

Homicide: Findings from the South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS), 2003-2005

The South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS) is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). It integrates data from death certificates, coroner reports and law enforcement reports. The data presented in this newsletter reflect homicides occurring in South Carolina (SC) from year 2003 to 2005, regardless of place of residence of the decedent. The exceptions to this are the leading causes of death for SC, which are SC residence data.

Homicide Overview

- Homicide was the fourteenth leading cause of death among SC residents for years 2003 to 2005, which ranked the fifteenth leading cause of death among the U.S.¹.
- Homicides accounted for 0.9% of all deaths in the SC.
- A total of 1,008 homicides occurred in SC from 2003 to 2005. This represents an average of 0.9 homicides per day; or 8 homicides per 100,000 population.
- Black males aged 20-24 years had the highest rate (62.3 per 100,000) of homicide deaths among age-race-sex groups (Figure 1).
- Never married people had the highest homicide rate (21.6 per 100,000) of all marital status groups.

Figure1. Homicide Rate by Age, Gender, and Race 2003-2005

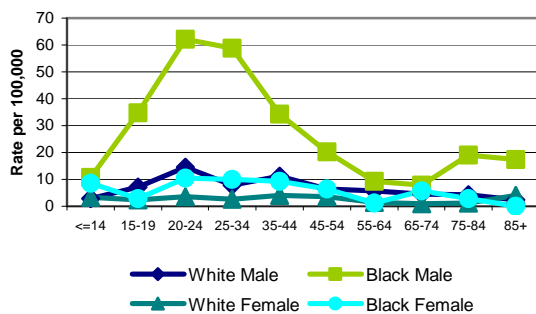


Table 1. Homicides by Marital Status

Marital Status	Number	Percent	Rate
Married	247	25.9	4.3
Never Married	531	55.7	21.6
Widowed	49	5.1	7.0
Divorced	118	12.4	13.6

Note: Marital Status of Victims of Age 15 and older; Rate per 100,000 population.

Gender Disparities

- Homicide was the thirteenth leading cause of death for SC males and the twentieth leading cause of death for SC females from 2003 to 2005.
- Males had a homicide rate (19.4 per 100,000) 4 times higher than that of females (4.8 per 100,000).
- Among males, those 20-24 years old had the highest rate of homicide (30.6 per 100,000; see Figure 2).
- Among females, those 20-24 years old had the highest rate of homicide (6.4 per 100,000, Figure2).

Figure2. Age-specific Homicide Rates for Males and Females, 2003-2005

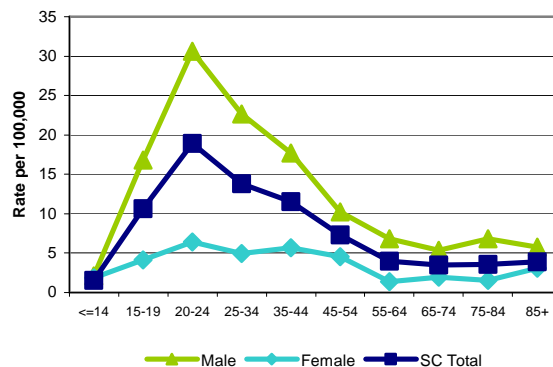
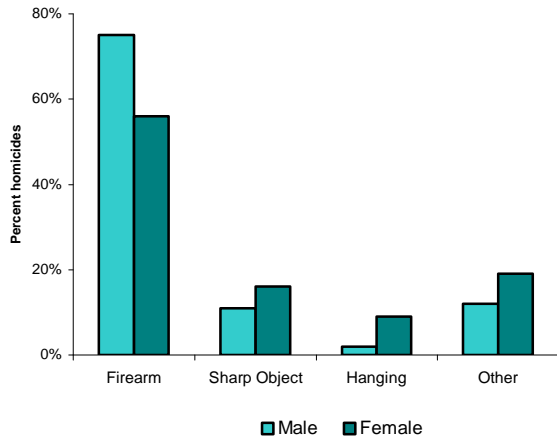


Figure 3. Mechanism of Homicide, by gender, 2003-2005



- Males completed homicide most often through the use of firearms (75%), while females completed homicide through the use of firearms in 56% of cases (Figure 3).
- Females (9%) were four times more likely than males (2%) to complete homicide by hanging (Figure 3).
- Male homicides were more likely to involve conflict over money or property, interpersonal conflict or abuse, drug dealing or use, and armed victims who used a weapon during the incident than female homicides. (Figure 4).
- Female homicides were more likely to be related to conflict between intimate partners than male homicides (Figure 4).
- Male homicides were more likely to be precipitated by another serious crime, such as robbery or burglary than females (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Circumstances Reported among SC Homicides by Gender, 2003-2005

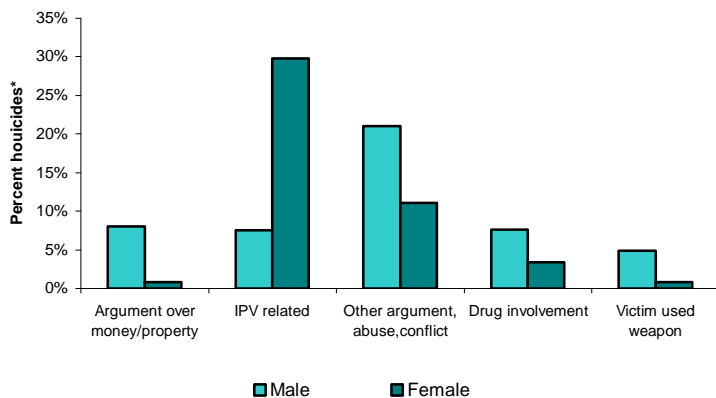
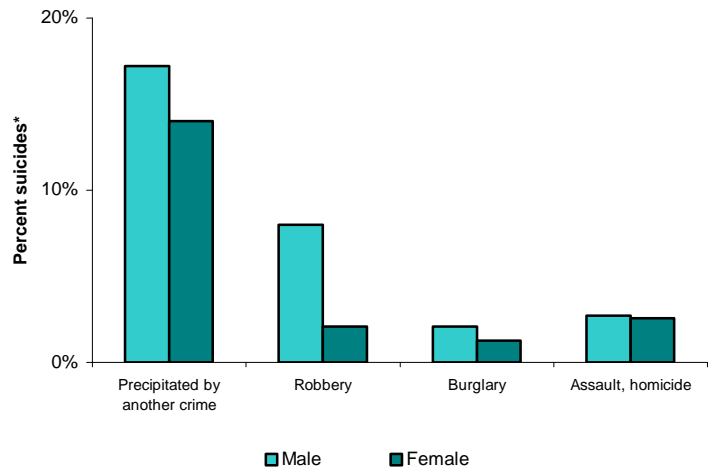


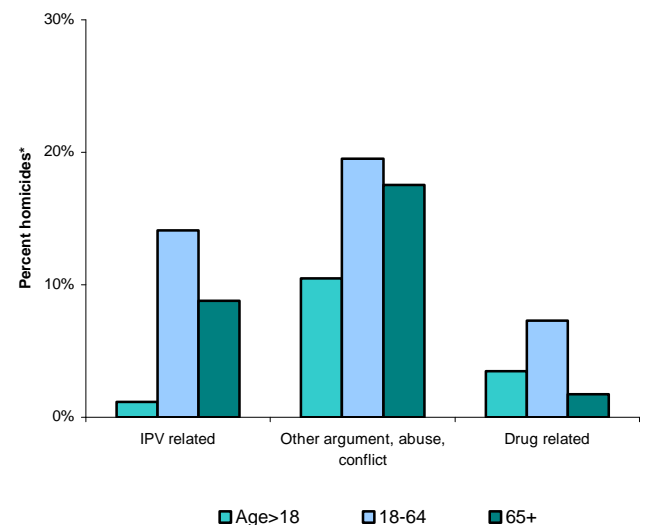
Figure 5. Circumstances Surrounding among SC Homicides, by Gender, 2003-2005



Age Group Difference

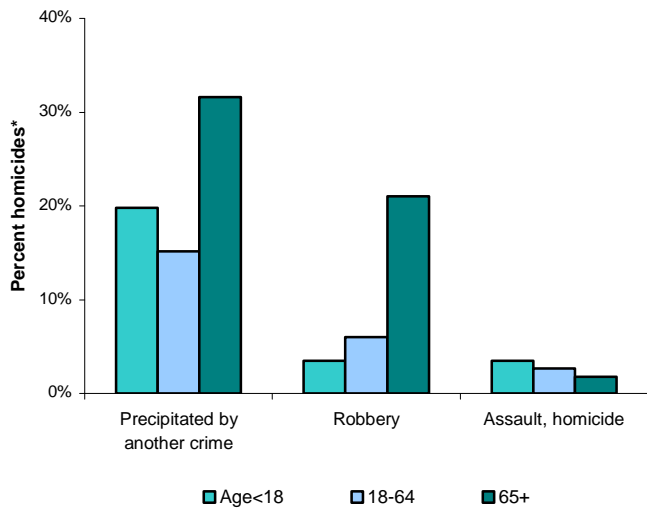
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death among SC residents aged 15-19 years and the third leading cause of death among SC residents 20-34 years old.
- The age group with the highest rate of homicide death is 20-24 year, with a homicide rate of 18.9 per 100,000 (Figure 2).

Figure 6. Circumstances Reported among SC Homicides by age, 2003-2005



- Homicide among persons aged 18-64 were more likely to involve conflict between intimate partners, interpersonal conflict or abuse, drug dealing or illegal drug use (Figure 6).
- Homicide among adults aged 65 and older were less likely to involve drug dealing or use (Figure 6).
- Homicide among adults aged 65 and older were more likely to precipitated by another serious crime, such as robbery (Figure 7).
- Youth homicides were less likely to be related to conflict between intimate partners than other age groups (Figure 6).

Figure 7. Circumstances Reported among SC Homicides by Age, 2003-2005



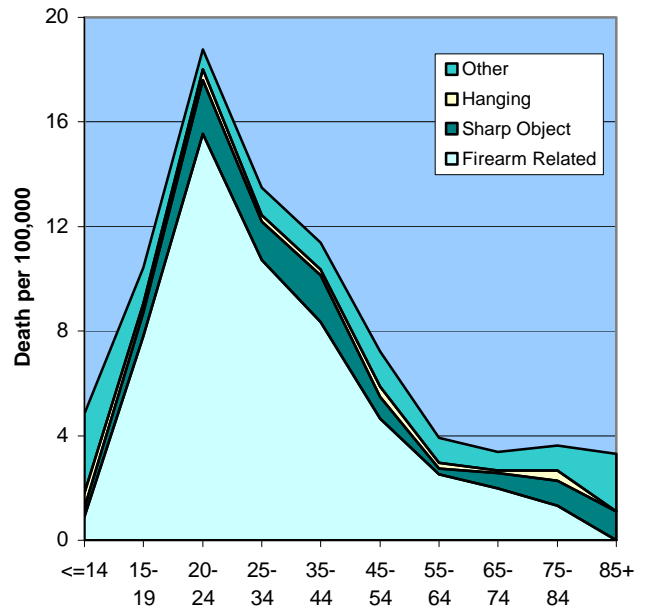
*Percentage calculated among homicides with known circumstances.

Homicide Method and Toxicology Test

- Firearms were the leading method of homicide for all age groups in SC victims (Figure 8).
- Among SC homicides with toxicology tests being conducted, 37.9% (250 of 659) tested positive for alcohol; 23.5% (96 of 408) for

marijuana; 22.5% (92 of 409) for cocaine; 4.4% (18 of 406) for amphetamines; 3% (12 of 406) for antidepressants; and 2% (8 of 406) for opiates.

Figure 8. Homicide Rate by Age and Method, 2003-2005



References

1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Online]. (2005). National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC (producer). Available from URL: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/default.htm.