

The Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

**Injury, Suicide and Violence Prevention Section
Colorado Department of Public Health and
Environment**

12/11/06

Topics

- ▶ **The Colorado Violent Death Reporting System**
 - The role of the county coroners
- ▶ **What we've learned about suicide in Colorado**
- ▶ **What we've learned about homicide in Colorado**
- ▶ **Using the data for prevention**

Violent Deaths in the US

- ▶ Nearly 50,000 deaths each year
 - 32,439 suicides in 2004
 - 17,357 homicides in 2004
- ▶ More information needed
 - To inform decision makers about the trends and characteristics of violent deaths
 - To evaluate and improve state violence prevention programs and policies

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

- ▶ National Violent Death Reporting System
- ▶ Funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ▶ To collect detailed information on violent deaths
 - Suicides
 - Homicides (including child abuse, DV)
 - Unintentional firearm-related deaths

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

- ▶ Data are gathered from multiple sources
 - Death certificates
 - Coroner/medical examiner
 - Law enforcement investigations
 - Supplemental Homicide Report
 - Crime lab
 - Child Fatality Review
 - Newspaper articles

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

- ▶ **Types of information gathered**
 - Demographics (victim and suspect)
 - Circumstances of the event
 - Alcohol/drug use by the victim
 - Type of location where the event happened
 - Type of weapon used
 - Relationship between the victim and suspect

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

- ▶ Data are entered into an electronic database
 - Software provided by CDC
 - Can include state-specific variables
- ▶ Limited de-identified data sent to CDC
 - For multi-state (national) database
- ▶ Data available in Colorado for analysis
 - Future plans for an on-line queryable system

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

- ▶ State statutes provide authority and protect the confidentiality of the information collected
- ▶ CVDRS Advisory Committee
 - Meets biannually
 - Representatives from all data providers
 - Representatives from potential data users

Collecting information from county coroners

- ▶ Staff at the health department identify violent deaths based on the manner of death indicated on death certificates
- ▶ Monthly/quarterly/annually, staff at the health department send letters to each county coroner requesting copies of the
 - Investigative reports or summaries
 - Autopsy report
 - Toxicology report

Collecting information from county coroners

- ▶ Staff at the health department abstract the information from the reports and enter the data into the database
- ▶ Arrangements can also be made for health department staff to come to your office to abstract the information

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System

► More than 2,000 violent deaths in Colorado in 2004 and 2005

- Suicides 1,626 (78.0%)
- Homicides/Legal intervention 443 (21.3%)
- Unintentional firearm-related 13 (0.6%)

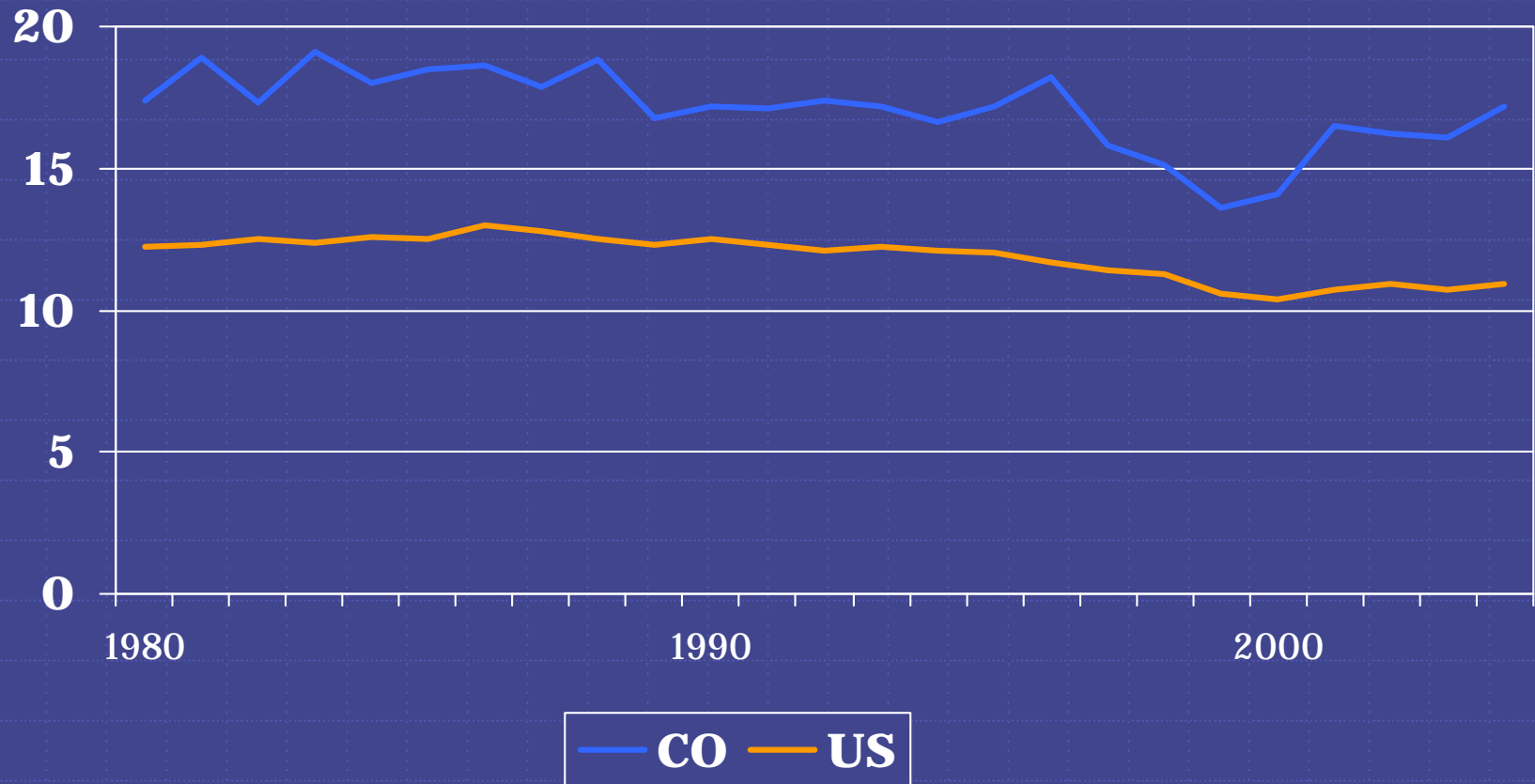
Suicide in Colorado

- ▶ Suicide is the leading cause of injury death in Colorado
- ▶ Suicide is the 6th leading cause of death in Colorado
- ▶ Colorado's suicide rate is the 7th highest in the nation
 - 2004 US rate = 11.1 per 100,000
 - 2004 Colorado rate = 17.2 per 100,000



Age-Adjusted Suicide Rates Colorado and United States, 1980-2004

Suicides per 100,000 population



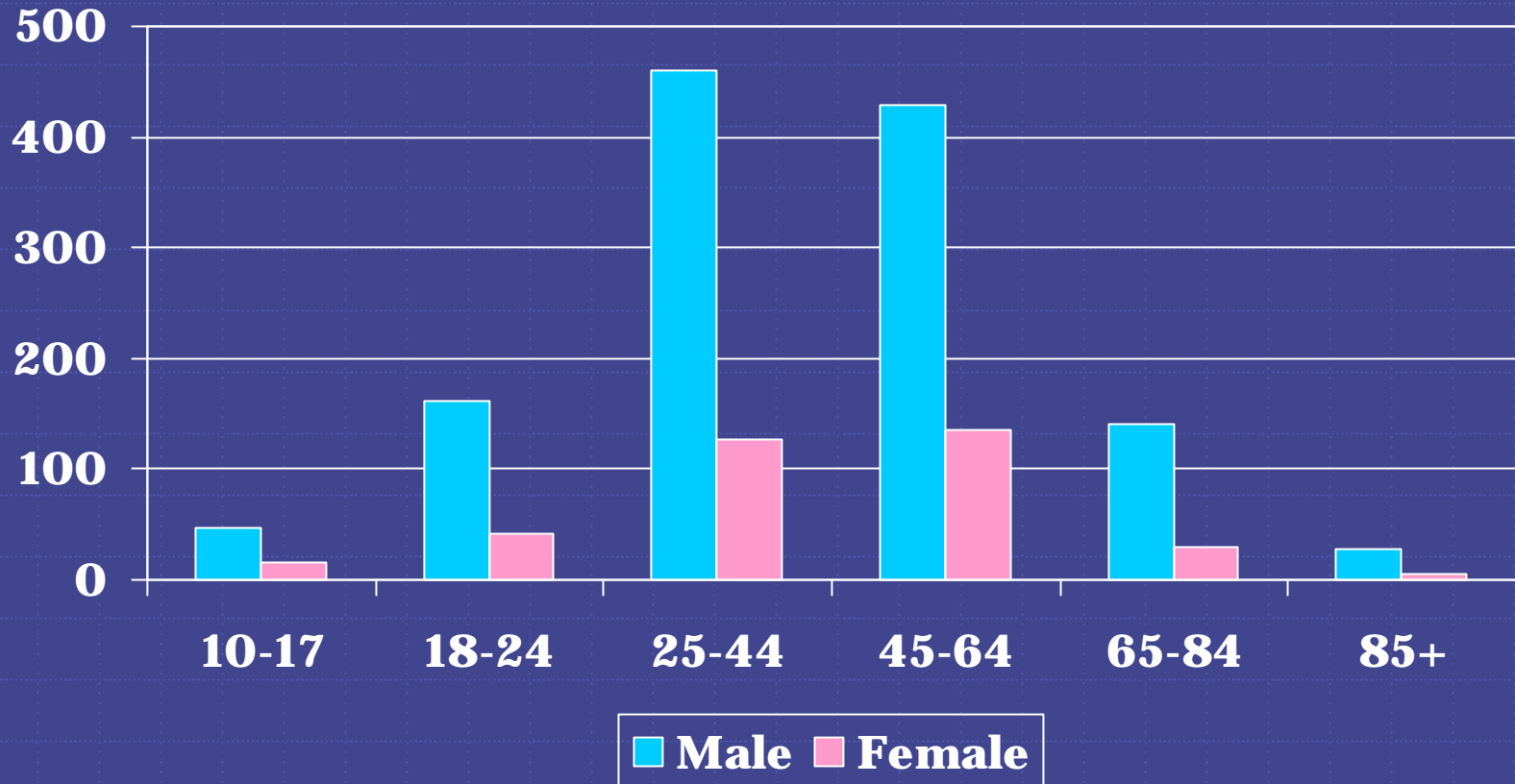
Leading causes of injury deaths

Colorado residents, 2004-2005

Rank	Cause	Total Number of deaths in 2004 and 2005
1	Suicide	1,626
2	Motor vehicle traffic	1,353
3	Unintentional poisoning	802
4	Fall	733
5	Other unintentional injury	831

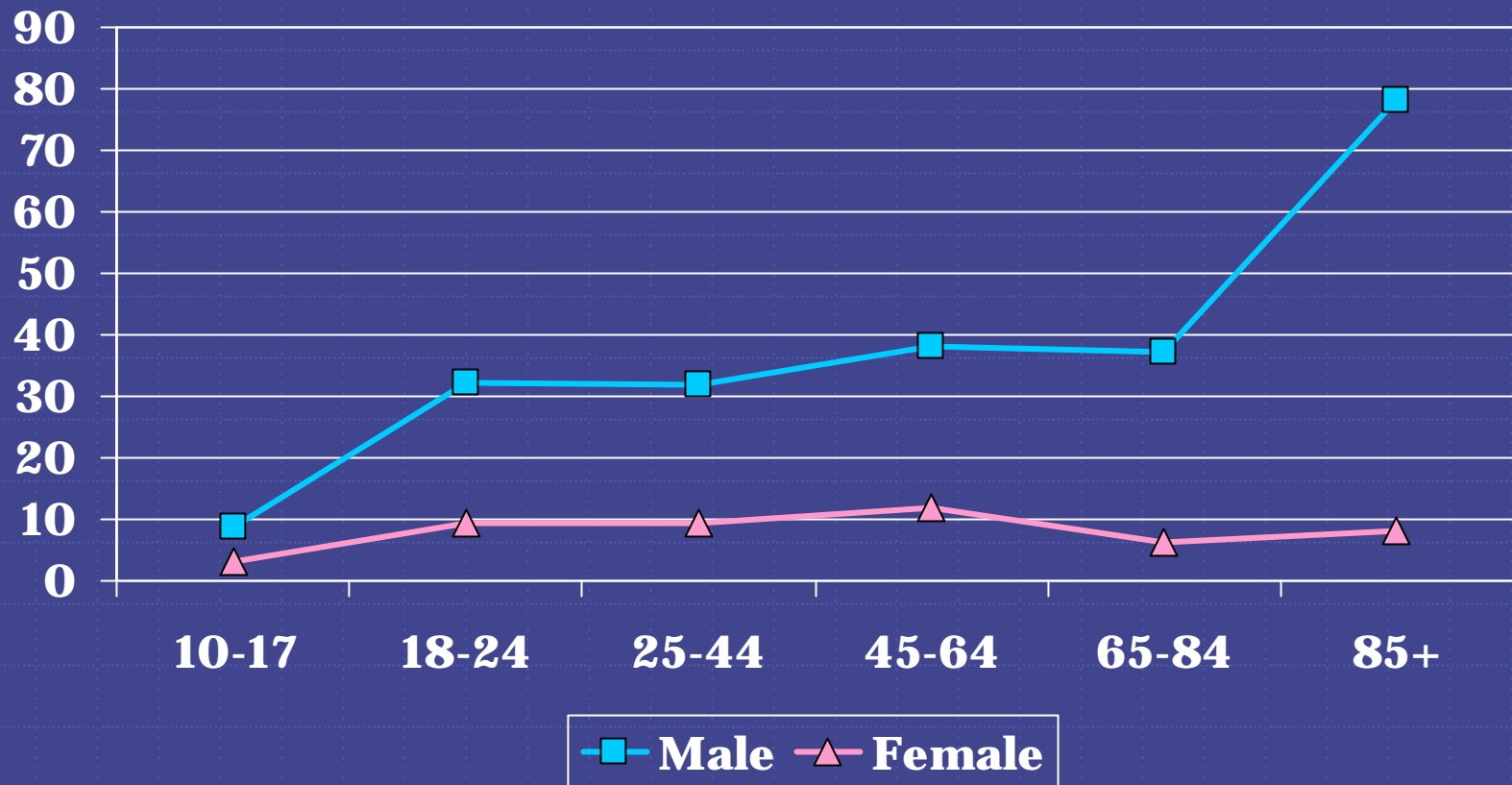
Suicide in Colorado

Number of suicides in 2004 and 2005



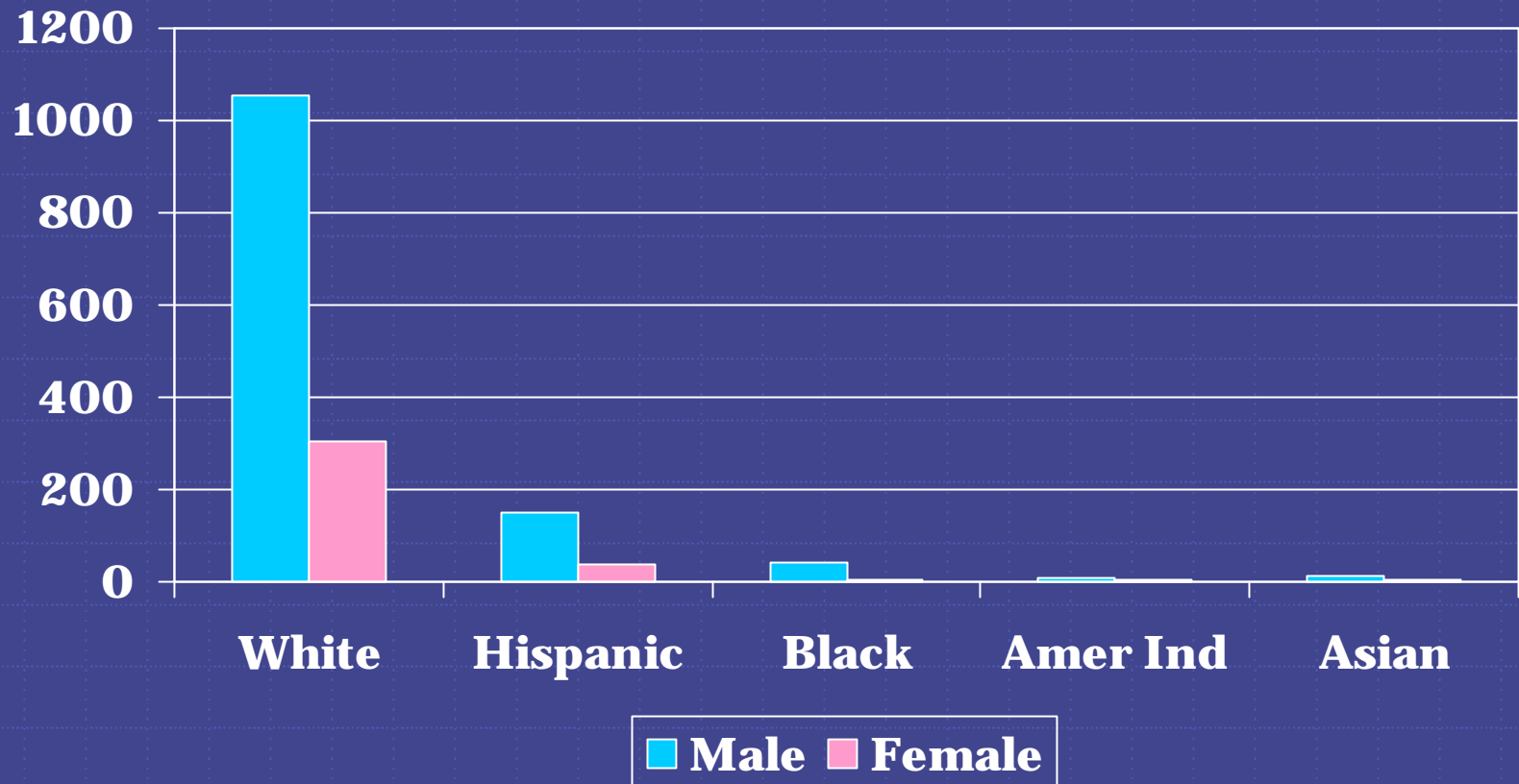
Suicide in Colorado

Rate per 100,000 population



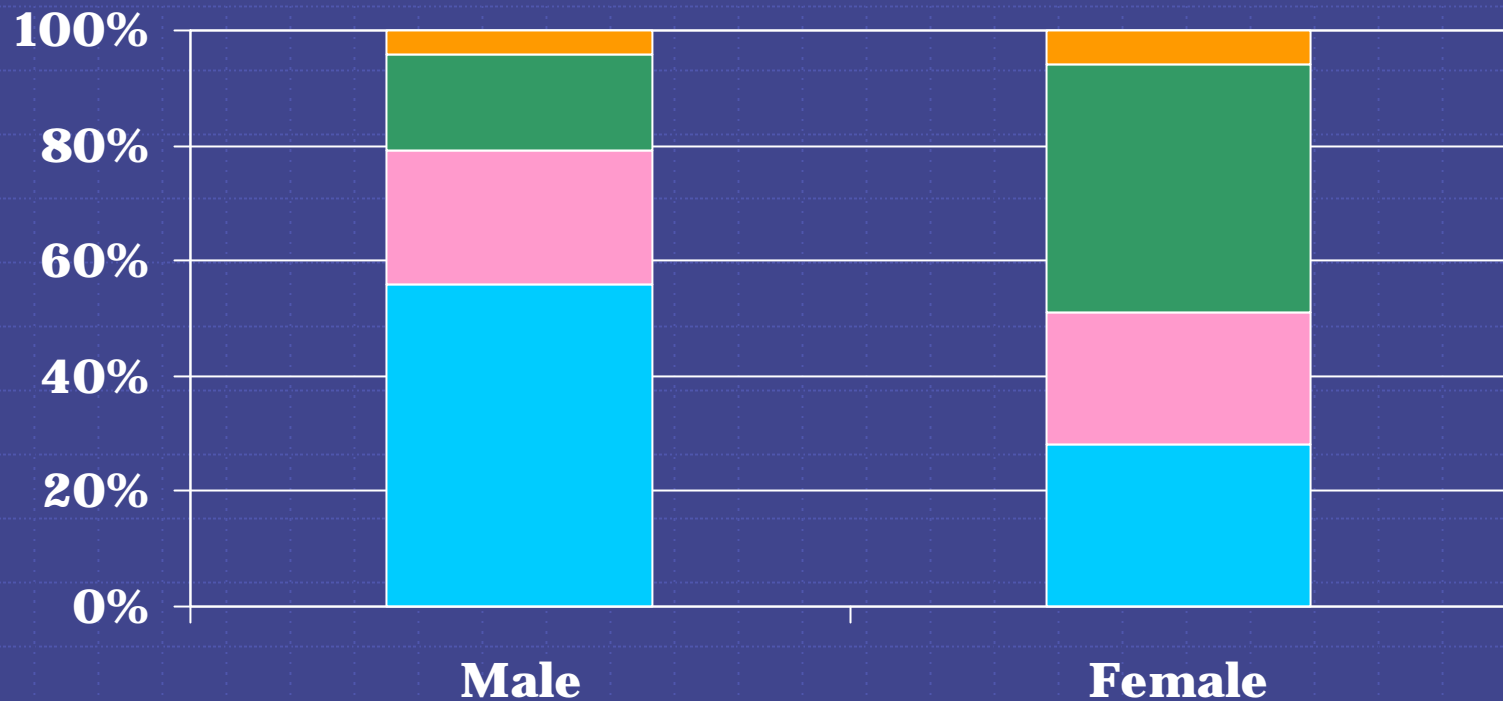
Suicide in Colorado

Number of suicides in 2004 and 2005



Suicide in Colorado

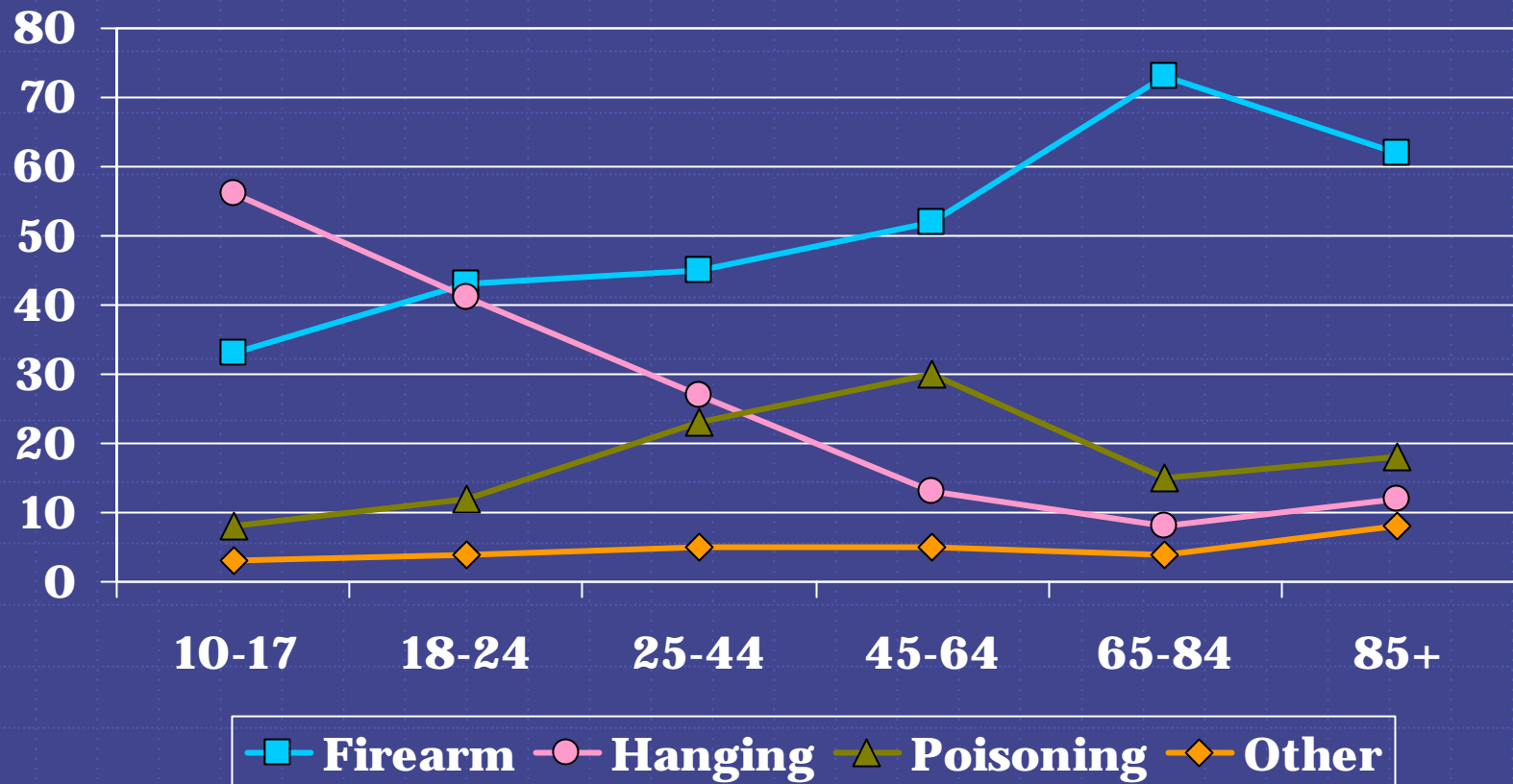
Percent of suicides by method



■ Firearm ■ Hanging ■ Poisoning ■ Other

Suicide in Colorado

Percent of suicides by method



Suicide in Colorado

► Selected occupational groups (for age>18, n=1557)

• Construction	208
• Education	122 (83 students)
• Medical/health	95
• Homemaker	80
• City/County/State/Fed Gov	73
• Trucking	56
• Automotive	46
• Computer programming/tech	45
• Military	32

Suicide in Colorado

▶ Data from Coroners and/or Law Enforcement

- 2004 760 of 818 (93%)
- 2005 726 of 808 (90%)

Precipitating circumstances for suicide

- ▶ Recent depressed mood
- ▶ Current mental health problem/diagnosis
 - If so, what was the diagnosis?
 - Was the person under treatment for his/her MH problem?
 - Has the person ever been treated for a MH problem?
- ▶ Alcohol dependence
- ▶ Substance abuse problem

Precipitating circumstances for suicide

- ▶ Did the person
 - leave a suicide note?
 - tell someone about his/her intent to commit suicide?
 - have a history of suicide attempts?
 - experience some type of crisis in the past two weeks?
 - have a physical health problem that was relevant to the suicide?

Precipitating circumstances for suicide

- ▶ Did the person
 - have a problem with a current or former intimate partner?
 - have a problem with a family member, friend, or associate other than an intimate partner?
 - have job problems?
 - have financial problems?

Precipitating circumstances for suicide

▶ Did the person

- have problems at school?
- experience the death of a friend or family member by suicide in the past 5 years?
- experience the death of a friend or family member by some other means in the past 5 years?

Precipitating circumstances for suicide

- ▶ Did the person
 - have recent criminal legal problems?
 - have recent non-criminal legal problems (e.g., custody battle, being sued)?
- ▶ Was the person a perpetrator of interpersonal violence within the past month?
- ▶ Was the person a victim of interpersonal violence within the past month?

Suicide circumstances

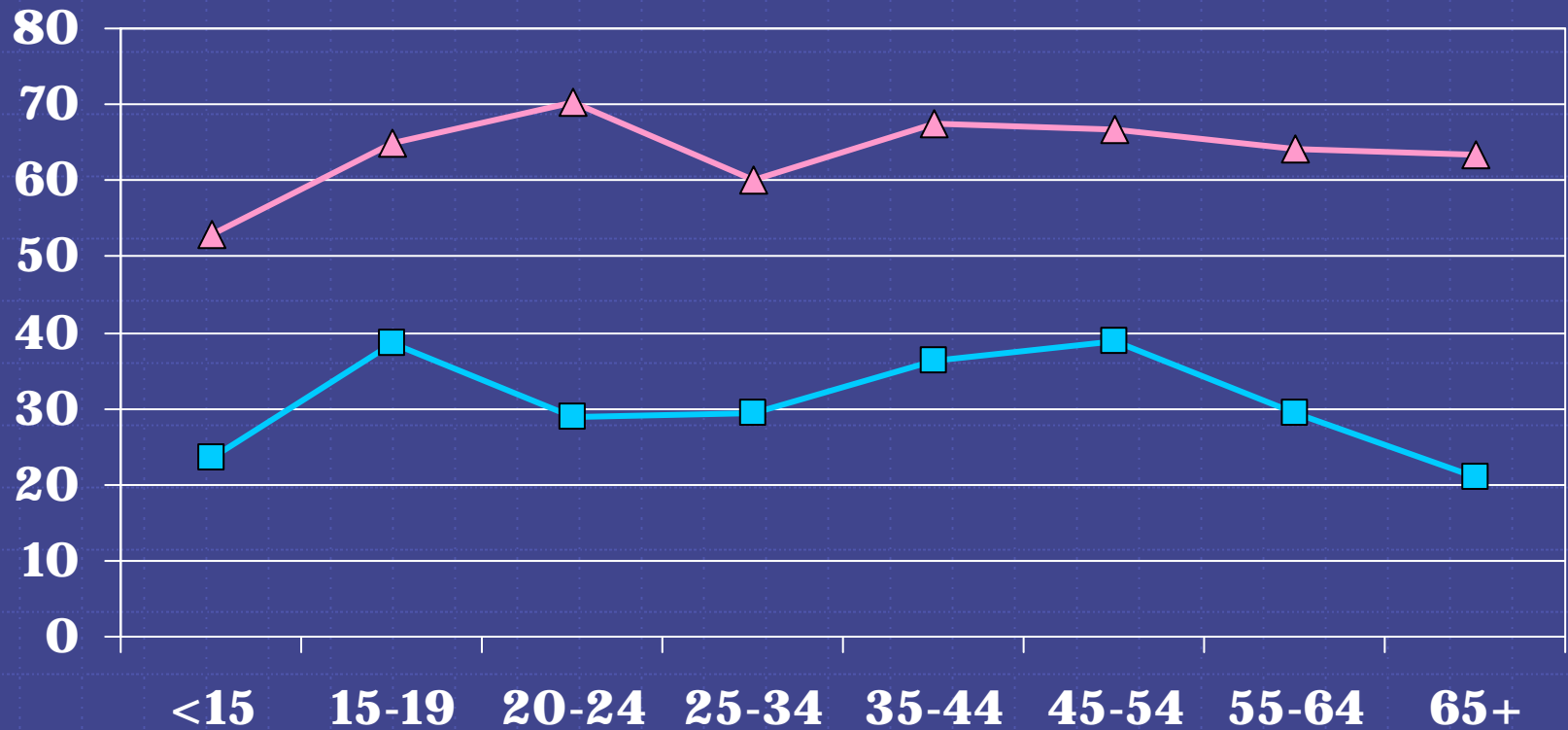
- ▶ Men were more likely than women to have:
 - An alcohol problem
 - A problem with an intimate partner
 - A job problem
 - A criminal or other legal problem

Suicide circumstances

- ▶ **Women were more likely than men to have:**
 - **A previous diagnosis of a mental health problem**
 - **A history of suicide attempt**
 - **A relationship problem with someone who was not an intimate partner**
 - **A suicide or other death of a friend or family member within the past 5 years**

Suicide circumstances

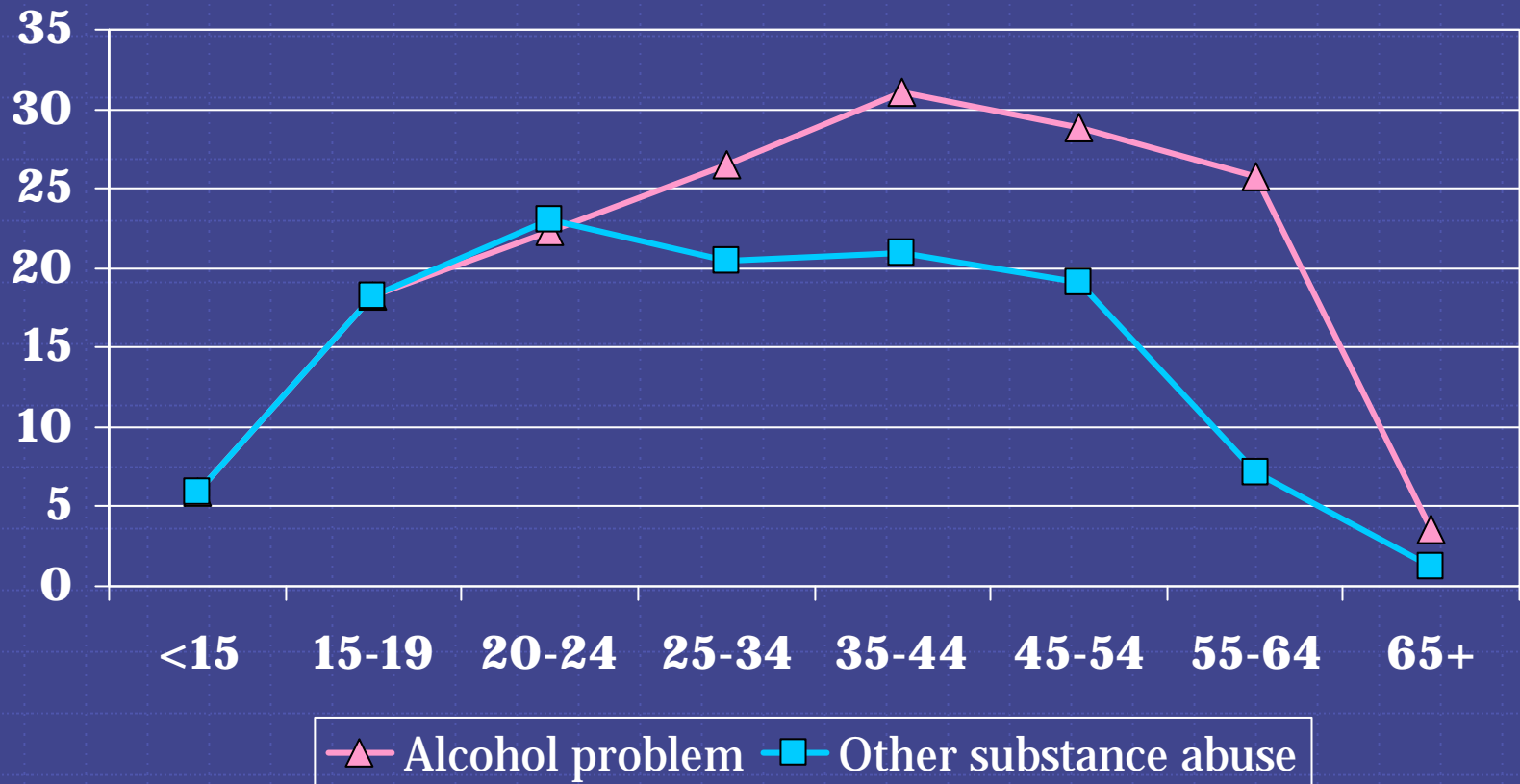
Percent of Total



—▲— Recent depressed mood —■— Mental Health diagnosis

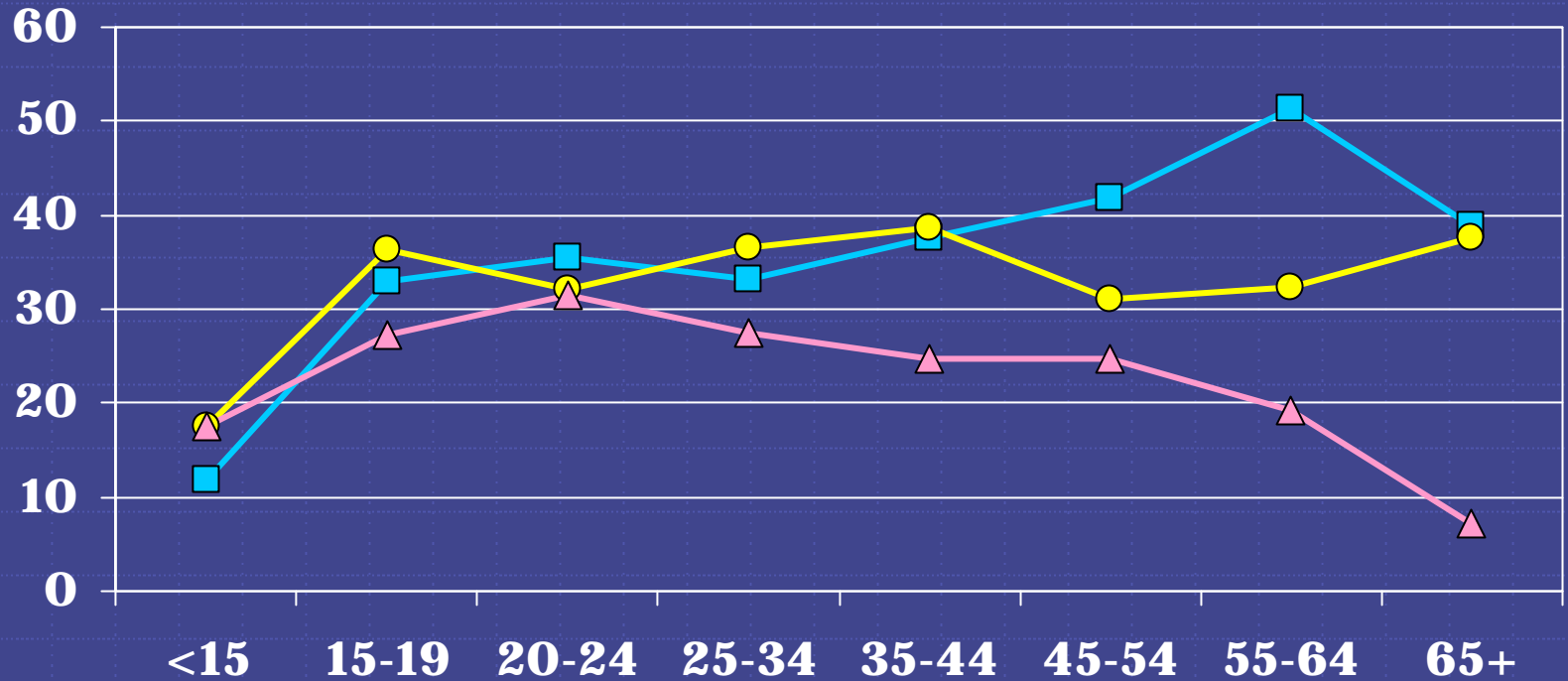
Suicide circumstances

Percent of Total



Suicide circumstances

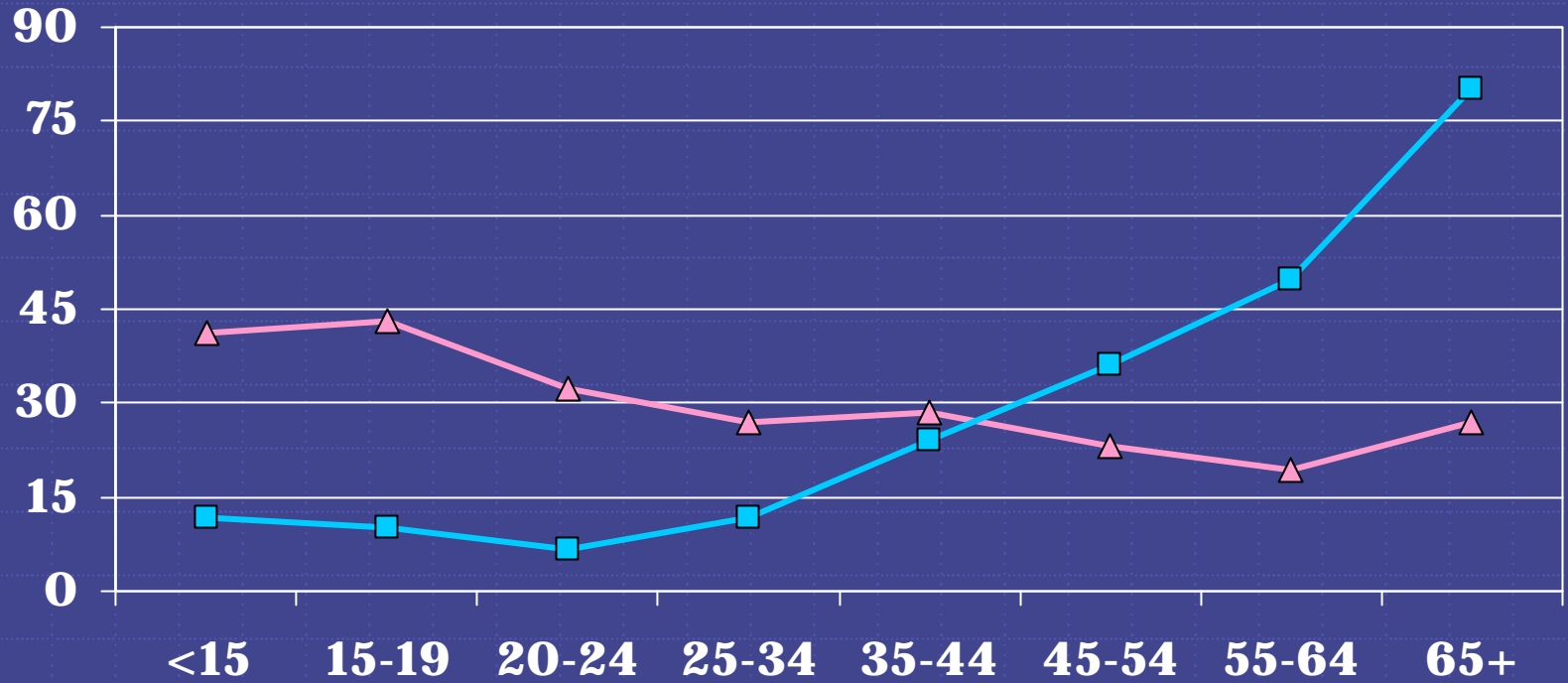
Percent of Total



■ Note ● Disclosed intent ▲ History of suicide attempt

Suicide circumstances

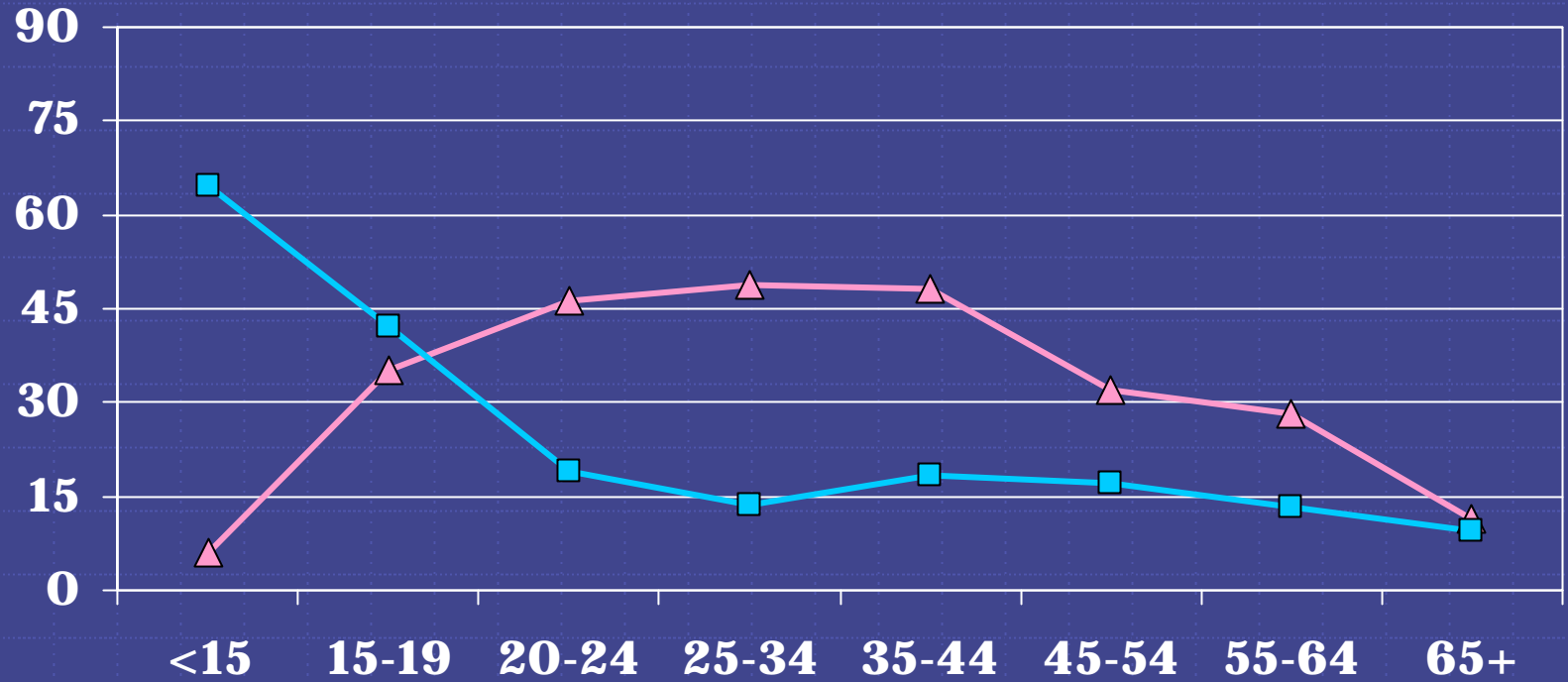
Percent of Total



—▲— Crisis in past 2 weeks —■— Physical health problem

Suicide circumstances

Percent of Total



—▲— Intimate partner problem —■— Other relationship problem

Other suicide circumstances

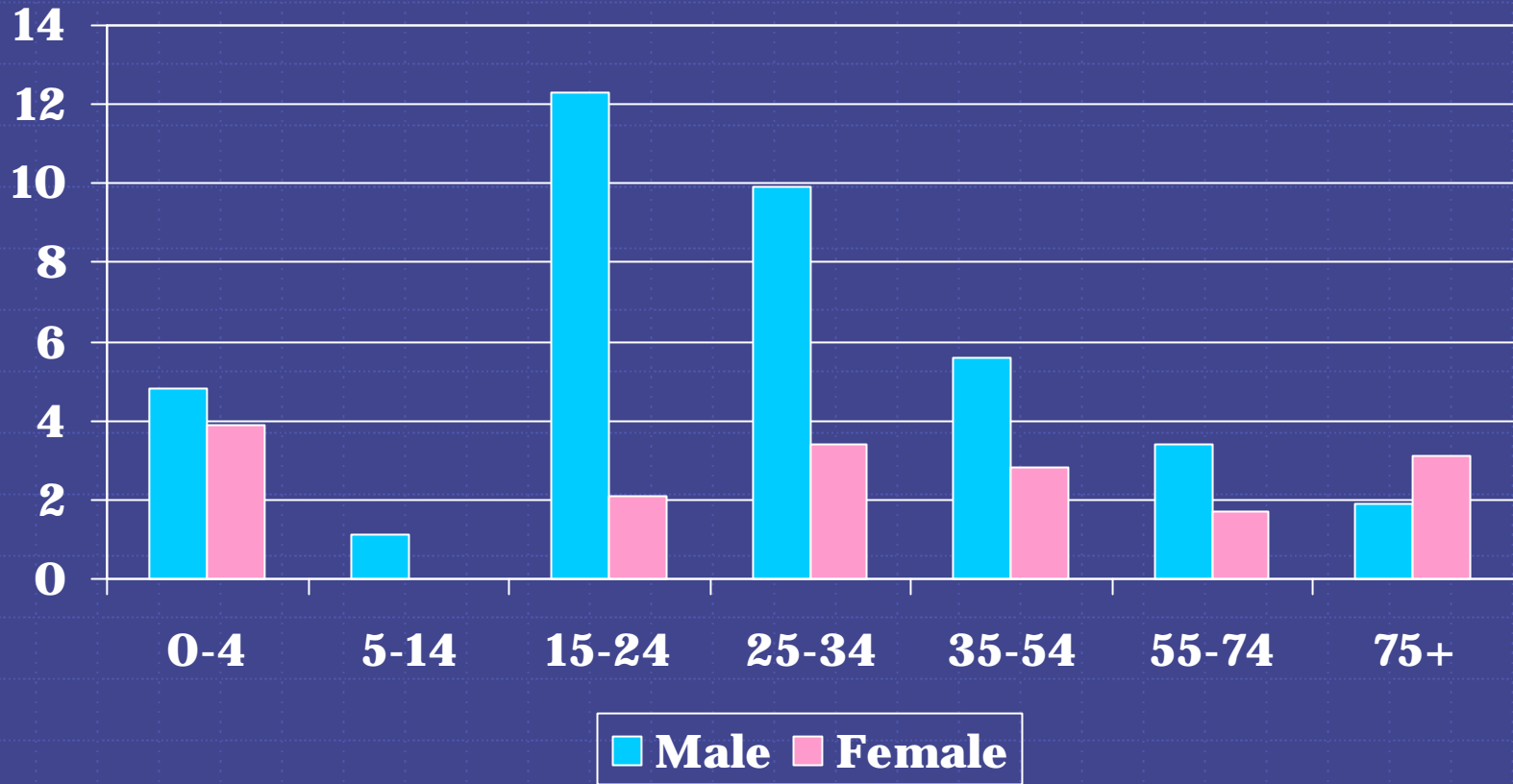
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Past history of traumatic brain injury
- ▶ Who found the person
- ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Impending eviction

Homicide in Colorado

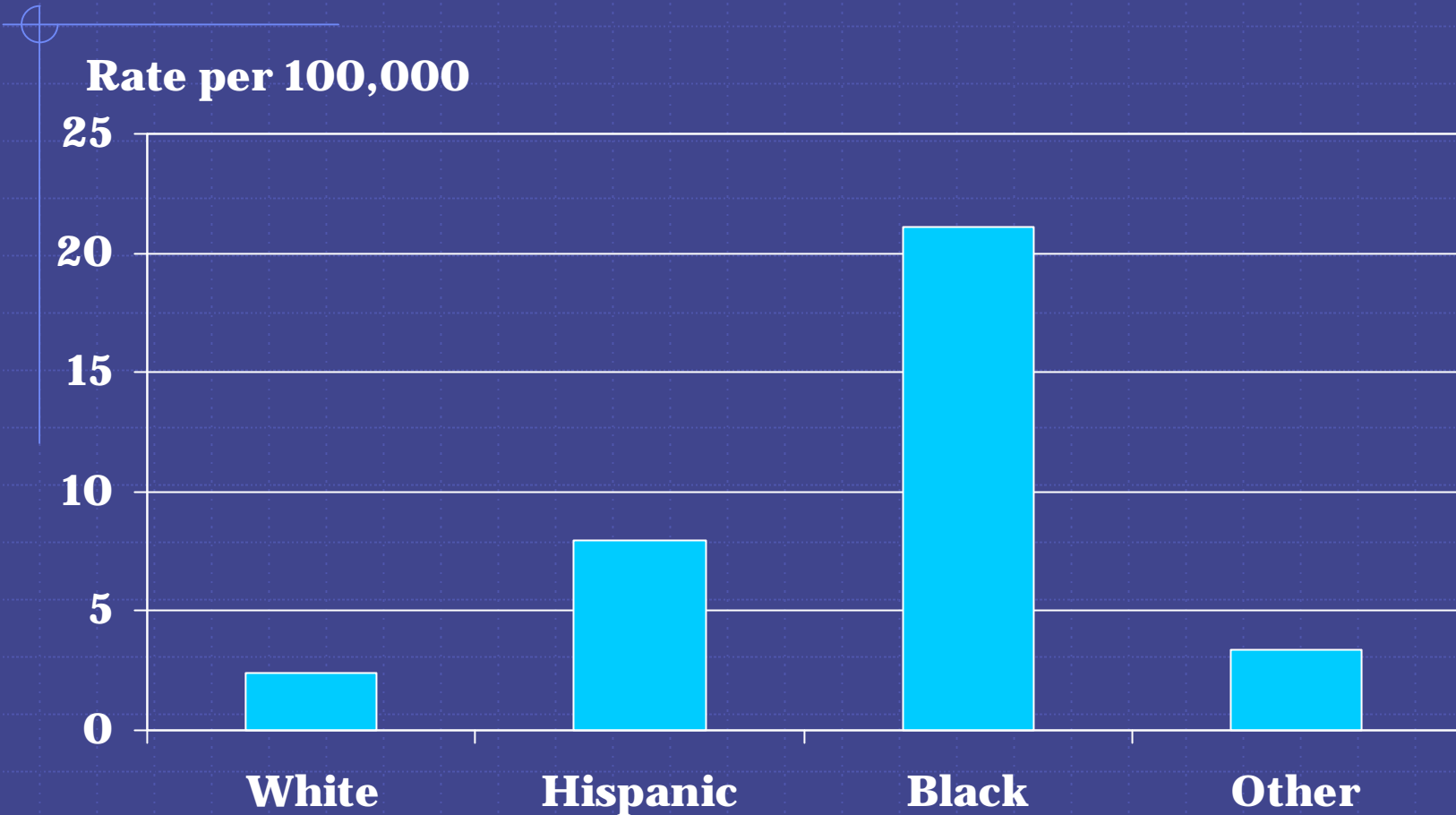
- ▶ Colorado's homicide rate is consistently lower than the US rate
 - 2004 US rate = 5.91 per 100,000
 - 2004 Colorado rate = 4.63 per 100,000
- ▶ Homicide is the second leading cause of injury deaths for children under age 5 in Colorado
 - 34 children under age 5 died of child abuse in 2004 and 2005

Homicide in Colorado

Rate per 100,000 population



Homicide in Colorado



Precipitating circumstances for homicide

► Did the homicide

- result from an argument or conflict over money or property?
- result from jealousy or distress over an intimate partner's relationship or suspected relationship with another person?
- involve a conflict between current or former intimate partners?
- involve other interpersonal conflict, such as abuse, insult, grudge, or personal revenge?

Precipitating circumstances for homicide

- ▶ Did the homicide result from drug dealing or illegal drug use?
- ▶ Was the homicide gang-related?
- ▶ Was the homicide precipitated by another serious crime (e.g., drug dealing, robbery, rape)
 - If so, what type of crime?
 - Was the other crime in progress when the homicide occurred?
- ▶ Did the death involve justifiable self-defense?

Precipitating circumstances for homicide

- ▶ Did the homicide result from a hate crime?
- ▶ Did the homicide result from a mutual physical fight or brawl?
- ▶ Was the person who died a bystander, not the intended target of the homicide?

Precipitating circumstances for homicide

- ▶ Was the person who died a law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty?
- ▶ Was the person who died an intervener other than a law enforcement officer who was killed while assisting a crime victim?

Precipitating circumstances for homicide

- ▶ Was this a
 - “mercy” killing – did the victim request that his or her life be brought to an end?
 - a drive-by shooting?
 - a random act of violence?
- ▶ Was the suspect mentally ill?
- ▶ Did the person who died use a weapon during the course of the incident?

Homicide circumstances

- ▶ Circumstance information available for 328 of 412 homicides (80%)
 - 17% involved intimate partner violence
 - 12% involved argument over money or property
 - 37% involved other argument, elder abuse
 - 20% occurred in conjunction with another crime (usually robbery)

Using the Data: Suicide Prevention Efforts

▶ Office of Suicide Prevention at CDPHE

- Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado
- Increased funding to Colorado
 - ◆ \$200,000 state funds per year for suicide prevention
 - ◆ \$400,000 per year for 3 years for teen/college suicide prevention
 - ◆ \$300,000 per year for 3 years for adolescent violence prevention

▶ The Colorado Trust

- Funding to 10 local communities
 - ◆ \$2.55 million over 3 years

Using the Data: Homicide Prevention Efforts

▶ Child Abuse Prevention

- Child Fatality Review
- Children's Trust Fund
 - ◆ \$400,000 to communities for child abuse prevention efforts
- The Children's Hospital/the Kempe Center – campaign to prevent shaken baby syndrome

▶ Domestic Violence Prevention

- Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Project Safeguard

Websites about the NVDRS

- ▶ <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/profiles/nvdrs/facts.htm>
- ▶ <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/profiles/nvdrs/publications.htm>
- ▶ <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/injepi/cvdrs/index.html>

Websites about Suicide Prevention in Colorado

- ▶ <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/suicide/suicidehome.asp>
- ▶ <http://www.thecoloradotrust.org/index.cfm?fuseAction=InitiativesGrantees.details&initiativeId=299>
- ▶ <http://www.sprc.org/stateinformation/statepages/colorado.asp>