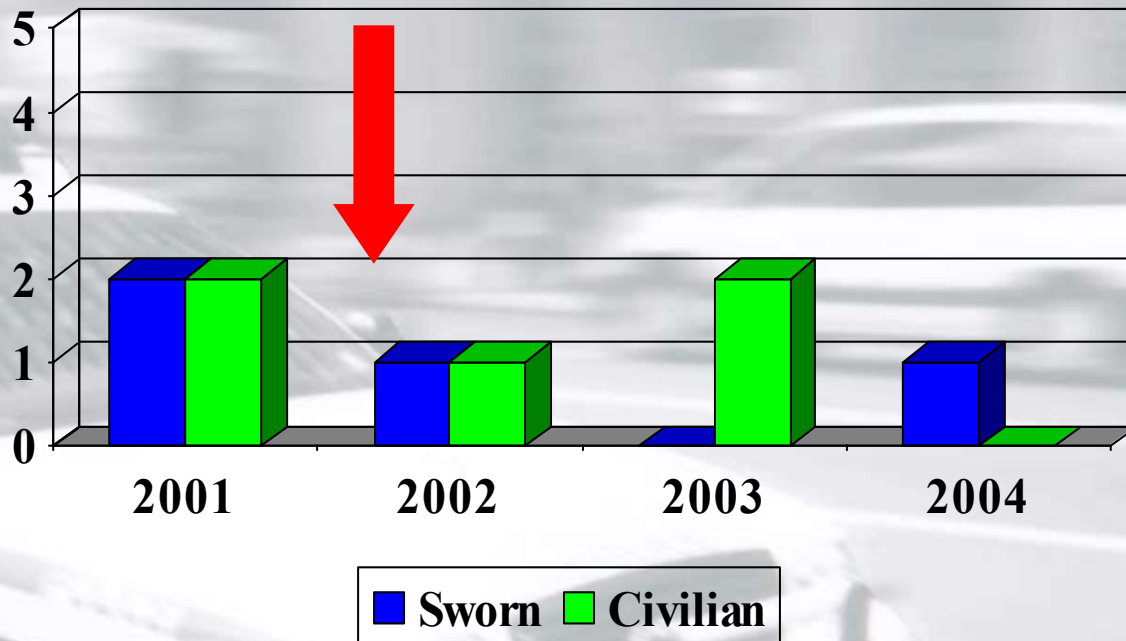
5
11
15
17

“For average starting police officer salary in America's largest county was \$33,000 in 1991. Over the next 10 years that salary actually declined. The figures are disheartening, but not surprising.”

—page 7

LASD Suicide Intervention Model Evaluation

Number of LASD Suicides per Year



***Based on size, LASD can expect ~1.5 sworn suicides per year.**

Final Considerations

Questions?