

A common response to males committing suicide 3x times as often as women is “That’s because men choose more violent & lethal methods”, with misandrist implications that it’s a result of men being inherently violent. In reality, studies show that even using the same less-lethal methods, men die more.

August 12, 2021 | 238 upvotes | by [2717192619192](#)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165032711005179>

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Comments

PassedPawn_ • 70 points • 12 August, 2021 07:52 AM

There was a post about male suicide on /askfeminists and the commenters were condescendingly treating it as a result of easy gun access. Like did they forget countries exist where civilians aren't legally allowed to own firearms? Male suicide rate is higher almost everywhere.

thescopeoflife • 41 points • 12 August, 2021 08:12 AM

I live in a Country where hardly anyone has guns. In my specific region it's less than one gun per a hundred people. It's also the Country that has the biggest ratio of men to women suicide in Europe

bombarc1art • 35 points • 12 August, 2021 10:56 AM

'B-but men don't care about the state their body is found in so they choose more violent methods!!'

nocturnefox • 19 points • 12 August, 2021 07:42 PM

What an ignorant thing to say when someone is feeling so low they decide to take their life. I've seen that said before and it's disgusting

UnHope20 • 15 points • 12 August, 2021 11:39 PM

My personal favorite lol. It's the quintessential 'Just so' reasoning. If the tables were turned and women were the ones using more violent methods they would argue that the men were choosing the less violent methods because they didn't really want to commit suicide or they would say that men not wanting to do too much damage to their appearance is proof that society values men more.

You can literally use any hypothetical scenario, switch nothing but the gender and they will sympathize accordingly.

I know I'VE DONE IT with them lolol

The situation has no bearing on their understanding of whose vulnerable. It's entirely the identity of the people involved in the story.

Once I figured that out, YKW lost me.

themolestedsilver • 3 points • 13 August, 2021 03:04 PM

Oh yeah I understand this very well.

Feels like everytime I give a retort they cant bullshit away that *immediately* resort to cherry picking and snarky "ok incel" level of comments.

Schmladdn • 13 points • 12 August, 2021 07:28 PM

That's something I really have read a couple of times. "Even in death women are pressured by society to be pretty so they chose less messy methods while men just don't care about the person that finds them". I'm paraphrasing but that's exactly the meaning I have heard several times in reddit.

Fucking people can twist higher suicide rates for men to aKsHuaLly be about Misogyny.

Vegetable_Ad6969 • 54 points • 12 August, 2021 08:40 AM

Most often I see people use the Americacentric opinion that it is because men choose to commit suicide with

firearms which have a high success rate. Except the ratio of men to women suicides is pretty consistent across the board, even in countries where there is strict gun control.

2717192619192[S] • 22 points • 12 August, 2021 08:53 AM

You're completely correct.

dontpet • 36 points • 12 August, 2021 10:30 AM*

Let's play swap the gender in this one and see what happens.

Women die more due to domestic violence because they are weaker and not as skilled at fighting. Does that mean we shrug our shoulders and just treat them the same as we do men?

Men are experiencing the most harm from this public health issue. I've watched up close in New Zealand as our Ministry of Health had prepared to respond to suicide. I have produced useful data in consultations and developed and suggested programs relevant to men's suicide harm reduction.

A major issue is the lack of community services and screening done of men by health services. I pointed this out, and it's obvious one you start working in the field.

The outcome of that? No special targeting of men. In fact, our Director of Suicide Interventions told us at a local meeting that women have special needs when it comes to Suicide risk.

quokka29 • 5 points • 13 August, 2021 07:14 AM

Oh I've experienced similar things. I've had managers at mental health clinics say misandrist things and that women are a priority for treatment etc. Its absolutely appalling and evil. And what is worse is that they get a pass for it. They should be fired on the spot for expressing such a view.

enjoycarrots • 8 points • 12 August, 2021 05:27 PM

In fact, our Director of Suicide Interventions told us at a local meeting that women have special needs when it comes to Suicide risk.

This makes my blood boil. Just to clarify, were there any special needs listed for men in the same way? Also, what special needs did they identify for women?

dontpet • 12 points • 12 August, 2021 05:46 PM

She only referred to gender twice during the discussion. How women that have been sexually abused are vulnerable to Suicide. And later, how women that are domestic violence victims are vulnerable to Suicide.

I think men were just as vulnerable, or more vulnerable, in both those cases.

She got angry at me when I pointed that out.

fitrainz • 2 points • 15 August, 2021 08:52 PM

May she forever step on legos.

VeteranOfDepression • 2 points • 16 August, 2021 01:42 AM

aren't there just as many male victims of domestic abuse, if not more?

dontpet • 3 points • 16 August, 2021 03:27 AM

Yes. And while population data such as the Otago Longitudinal Study show that it generally isn't as upsetting or dangerous for men, I expect in the end more men kill themselves as an outcome of

victimisation than women.

That is partly due to the higher suicide rate overall indicating just higher likelihood of harm. It is also partly due to what happens to male victims of dv when those care and justice systems are engaged.

cakeandcoke • 58 points • 12 August, 2021 04:45 AM

I guess men are just better at everything ☐☐☐☐

I'm joking I'm joking

JaredIsAmped • 15 points • 12 August, 2021 12:17 PM

Definitely better at dying, plenty of undeniable proof.

DudeBeingReal • 42 points • 12 August, 2021 05:37 AM

The important thing here is, fuck men, right?

lightning_palm • 19 points • 12 August, 2021 06:24 AM

There is an evolutionary theory of suicide that suggests that suicide might be adaptive. I wonder if it can be applied to male suicide victims.

"People are most likely to commit suicide when their direct reproductive prospects are discouraging and, simultaneously, their continued existence is perceived, whether correctly or incorrectly, as reducing inclusive fitness by interfering with their genetic kin's reproduction."

[...]

"The profile of correlations agrees with the notion that suicidal ideation is related to conjunction of poor reproductive prospects and diminished sense of worth to family. Concordance of the data with the hypothesis is apparent in reliable relationships of reproductive and productive parameters to suicidal ideation."

[...]

"Interestingly, the methods of suicide have changed much more than the rates. For example in Japan, hanging prevailed until 1950, after which pills and poisons became the primary method. In England and Wales, hanging and drowning were common in the late 19th century, but were progressively replaced by drugs and gassing. Motives may have been more constant than means."

Source:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/bering-in-mind/is-killing-yourself-adaptive-that-depends-an-evolutionary-theory-about-suicide/>

BitsAndBobs304 • 8 points • 12 August, 2021 08:36 AM

howard bloom is a sustainer of the theory of group selection (complementary to natural selection), including suicide being part of one of the ingrained mechanisms

redgarnetamaranth • 2 points • 12 August, 2021 02:18 PM

inclusive fitness applies mainly to older or infirm people as a byproduct of pain avoidance if they're really sick and feel like a burden for example, and not because of natural selection. Bargaining is associated mostly to younger people and is usually a cry for help as a way to try improve their situation

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1090513815001087>

The IFM and BRM are complementary. Committing suicide to reduce burden on kin, although less common in the ethnographic record, is reasonably well documented among older or infirm individuals, especially those living at high latitudes.

Suicidal behavior by younger, healthy adults in the context of fitness threats, such as forced or thwarted marriages, physical or sexual abuse, or loss of a mate; social conflict, such as severe disagreements with parents and other authority figures; and powerlessness to improve one's situation, is ubiquitous in the ethnographic record. There is also consistent evidence that non-lethal SB can improve outcomes for victims (Table S3). These findings closely parallel those for deliberately self-harmful behavior in Western societies (e.g., Hagen et al., 2008). Much suicide mortality in the ethnographic record was therefore probably a consequence of particularly dangerous forms of deliberate self-harm, perhaps in combination with a lack of modern medical care, whose aim was to improve victims' circumstances if they survived. These results support the BRM (Andrews, 2006, Hagen, 2002, Hagen, 2003, Hagen et al., 2008, Nock et al., 2008, Rosenthal, 1993, Stengel, 1952, Watson and Andrews, 2002) and the venerable idea that much SB is a 'cry for help' (e.g., Farberow & Shneidman, 1961). In particular, they support the view, perhaps first and most clearly expressed by the anthropologist Raymond Firth, that SB is often a gambit to improve one's situation (e.g., Firth, 1936).

lightning_palm • 1 point • 12 August, 2021 02:26 PM

Should this then not be represented in the methods chosen? You would expect adolescents to choose a higher proportion of non-lethal methods, such as intoxication.

At least according to this study which I just found this is not the case for males:

"Swiss suicides from 1998 to 2007 were examined. The main methods of suicide were analysed with respect to age and gender. Of the 12,226 suicides which took place in this 10-year period, 333 were committed by children and adolescents (226 males, 107 females). The most prevalent methods of suicide in children and adolescents 0-19 years were hanging, jumping from heights and railway-suicides (both genders), intoxication (females) and firearms (males). Compared to adults, railway-suicides were over-represented in young males and females (both $P < .001$). Jumping from heights was over-represented in young males ($P < .001$)."

Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22130898/>

Interesting_Doubt_17 • 19 points • 12 August, 2021 11:13 AM

This idea that men choose more violent methods is so north american-centric.

Here in (Eastern) Europe, people don't have easy access to guns. I believe you need a passport or something similar to an ID card or whatever. And yet, men are still more likely to commit suicide. And to top it off: the gender gap is also HIGHER.

JaredIsAmped • 12 points • 12 August, 2021 12:14 PM

I shit you not in my 5th grade health class they said men have higher suicide rates because "they use more dramatic methods".

BloomingBrains • 10 points • 12 August, 2021 06:10 PM

If women are choosing less lethal means, that means they aren't really serious about it, and its mainly a cry for attention. Which is something I actually heard from a female psychologist when I was in college.

Saying that would get me accused of misogyny in most places but if you take a second to think about it, it makes

sense. The only other alternative one can believe is that women are not choosing as lethal means because they're incompetent at recognizing what those more lethal methods are, which is misogyny. So once again trying to attack men actually backfires and winds up being sexist against women.

I know that technically speaking, killing yourself is violence against yourself, but it isn't the same thing as "violence" the way people usually think about it (hurting other people). There is no reason to think that just because someone was sufficiently violent to hurt themselves, they would have been just as likely to hurt others as well. That's because suicide mainly comes from depression or something similar, and not out of any kind of innate aggressiveness.

Taking a tragedy like male suicide victims and turning it into a point about how they would have been just likely to go around hurting others is disgusting.

quesadilla_dinosaur • 7 points • 12 August, 2021 03:09 PM

You should post this in r/Male_Studies

It's where we keep a repository of studies and evidence that support men's issues.

CookieDoughJunkie • 6 points • 12 August, 2021 05:22 PM

This is where the stats need to be specific. A lot of suicide attempts aren't. They're self-harming for attention but it gets put as a suicide attempt.

SexEleven • 9 points • 12 August, 2021 05:23 PM

I've thought about this a ton since I'm a male and was suicidal around age 19 and now I'm training to be a psychologist. I'm so happy someone else has noticed this. I remember when I first heard this stat and the lethal means explanation, my gut reaction was that men simply want to die more, that they are in so much pain and really want to die and not be rescued, so they use a gun. I was drawing from my own experience because I had suicidal thoughts every day and I knew that if I'd do it, I'd really do it.

When I hear psychologists talk about the disparity in universities and trainings, I've literally never heard someone say "It may be the case that more men die by suicide because more men really want to die." They can't even offer that hypothesis because it would imply that there are more men than women driven to this extreme of despair. Don't get me wrong - I'm not downplaying female suicide completions or attempts in the least - I thank god that more of them choose less lethal means and that they are often crying for help and often they can get help because finally someone sees their full pain.

But you don't have to be a genius to realize that if you're a female and really want to kill yourself, you know a gun or proper hanging or jump from a great height would do it. Women are equally intelligent and capable of reasoning it through as men. I could be wrong - I don't find any research on this - but my theory is that 3x more men die by suicide than women because 3x more really want to die and the despair that drives them to that dark place is caused by the anti-male aspects of our society that does not recognize their pain.

day5tar • 9 points • 12 August, 2021 06:17 AM

Then why do they die more?

Tamen_ • 26 points • 12 August, 2021 08:38 AM

I'd wager intent:

The overall finding, that male attempts were rated as SSA more often than females, is in line with other studies that found females to have a less serious intent to die than males [15, 18, 31, 32] despite other findings illustrating no difference in suicide intent between males and females [6, 19, 33].

(SSA is an abbreviation for Serious Suicide Attempt)

Source: <https://bmcpsy psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-017-1398-8>

The hard question is of course; why do more men have a more serious intent to die than women?

mimetic_emetic • 11 points • 12 August, 2021 10:10 AM

What percentage of suicide attempts are actually people seeking help in a time of emotional turmoil?

Tamen_ • 10 points • 12 August, 2021 11:00 AM

From the same paper (table 2):

Gender	Deliberate Self-Harm (DSH) [%](SR)	Para-suicidal Pause (SP) [%](SR)	Para-suicidal Gesture (SG) [%](SR)	Serious Suicide Attempt (SSA) [%](SR)
Male	260 [12.3%]	281 [13.3%]*	367 [17.4%]***	1206 [57%]***
Female	402 [13%]	484 [15.6%]	705 [22.8%]	1507 [48.6%]

If we classify suicide attempts that aren't serious as seeking help we get:

For men that would be 43% seeking help and for women it would be 51.4%

UnHope20 • 1 point • 12 August, 2021 11:45 PM

This is one of my favorite studies because it blows all of the BS out of the water.

mimetic_emetic • 11 points • 12 August, 2021 10:31 AM

Then why do they die more?

Personally I think that men make fewer attempts since they they don't expect to receive any help from the attempt. I don't have any data but my default position, I suppose, is that most attempts are people trying to articulate their suffering in way that will be heard, rather than a sincere try to self-annihilate. Men expect to feel shame and be shamed at looking for attention in that way.

Just some thoughts.

Oncefa2 • 12 points • 12 August, 2021 11:49 AM

Society doesn't react very positively to men's cries for help. We're just expected to man up and figure things out on our own, not become a burden to others.

Women on the other hand are allowed to be burdens. That's their role in society -- to be provided for and protected. And the more dramatic they get, the more everyone runs around trying to help them.

Vandechoz • 5 points • 12 August, 2021 05:00 PM

people who use the more effective types of suicide also have the lowest reattempt rates

of course, that could just be because the intention isn't a cry for help in the first place

WaterHoseCatheter • 4 points • 15 August, 2021 09:29 PM

There was a thing I saw on a number of my female friends Instagram stories earlier this year. It was a tweet saying how men kill themselves in violent ways because unlike women they are selfish because they aren't considerate to those who will find their bodies.

And just like that, the male suicide social disparity made that much more sense.

back_againx13 • 2 points • 15 August, 2021 10:55 PM

While it's true that men use more violent means of suicide which means they often complete the act, it's terrible that anyone would try to "win" a debate by negating or trivializing the number of men who commit suicide. It's not a competition, ffs! Mental health is an area in which men are severely underserved, and they deserve much, much better than they're currently getting. Being a feminist doesn't mean that I can ignore facts and data in order to prove that women are eternal victims. To me it means striving for gender equality, which means that I care about men's rights and well-being, too. When one gender makes gains toward equality, the other gender benefits as well, so there is no reason that we shouldn't advocate for one another.

throwra_coolname209 • 5 points • 12 August, 2021 04:55 AM*

Mm, I'm not sure I'm up in arms about this one. Edit: the title, I'm definitely up in arms about the suicide rate in men

More violent methods means like... Men are choosing a bullet to the head relatively more often than women are choosing pills as a suicide method. One of those is pretty cleanly more "violent" of an end than the other - it's the method, though, not the action.

Though, admittedly, I've seen some MAJORLY misandrist takes on male suicides/suicide methods that I just can't fucking believe people have said.

Tamen_ • 26 points • 12 August, 2021 08:33 AM*

Interestingly enough it seems like European men are choosing pills as a suicide method just as often as women does.

Although 24.7% of women who died by suicide and 8.6% of men who died by suicide had used drug poisoning as a method **the number of men and women who committed suicide by drug poisoning were just about the same (10,211 men and 10,209 women)** according to this European study:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2569832/> (table 1)

The most common method for both genders which also had the largest difference in numbers between men and women were by far hanging (74,730 men and 14,735 women).

I'd wager that access to rope and a beam/branch is pretty evenly distributed across genders in Europe at least so availability does not come into play as it does for firearms (11,593 men and 548 women).

This also seems to hold when looking at suicide attempts in ~~the US~~ parts of Europe:

In terms of the association between type of suicide intent and gender among different suicide methods, results illustrated that for suicide intent, SSA was rated significantly more frequently in males than females in the most frequently used method of attempted suicide (intentional drug overdose, N = 3542, 67.9% of patients). This finding propounds that even within the same method of attempted suicide, in this case, intentional drug overdose, males show a stronger intent to die than females.

<https://bmcpsy psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-017-1398-8>

MelissaMiranti • 39 points • 12 August, 2021 06:18 AM

Though, admittedly, I've seen some MAJORLY misandrist takes on male suicides/suicide methods that I

just can't fucking believe people have said.

Like how men choose messy methods because they don't care about the women who have to see their corpse? Yeah, that's too common.

Deadlocked02 • 18 points • 12 August, 2021 10:51 AM

I was actually told something like this on the male mental health sub. It was basically something like “Even when suicidal, women are more empathetic than men”. Shocked to know this is a more common line of thinking than I previously thought.

throwra_coolname209 • 10 points • 12 August, 2021 01:29 PM

Pretty sure I had this discussion with my ex and it's one of the things that solidified the realization that she actually believed men were just emotionless freaks

Deadlocked02 • 6 points • 12 August, 2021 01:34 PM

Good thing she's your ex then.

JangLinn • 10 points • 12 August, 2021 03:31 PM

Yanno, I was recently watching FriendlyJordies documentary on the corruption regarding the Murray-Darling river in NSW, and he was talking to a few locals of some towns in the southern basin. One man who was interviewed said that since the rivers been dried up the suicide rates have gone up, and the loss of employment and farmland has lead a lot of older men to kill themselves out of embarrassment.

He also stated that he knew many people who were killed in single vehicle accidents which were actually suicides via intentional car crashing, the purpose of this was so their wives could still get insurance.

But nah we gotta turn this into a gender war about ... empathy ??? too- fucking hell.

MelissaMiranti • 7 points • 12 August, 2021 01:53 PM

Yeah, it's a pretty fucked up take.

PassedPawn_ • 6 points • 12 August, 2021 02:03 PM

I was wondering what's up with that subreddit. It's supposed to be a male-centric community but the members are often feminist-aligned.

Apparently, there's a significant overlap between that sub and menslib:

<https://subredditstats.com/subreddit-user-overlaps/malementalhealth>

a-man-from-earth • 8 points • 12 August, 2021 03:00 PM

It got inundated with menslib types, and the rules against political and ideological discussions are not being enforced. It's a major reason why I started /r/mensupportmen.

ruby_rose_13 • 27 points • 12 August, 2021 07:12 AM

We were discussing male mental health and suicide at my work and someone had the same take. First time I'd heard it in the wild.

Thinking about it in retrospect it's very “world ends, women most affected”.

MelissaMiranti • 4 points • 12 August, 2021 01:52 PM

How dare someone be in that much pain and be inconsiderate of the pain of others? Honestly, it's just the worst thing ever to have to clean. /s

BitsAndBobs304 • 17 points • 12 August, 2021 08:37 AM

it ignores that "taking some pills with low odds of killing you, end up in er" becomes a statistic, putting gun in your mouth and not shooting doesn't

2717192619192[S] • 39 points • 12 August, 2021 05:11 AM

I'm not sure I'm up in arms about this one

I am. When MRAs bring up the male suicide rate, it's often responded to with "but women attempt more often".

throwra_coolname209 • 13 points • 12 August, 2021 05:16 AM

Sorry, to clarify, I'm not up in arms about the title of the post implying that it's misandrist to say men choose more violent methods. Definitely up in arms about the male suicide rate, and as someone who has gotten close to attempting myself, I can definitely say there's not many good resources for men out there.

2717192619192[S] • 21 points • 12 August, 2021 05:17 AM

I didn't say it was misandrist to state a fact, I was referring to how people will often say "that's because men just choose more *violent* methods, but women actually attempt more" with a certain implication behind the statement.

ozurdexscaresme • 10 points • 12 August, 2021 08:07 AM

I think people get mad because of the implication:

Feminists might get mad because it implies "Men have it worse in life. See? They commit suicide more."

MRAs might get mad at their response because it implies, "Both men and women feel compelled to kill themselves. In fact, women have it worse. See? They attempt suicide more! It just so happens that men use more lethal methods."

I think that's the issue. The question is, "Why do men choose more lethal methods?" or "Why do women choose less lethal methods?"

It's an uncomfortable question because no matter what the answer is, it will somehow appear like it is downplaying the other side.

Oncefa2 • 17 points • 12 August, 2021 11:44 AM

There's actually no data or evidence showing that women attempt suicide more than men.

That's another myth that's been repeated over and over again.

It comes from a fluke in hospital reporting codes that lump suicide attempts in with self-harm.

And even that ignores the obvious fact that if taking pills and ending up in the ER is more common for women, they're just being seen and recorded more. A man who grabs a gun but changes his mind, and doesn't go to the ER because he's obviously not injured, isn't included in those statistics.