

# Men and Suicide

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Talk dedicated to

Barney Wong

Dr. Wong was wonderful  
young doctor in the Stroke  
Unit of our hospital,  
who very recently died of  
suicide

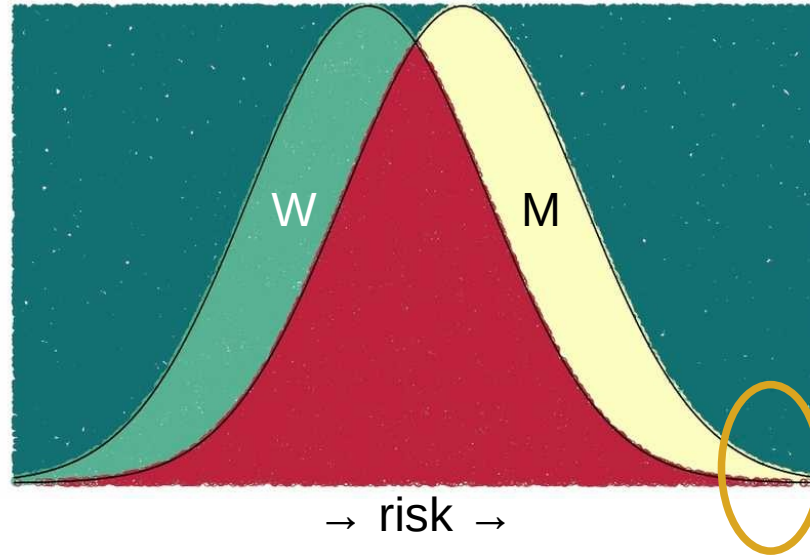
## UK suicide rates by age group – 2018



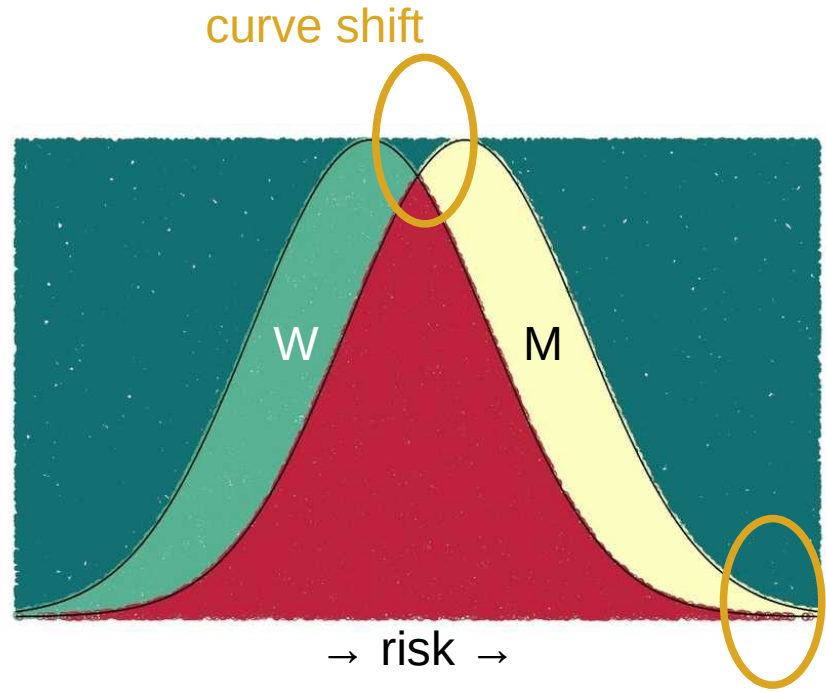
6,507 people died by suicide in the UK

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# A very simple model with huge consequences



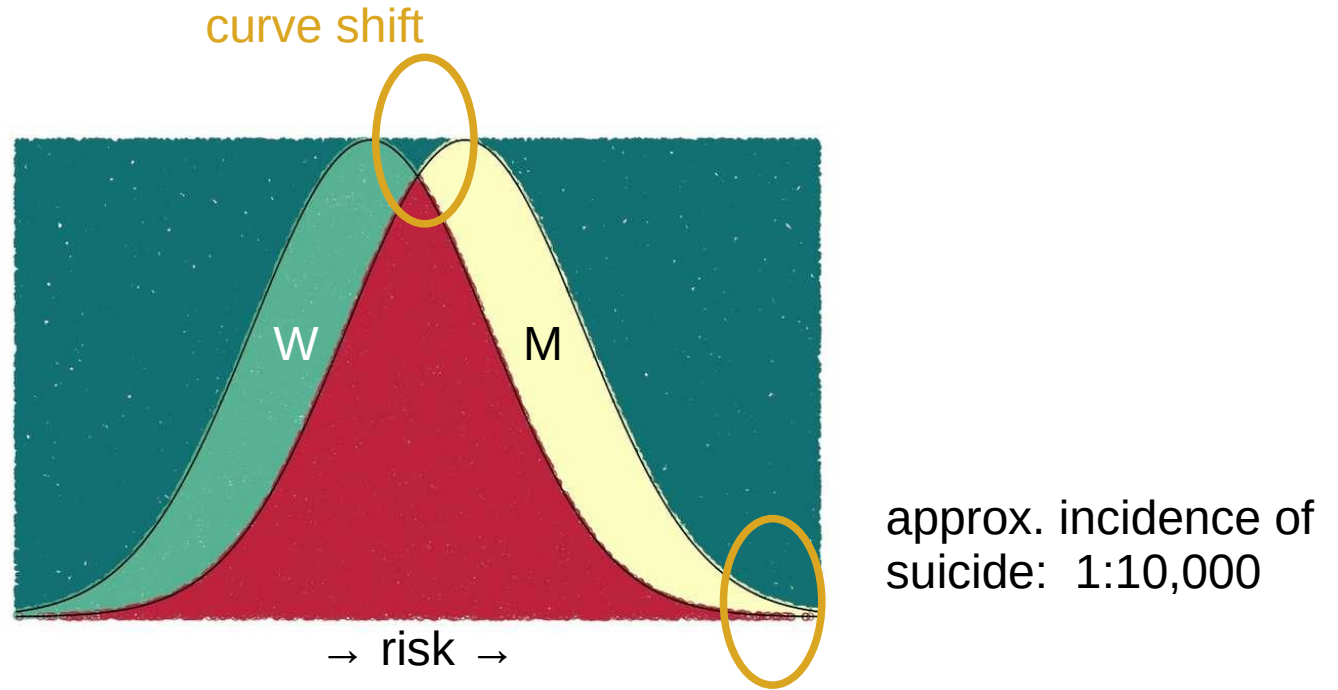
approx. incidence of  
suicide: 1:10,000



approx. incidence of suicide: 1:10,000

Yellow - to - red area:  
relative incidence of  
ab-normality

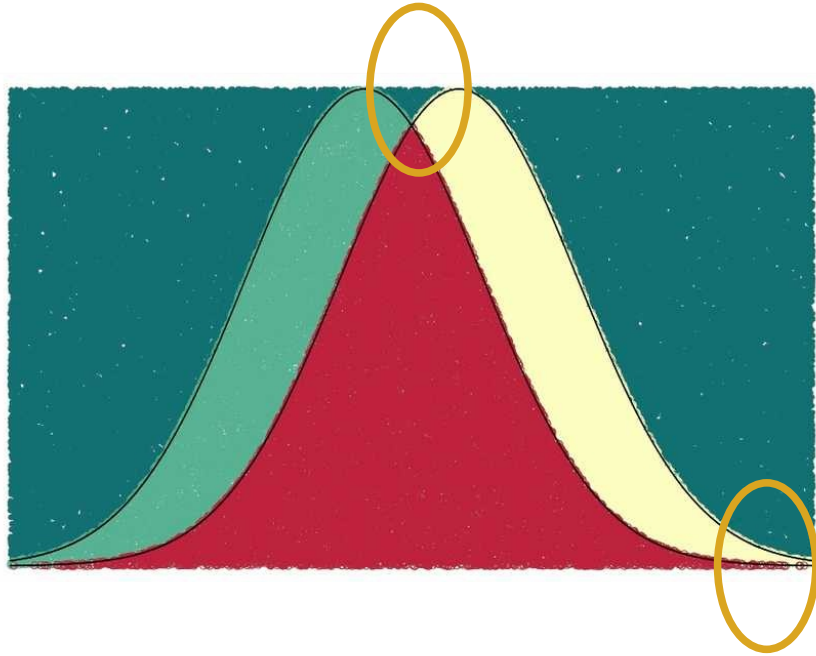
For an area of 1:10,000 here, a ratio of 3:1  
needs a curve shift of only  $ES \sim 0.25$



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Suicide is recourse to violence, and most such violence is male

# Suicide is recourse to violence, and most such violence is 'male'



went, from stuffy churches hosting suicide loss support groups to the hallways at work where I'd chit chat with colleagues. Every time I tried to utter the term "murder-suicide," nothing came out.

At war with myself, I lived like a liar.

*Murder-suicide.* I searched the grim term online regularly, hoping to find somebody like me. I was met with sensational headlines and carelessly rendered facts or the occasional anonymously penned survivor story. I pictured reporters as ghouls devouring their hand-delivered juicy meal each day. One part murder. One part suicide. One perfect piece of click-bait.

When I received the 54-page crime scene report detailing what was known of their final moments, I read it in its entirety. Fifty-four pages: One for each year of Dad's life. My brain became a case file: autopsies, transcripts and evidence.

The images splashed across the news haunted me for months. I learned many details in lockstep with the public: Police crowded outside the cute double-wide manufactured home my dad and stepmother shared on the corner of a cul-de-sac decorated with yellow crime scene tape.

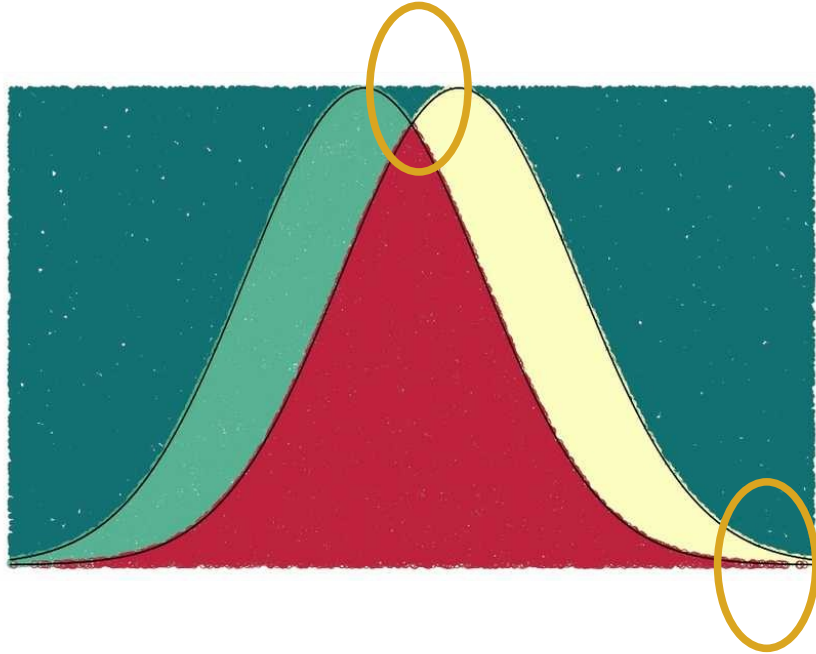
None of the reports mentioned two months before the end. How Dad chucked any identifying possessions he had into the woods, save a cell phone, and hid in a port-a-potty for hours making frantic calls. How for years bright lights and loud noises would spur him into panic attacks, symptoms temporarily appeased by a cocktail of antipsychotics and medical marijuana.

How Dad suffered from posttraumatic stress and was convinced our country's enemies were tracking him wanting revenge for the atrocities he believed he committed. How, on that day in November, he believed the world was ending. His mother was able to coax him into going home during their phone conversation. Soon after he did, he returned home and, with his wife's support, admitted himself to a behavioral health facility for two weeks.

How that was Dad's last attempt after years of trying to get help. How nothing could save him from his thoughts.

The 18 months following the murder-suicide were the toughest of my life. Without much information to cling onto in my grief, I grasped at myths and misinformation. I believed I was nothing more than a murderer's daughter.

# Suicide is recourse to violence, and most such violence is 'male'



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by US Army Veteran,

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most probably psychotically depressed

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Men who kill themselves are distressed about 'normal things'  
that matter to them

### Suicide Deaths in University Students in a UK City Between 2010 and 2018

There was strong statistical evidence that students who died by suicide were more likely to have been male, experiencing academic difficulties (repeated years, changing course, and suspension of studies were all associated with a 5–30-fold increased risk), and in need of financial support compared with other students.



Each human being,  
each man, is the expert in what their problems are.  
Listen, don't lecture.



**If you think someone might need help,  
trust your instincts. Stop and have a chat**

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**SAMARITANS**  
in partnership with

Metropolitan Police London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

To help men, care about society.

Augment key protective factors:

- secure intimate relationships,
- satisfactory work, and
- children

Strong risk factor:  
Diagnoseable mental illness

Serious physical  
health problem – e.g.  
conditions with chronic pain

Strongest risk factor:  
Previous suicidal attempt

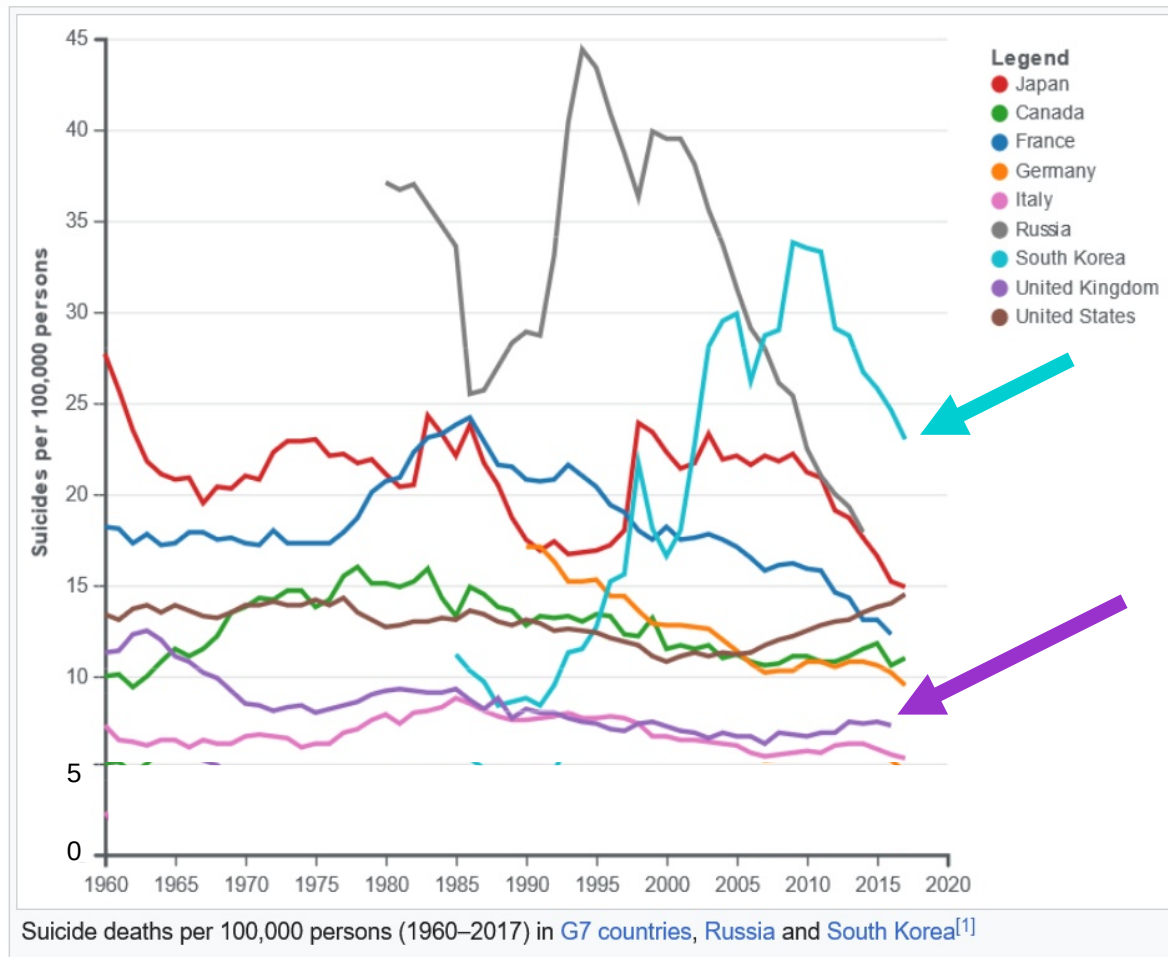
None of these are good for individual prediction  
Suicide is very difficult to predict at the individual level

## A world-wide problem, where the UK does rather well !

Male suicide preponderance is almost universal, at about 3:1

but cf. China, S. Korea → 2:1 'only'.

However the absolute rates matter more.

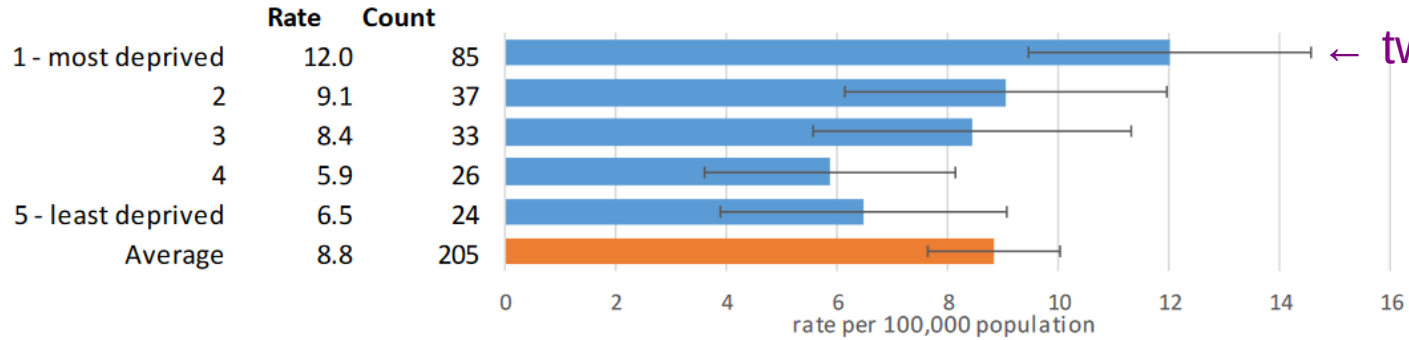


# Inequality matters, but it's not a 'black and white' thing (Leeds, 2019)

## Deprivation and Geography

### Deaths from Suicide 2014-16

Leeds City residents by Deprivation Quintile, crude rate per 100,000 and 95% CIs



Don't be poor!

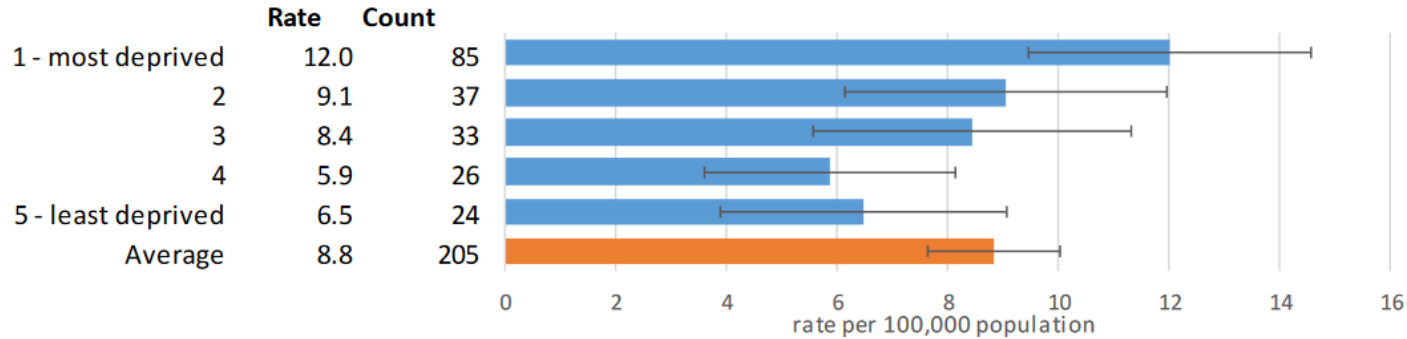
← twice as bad as well-off

# Inequality matters, but it's not a 'black and white' thing (Leeds, 2019)

## Deprivation and Geography

### Deaths from Suicide 2014-16

Leeds City residents by Deprivation Quintile, crude rate per 100,000 and 95% CIs



Be a minority female !

(Leeds, 2019)

	Overall (including unknown ethnicity)	BAME	White British and White Other
Persons	8.8	5.8	8.5
Female	2.8	1.3	2.8
Male	15.0	10.4	14.4

# Take-Home points

- To guard from suicide, men need stable intimate relationships, good work, physical health – and also kids.
- Socioeconomic disadvantage increases male suicide,
- Ethnicity is a lot more complicated.
- I know one thing, that I know no man's mind (credit: Plato)
- Chat to men and women in trouble; maybe about public transport nowadays.
- Raise awareness – like her! →



[KevinBerthiaFoundation.org /](http://KevinBerthiaFoundation.org/)

Berthia and the police officer who saved his life on Golden Gate Bridge, reunited years after the suicide attempt

In 2005 [Kevin Berthia](#) was struggling with depression and decided to end his life on the Golden Gate Bridge. A police officer stayed with him for 90 minutes and saved his life.



**Mindy Todd**

Managing Director of Editorial, "The Point"

# You have all the experience you need to help save a life

Find out how a little small talk can make a big difference

SMALL TALK

SAVES LIVES

SAMARITANS

In partnership with

