

Self-harm among Wisconsin Adolescent Emergency Department (ED) Patients Ages 10 to 19

This factsheet describes a population at increased risk of self-harm and suicide. In 2021, **1,650** adolescents went to the ED with self-harm injury (with or without suicidal intent). **Rate = 220 out of 100,000¹**

There were **55** suicide deaths among adolescents the same year. **Rate = 7 out of 100,000²**

Method of self-harm¹

The most common methods of self-harm are drug overdose and cutting.

Drug overdose

Females: 62%

Males: 47%

Drug overdose is significantly different between males and females, with females more likely to self-harm by this method.

Cutting

Females: 32%

Males: 34%

About one-third of adolescents cut themselves, sometimes to relieve emotional pain (without suicidal intention) or sometimes to attempt suicide.

Additional health issues in ED record¹

Mental health condition

(excluding alcohol and drug use disorders)

49%

Suicidal Ideation

23%

History of Suicide Attempt

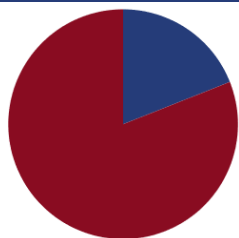
8%

Drug Use Disorder

7%

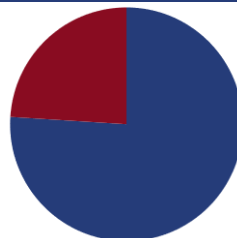
There were no significant differences by sex for any of the health issues noted above in the ED records.

Self-harm among ED patients¹



Females: 81%
Males: 19%

Suicide deaths²



Females: 24%
Males: 76%

Self-harm and suicide are significantly different by sex. Adolescent females are more likely to self-harm while adolescent males are more likely to die by suicide. These differences may be the result of different methods used and/or different intentions (for instance, some self-harm may not be about suicidal intention but a release of emotional stress or pain).

Select strategies to prevent self-harm and suicide

- Provide programs that promote help-seeking, resiliency, and healthy coping strategies
- Provide peer support and mental health resources
- Teach families coping and problem-solving skills

¹Wisconsin Hospital Emergency Department Visits; includes only nonfatal visits, treated and released from the ED, presented as patient-level. WI Department of Health Services; 2021.

²Wisconsin Death Certificates. WI Department of Health Services; 2021.



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