

Comment in relation to CSO Vital Statistics Report

On December 11th 2015, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) released final figures for deaths including suicide that occurred in 2013. According to Report on Vital Statistics 2013, 487 (391 men, 96 women) suicide deaths occurred in 2013, equating to 10.6 per 100,000 of the population. This rate shows a decrease of 10% from the suicide rate in 2012 (11.8 per 100,000). The greatest decrease occurred among men aged 15-44 years. The number of suicides among women was 96, which was identical to the number of female suicides in 2012 and 2011. Despite the overall decrease, the rate of suicide among people aged 65 and over increased by 14% from 2012 (from 14.7 to 16.8 per 100,000).

In 2013, the number of deaths of undetermined intent was 56, which was close to the number of deaths of undetermined intent in 2012 (n=54). In order to determine whether the reduction in suicide rates in 2013 indicates a downward trend it would be important to take into consideration the final suicide figures for 2014 and 2015, which are not yet available. This is particularly important in countries of a small population size where the number of suicides can fluctuate from year to year. In order to verify whether the decrease is a true decrease, it would also be important to verify whether increases occurred in other external cause of death categories, such as accidental drowning and accidental poisoning.

Considering the relatively high rates of suicide among men aged 45 years and older and the unchanged rates of suicide among women, it is important to prioritise implementation of the strategic actions in the recently launched National Strategy to Reduce Suicide in Ireland, *Connecting for Life*, 2015-2020.

Professor Ella Arensman
National Suicide Research Foundation
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health,
University College Cork
Western Gateway Building
Cork
Tel: 0035321 4205551
E-mail: earensman@ucc.ie

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