

Suicide — Who Tries? When? What Methods?

By W.W. EDGAR

Suicide attempts in Wayne County are more prevalent in the 20-39 age group than any other.

When it comes to trying to take one's own life, women outnumber the men almost three to one.

The first five months of the year are the prime target dates for the suicide attempts. Whites outnumbered blacks, 1,514 to 388, during 1970.

THESE statistics are revealed in a recent report of the Suicide Prevention Center that has been keeping a close watch on the emergency rooms of hospitals in the county for the past two years.

Surprisingly, the second most common group was the 0-19 category and, according to Dr. Bruce L. Danto, M.D., director of the Suicide Prevention Center, the younger people — up to 39 years of age — are having a difficult time coping with life.

All told, there were 1,600 instances of attempted suicides in these combined groups in 1970. Of this number, 1,186 were in the 20-39 category.

Regarding this age, the report states another area of concern would seem to be that the over-50 group utilizes the hospital with less frequency as a resource to deal with the problems of living as well as to promote the idea of living.

WHILE THE report shows that whites greatly outnumbered blacks in suicide attempts, only one oriental was listed during the year. The incidence of attempted

suicide among married people was higher in 1970 than the previous year with 1,006 cases listed. This compares with 105 listed as separated, 104 divorced, 744 single and 56 widows.

Over the past two years, the most popular method chosen for suicide attempts was drug overdose, a method which accounted for 1,882 cases.

Second most popular was cutting with 122, followed by poison and then gas. One of the surprising features was that shooting was listed fifth in all cases uncovered in the hospitals. In 1969 suicide attempts by shooting ranked third.

The decrease in shooting

attempts, Dr. Danto's report stated, is significant in light of the rising incidence of violence associated with the use of fire arms.

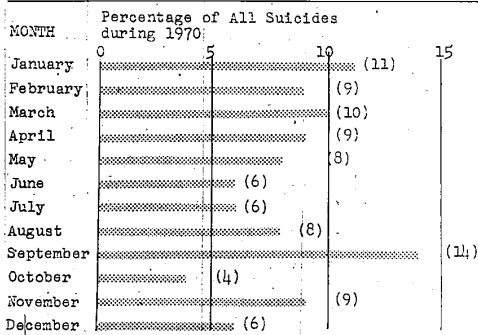
ANOTHER interesting factor in the report is that the patient arrived at the hospital was the family in 983 cases.

"This would seem to indicate," Dr. Danto states, "that the high level of family resources as a potential rescuer offers the possibility that this is why the statistics reveal more attempts than successful suicides."

During the year, 1,345 cases were returned to their homes, with 319 returned to other medical institutions.

The hospitals that participated in the study included:

Alexander Blain, Bon Secours, Children's Hospital, Cottage Hospital, Evangelical Deaconess, Delray General, Detroit General, Detroit Memorial, Detroit Osteopathic, Doctor's Hospital, Garden City Osteopathic, Grace Central, Grace Northwest, Harper, Henry Ford, Holy Cross, Jennings Memorial, Lakeside General, Lynn, Martin Place, Metropolitan, Mt. Carmel Mercy, North Detroit General, Oakwood, Plymouth General, Redford Community, Riverside Osteopathic, St. John, St. Mary of Livonia, Seaway, Sinai and Straith Memorial.



Source: Wayne County Suicide Prevention Center, 1970 report of suicide hospital statistics.

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Regional Affairs



INNER WORKINGS — Observer Newspapers typesetter Nellie Fillmore and in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Fillmore of Plymouth, get an explanation of the workings of a reel in the

pressroom during ONI's employee open house Sunday at the papers' new plant at 36251 Schoolcraft Rd. in Livonia. (Observer photo)



INTRODUCTIONS — Observer Newspapers Inc. publisher Phillip H. Power and his fiancée, Miss Sarah Goddard, of Grosse Pointe Farms and New York, discuss ONI's new surroundings with Redford Township circulation driver Sophie Phillips. Employees and their families toured the new plant and offices Sunday. (Observer photo)

P.O. BOX Drugs

Can Drugs Aid Your Driving?

Questions should be sent to the Community Commission on Drug Abuse, P.O. Box 48151, Livonia, Mich. 48151.

Q. In one of your columns you talked about the possible dangers of driving under the influence of drugs. But isn't it true that some drugs like dextroamphetamine help to keep you alert and make you drive better?

S.R. Westland
A. Dextroamphetamine and other amphetamines (known variously as "uppers," speed, crystal, meth, etc.) are well recognized for their ability to keep one awake. However, they scarcely qualify as driver aids. To the contrary, a study was done in Toronto in 1969 on the crash rates per 10,000 miles of drug users.

"The psychoactive drug abusers had accident rates about twice as high as expected for their age, sex, and driving exposure. Most of the excess was contributed by those addicted to amphetamines (alone or in combination)."

"(Amphetamine users) often claimed to have used amphetamines prior to their accident. Large doses of amphetamines may create irritability, impatience and aggressiveness, together with delusions of persecutions and hallucinations. Of course, any of these effects could make the amphetamine user dangerous on the road."

The authors of this article point out that whereas users of depressant drugs and marijuana are apt to become inactive and just sit around, the users of amphetamines have higher activity levels and are much more likely to engage in activities such as driving.

One should remember also that use of stimulants such as amphetamines may be an indication of rebelliousness or aggressiveness that can also be expressed by driving dangerously. There may be underlying psychological causes that compel both the use of drugs and reckless driving.

In any event, it's becoming more and more clear that "speed" and driving are a dangerous combination in more than one sense.

Q. I heard from a very good source that I could get treated by a doctor for a drug problem without my parents finding out. So far I've called three different doctors and none of them will handle my case. What's the deal?

M.M., Livonia
A. What the law says (and we'll go into the details in a later column) is that if you as a minor so request, a physician may treat you for a drug problem and not advise your parents. What the law does not say is that any physician must accept you on this basis as a patient.

There are several reasons for which a physician may choose not to accept such a case.

Low Bids Told For I-96 Interchange In Livonia

Jay-Dee Contractors, Inc., of Livonia was the lowest of five bidders for the construction of tunnel and storm sewers for the interchange of I-96 and the proposed I-275 in Livonia.

The company's bid of \$2.3 million must be approved by the state administrative board before a contract is awarded.

Bids for construction of the interchange itself and associated projects were taken last month. The project, scheduled for completion in July 1972, will be a major interchange between the proposed I-275 freeway, running north and south through Oakland and Wayne Counties, and the junction of the planned M-14 and the Jeffries Freeway (I-96), running east and west.

The combined 5-mile I-275 and M-275 freeways, connected at both ends to I-75, will provide a westerly by-pass of Detroit. The entire route should be open to traffic in 1977.

THE JEFFRIES Freeway, when completed, will follow the present Grand River in the center of Detroit, continue along the route of Schoolcraft Rd. through western Detroit, Redford and Livonia, then turn north and follow the Haggerty Rd. corridor to the existing I-96 freeway, on the Farmington-Novis border.

The 1.9 mile section of land will be the major intersection for traffic bypassing the city from either direction. The bid from Jay-Dee Contractors

was the lowest of five bids for the sewer system.

The highway commission also took bids last week for construction of a 1.3 mile section of the Jeffries Freeway between Shirley Street and Wyoming in Detroit. The project also includes construction of four bridges and a pedestrian overpass.

C.A. Hull Co. of Livonia submitted the lowest bid for the project jointly with Greenfield Construction Co. At \$7.5 million, it was the largest bid accepted by the

Highway Commission in one of the largest bid-taking sessions in department history. Bids were accepted on 44 projects last week.

AMONG OTHER projects was a bid from the Ministrell Construction Co. of Livonia for modernizing and widening a section of Eight Mile Rd. from the west Ferndale limits east to Dequindre.

The 3.6 mile section lies in Detroit, Ferndale, Hazel Park, and Warren. The Livonia company's bid was the lowest of six at \$3.1 million.

Madonna Sets Summer Session

A short summer session consisting of evening and Saturday classes will be offered at Madonna College, Livonia, throughout the month of July.

The Saturday courses are two of three semester hour courses. Classes will meet on the five Saturdays of July, 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Courses offered on Saturdays are the following: Innovative issues in education (for principals and teachers of grades 1-12); diagnosis and remedial reading; seminar on aging; and contemporary catechetics.

Evening classes, beginning July 1, include rhetoric and composition (three semester

hours, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 7-9 p.m.).

A reading practicum will be offered by arrangement, extending through six weeks, June 21 to July 30, Monday through Friday, carrying two to four semester hours. The practicum will consist of supervised clinical teaching in the college psycho-educational center.

Three courses—catechetics, English rhetoric and developmental reading—are open to high school juniors and seniors, and may be used toward college credit.

Tuition fee for each of the courses is \$32 per semester hour, credit or audit. Registration is currently open until June 7.