Suicide in Alabama, 1980 to 1989.

Trends of US suicide rates show great variations among demographic groups over time. Although more attention has been directed to the increasing suicide rate among adolescents, persons aged 65 years and older continue to commit suicide at a higher rate than for any other age group. To examine the recent trend of suicide rates and compare the suicide pattern with that at the national level, we conducted a study using suicide data in Alabama from 1980 to 1989. For all age groups in Alabama in the 1980s, male suicide rates exceeded female rates. Of the four major race-sex groups, nonwhite females are an especially low-risk group, experiencing a rate of about 1.5/100,000 at all ages. There have been remarkable increases in suicide rates in the 1980s for males, especially for nonwhite males in Alabama. The results suggest that high-risk groups to be targeted for interventions are men over age 45 (especially white men over age 65), and divorced and widowed men and women.