

ALCOHOL AND SUICIDE

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS (AUD) ARE ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK OF SUICIDE

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

FACT 1:

Globally, more than 700,000 people die by suicide every year. In the Americas, this figure is 97,339.

FACT 2:

77% of suicides in 2019 happened in low- and middle-income countries.

FACT 3:

Suicide can affect people throughout their lifespan.

FACT 4:

In the Americas, men account for 77% of all deaths from suicide.

FACT 5:

Suicide attempts are about two to four times more frequent among women.

FACT 6:

There are indications that for every adult who dies by suicide, there may have been 20 others attempting suicide.



UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL USE AND SUICIDE

Alcohol intoxication can cause changes to your feelings, mood, and decision-making, which can lead to a greater risk of suicide:

UNHAPPINESS, SADNESS, MELANCHOLY

COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT, NOT THINKING EFFECTIVELY

IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS OR ACTS

INCREASED SUICIDAL IDEATION

1. People have about a seven times increased risk for a suicide attempt soon after drinking alcohol.

2. The risk of a suicide attempt further increases to 37 times after heavy use of alcohol.

3. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that up to 18% of suicides globally are due to alcohol.

4. The risks of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and completed suicide are each increased by 2–3

times among those with AUD in comparison with the general population.

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread impacts on people's mental health and exacerbated many of the known risk factors for suicide.

DRINKING LESS

- Avoiding intoxication and drinking when you are not feeling well is the best way to reduce your risks of a suicide attempt. If you think you are drinking too much, seek help to assess your risks and choose the right intervention for you.

FINDING HELP

- Effective interventions to prevent suicide are available. Talk to a healthcare provider if you are thinking about suicide. On a personal level, early detection and treatment of depression and Alcohol Use Disorders (AUD), are critical to suicide prevention, as well as follow-up contact for psychosocial support.

Sources:

1. Pan American Health Organization. Suicide prevention must be prioritized after 18 months of COVID-19 pandemic, says PAHO [Internet]. Washington, DC: PAHO; 2021 [cited 23 Sep 2021]. Available from: <https://www.paho.org/en/news/9-9-2021-suicide-prevention-must-be-prioritized-after-18-months-covid-19-pandemic-says-paho>
2. World Health Organization. Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018 [Internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2018 [cited 23 Sep 2021]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565639>
3. World Health Organization. Mental health and substance use [Internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2018 [cited 23 Sep 2021]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/suicide-data>

PAHO/NMH/MH/21-0028

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