

Suicide in Greenland

Suicide is a serious [problem](#) in [Greenland](#). According to the [government](#) of Greenland, one person in five has attempted [suicide](#).^[1] Because of this, the Greenland government has taken a number of steps to reduce the suicide rate. One example is [roadside posters](#).^[2]

History

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The number of [suicides](#) in Greenland began to rise in the 1970s. Before that it had been very low. It kept getting higher until 1986. In 1986, suicide was the leading cause of [death](#) in several towns, such as [Sarfannguit](#).^[2] Before 1970, the rate of suicide in Greenland had been very low. But by 1994, it had become one of the highest in the world. The rate was 107 per 100,000 persons committing suicide per year. Government data in 2010 suggested that almost one suicide occurred a week.^[3]

Rates

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An [article](#) was published in the [journal](#) *BMC Psychiatry* in 2009. It reported that 1351 suicides took place in Greenland during the 35 years (1968–2002). The study noted [seasonal](#) changes in the suicide rate. Suicides were higher in June and lower in the [winter](#) months. Suicide rates in [northern](#) parts of West Greenland are higher than in [southern](#) parts.^[4] Suicide rates are higher for men than women. Most of the people committing suicide are young men between the ages of 15-24. Unlike in other [Western countries](#), the suicide rate in Greenland goes down with age.^[4]

Reasons

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Several reasons are blamed for Greenland's high rate of suicide. These including [alcoholism](#), [depression](#), [poverty](#), poor [relationships](#) with partners and [dysfunctional parental homes](#). The higher summer suicide rate is blamed on [insomnia](#) caused by longer periods of [daylight](#).^[5]

The increase in suicide rates started about the time [television](#) appeared in Greenland.^[6] But it may be more the "modernization package" in general that is causing the problem.^[7] Culture clash between the traditional culture and modern Western culture is also assumed to be a factor.^[8]

Common methods

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The most common methods were hanging (46%) and [shooting](#) (37%). Other methods include jumping from heights, cutting with sharp objects, [drowning](#), [overdose](#) of [medication](#), and [poisoning](#).^[4]

Suicide prevention

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Greenland's Government and other [organizations](#) have made a number of efforts to [prevent suicides](#). There are different associations that provide support for people that feel suicidal. Measures include posters placed along the roads, which read: "The call is free. No one is alone. Don't be alone with your dark thoughts. Call."^[2] Suicide [consultants](#) are used to show [movies](#) discouraging [teenage](#) suicide attempts.^[3]

References

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

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