

**Suicide in Guyana** is a serious social problem,<sup>[1]</sup> as [Guyana](#) is [ranked first](#) in [suicides](#) per capita worldwide.<sup>[2]</sup>

About 40% of people who commit suicide in Guyana poison themselves by consuming agricultural [pesticides](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

## Statistics

---

Domestic data on suicide in Guyana is limited, as the country's available health literature is focused mainly on infectious tropical diseases.<sup>[4]</sup> A 2012 [World Health Organization](#) report indicated that Guyana had a suicide rate of 44.2 per 100,000 people, and that for every single female suicide, there were 3.2 male suicides. By comparison, neighboring [Suriname](#) had a suicide rate of 27.8 per 100,000, and [Venezuela](#)'s rate was 2.6 per 100,000.

[Ethnic Indians](#) have been seen to make up the vast majority of suicides in Guyana, though their share of overall suicides dropped from 85% in 2004 to 75% in 2009. The ethnic groups categorized as "other" were seen to make up most of the difference. Indians accounted for 48% of all deaths in both years, which is 4% higher than their population share.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Possible causes

---

A 2003 [World Bank](#) report stated that the [political process in Guyana](#) is often fought with so much time and energy that "little [is] left to undertake the many policies necessary to facilitate growth and development," while the [IMF](#) in 2001 acknowledged "poor governance" as a major obstacle to the reduction of [absolute poverty](#) rates, which are among the highest in the region. Poor governance on the national level has led to inefficiencies and strained the abilities of local and regional authorities to provide basic services and guarantee [rule of law](#). Distribution of land and water rights, payment of taxes, court cases, and the issuance of gun and driver's licenses are all frequently found to be fraudulent. This basic ill-governance has fed a sense of mistrust and frustration among the population, reduced investments in constructive economic projects, and has led to the growth of a [shadow economy](#). This in turn has lowered tax revenues, further reducing the government's spending power and ability to fight poverty and repair basic infrastructure. However, the role of economic insecurity as a leading factor in suicide rates remains a controversial issue in Guyana.<sup>[6]</sup>

Another factor is the rate of [HIV/AIDS](#) in the country, which is third-highest in the Caribbean region. Several studies have reported an association between [HIV/AIDS](#) and [suicidal ideation](#).<sup>[7][8][9]</sup>

## Government response

---

Attempts by the government to address the issue have been stymied by political divisions. A bill was voted down in 2016 which would have amended the country's laws in order to decriminalize suicide, implemented the 2014 Mental Health Strategic Plan and a 5-year National Suicide Prevention Plan which were both crafted by the previous government, and allocated funds to treat mental health and suicide as national priorities. Speakers for the parliamentary majority argued that the manner in which the legislation was framed both politicized and trivialized the issue.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Examples

---

The most famous case of suicide in Guyana was the [Jonestown](#) mass suicide of over 900 cult members of [Jim Jones' Peoples Temple](#) in 1978, although some sources regard the events as a mass murder. Although this occurred in Guyana, the leader of this cult along with the followers were all foreigners and not Guyanese nationals.

## See also

---

- [Indo-Guyanese](#)
- [List of countries by suicide rate](#)

## References

---

- Ramsawak and Umraw, Rampersad and Ralph (2003). *modules in social studies*. La Romaine, Trinidad: caribbean educational publisher. ISBN 978-9768014061.
- "[Why Does Guyana Have The Highest Suicide Rate In The World?](#)" ↗. 2014-10-14. Retrieved 2015-08-27.
- Mauro, Craig (July 26, 2010). "[Guyana carries continent's highest suicide rate](#)" ↗. al Jazeera. Retrieved 2012. Check date values in: |accessdate= (help)
- Rudatsikira & Muula (23 August 2007). "[Prevalence and associated factors of suicidal ideation among school-going adolescents in Guyana: results from a cross sectional study](#)" ↗. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health*. **3** (13): 13. doi:10.1186/1745-0179-3-13 ↗. PMC 2014747 ↗. PMID 17716374 ↗.
- Gampat, Ramesh (7 July 2015). *Guyana: From Slavery to the Present* (Vol 2 Major Diseases ed.). Xlibris US.

6. Kruijf, Johannes Gerrit De (2006). *Guyana Junction: Globalisation, Localisation, and the Production of East Indianness*. Dutch University Press. pp. 100–105.
7. Cooperman, N.A; Simoni, J.M. (2004). "Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide among women living with HIV/AIDS". *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. **28** (2): 149–156. doi:10.1007/s10865-005-3664-3 ↗.
8. Shelton, AJ; Aktinson, J; Risser, JHM; McCurdy, SA; Useche, B; Padgett, PM (18 Jan 2007). "The prevalence of suicidal behaviours in a group of HIV-positive men". *AIDS Care*. **18** (6): 574–576. doi:10.1080/09540120500274992 ↗.
9. Jin, H; Hampton, AJ; Yu, X; Heaton, RK (2006). "HNRC China Collaboration Group: Depression and suicidality in HIV/AIDS in China" ↗. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. **94** (1–3): 269–275. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2006.04.013 ↗. Retrieved 20 August 2016.
10. "Gov't votes down opposition's 'political' motion on suicide" ↗. *Stabroek News*. 6 August 2016. Retrieved 20 August 2016.

 Last edited 2 months ago by Scwlong

