

**WHATCOM COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER
1500 NORTH STATE STREET
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225**

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

During 2009 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's office assumed jurisdiction in 126 death investigations that involved forensic autopsies, toxicological examinations, viewing and summary reporting. In addition, 150 other additional cases were reported and investigated and no jurisdiction was assumed (NJA).

From time to time local agencies brought miscellaneous bones to the Medical Examiner to determine if they were of human origin.

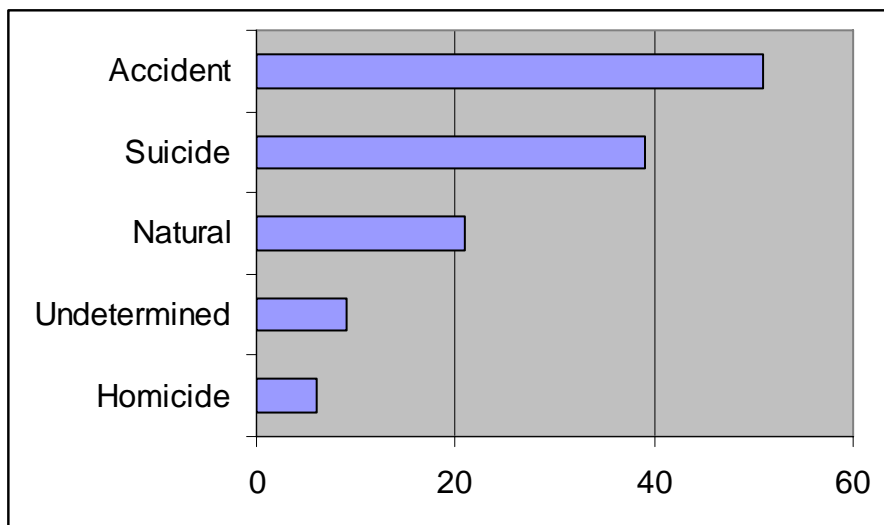
Teaching and public relations are also an important part of the Medical Examiner's office. Consulting was ongoing with the fire and police departments of the county and St. Joseph's Hospital. In addition, college and high school classes toured the morgue facility. The Medical Examiner also represented the office on numerous occasions to various civic organizations and gave multiple lectures.

**Gary Goldfogel, MD
Whatcom County Medical Examiner**

MEO Annual Report 2009

During 2009 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's Office conducted 126 forensic death investigations as stated on the previous page. The following statistics and graphs show the breakdown of the various causes of the deaths and the age and sex of those who died.

Whatcom County MEO Death Investigations 2009



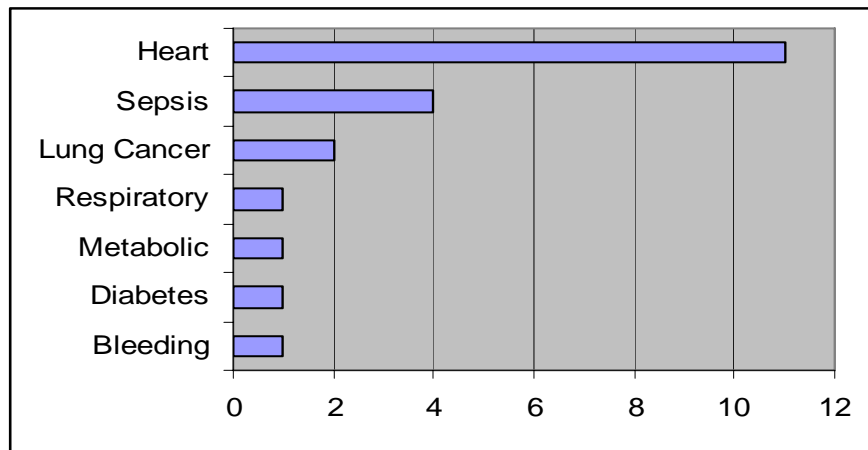
The causes of death shown in the above table are further broken down and displayed on the following pages.

NATURAL:

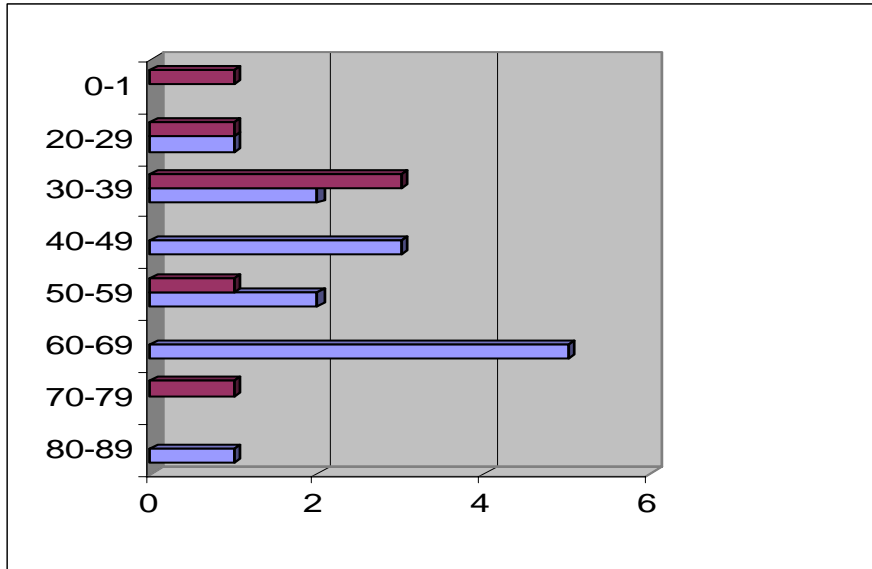
There were 21 total investigated natural deaths of which 14 were male and 7 female. The cause of death was as follows: Heart (11), Sepsis (4), Bleeding (1), Diabetes (1), Lung cancer (2), Metabolic (1) and Respiratory (1).

By age, approximately 5% were between birth and 1 year of age, 9% between 20-29, 24% between 30-39, 14% between 40-49, 14% between 50-59, 24% between 60-69, 5% between 70-79 and 5% between 80-89 years of age.

Natural Deaths by Cause



Natural Deaths by Age and Sex



*Blue bars are male and red bars are female.

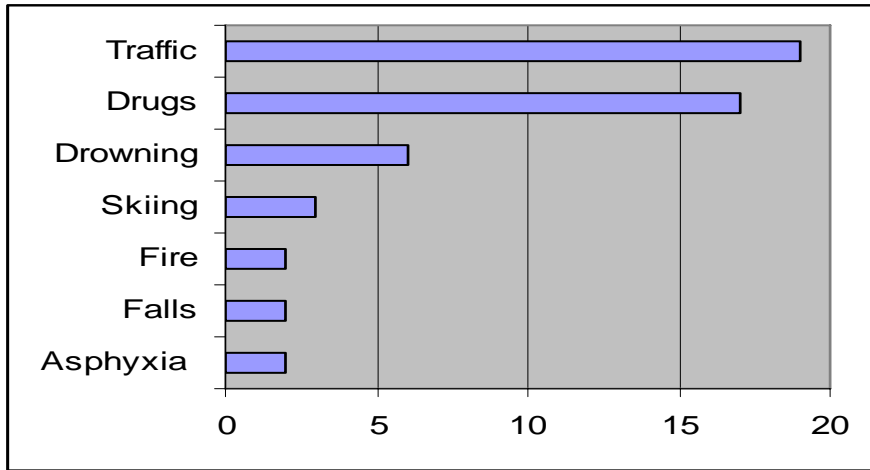
ACCIDENTAL:

There were 51 total investigated accidental deaths of which 40 were male and 11 female. The cause of death was as follows: Traffic accidents (19), Drugs (17), Drowning (6), Skiing (3), Asphyxia (2), Falls (2) and Fire (2).

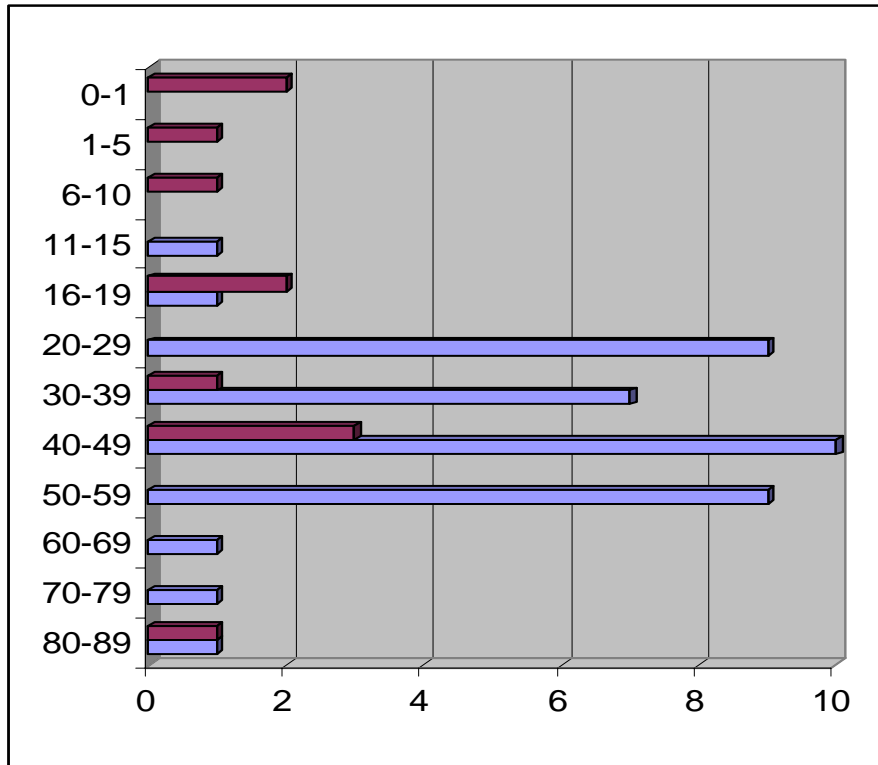
By age, approximately 4% were between birth and 1 year old, 2% between 1-5 years old, 2% between 6-10 years old, 2% between 11-15 years old, 6% between 16-19, 18% between 20-29, 16% between 30-39, 25% between 40-49, 18% between 50-59, 4% between 60-69, 4% between 70-79 and 8% between 80-89 years of age.

In the traffic deaths, alcohol was present 37% of the time with an average blood alcohol concentration of 0.21 gm%. Seatbelts were not worn in 16% of the deaths. Helmets were not worn in one of the two motorcycle deaths. In the traffic deaths cocaine and marijuana were present one time. In the drug deaths, cocaine was present 29% of the time, oxycodone, 29%, methadone 24%, opiates 24%, heroin 18%, benzodiazepine 18%, marijuana 12%, antidepressants 12%, methamphetamine 7% and Ecstasy 7%.

Accidental Deaths



Accidental Deaths by Age and Sex



* Blue bars are male and red bars are female.

SUICIDE:

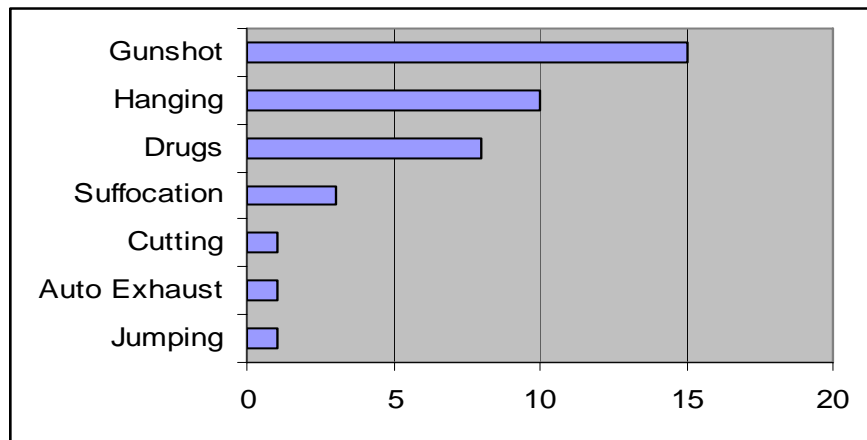
There were 39 total investigated suicide deaths of which 31 were male and 8 female. The cause of death was as follows: Gunshot (15), Hanging (10), Drugs (8), Suffocation (3), Jumping (1), Cutting (1) and auto exhaust (1).

By age, approximately 8% were between 16-19, 15% between 20-29, 23% between 30-39, 31% between 40-49, 13% between 50-59, 5% between 60-69, 2% between 70-79 and 2% between 80-89 years of age.

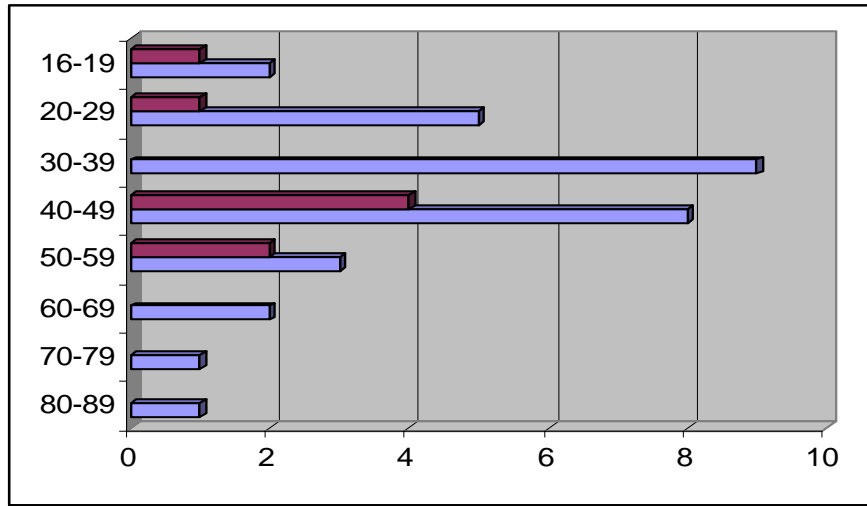
Alcohol was a factor in 46% of all suicide deaths with an average blood alcohol reading of 0.14 gm%.

In the gunshot suicides, handguns were used 73% of the time, shotguns 13% and rifles 13%. Alcohol was present in 54% of the gunshot suicides with an average reading of 0.10 gm%.

Suicide Deaths by Mechanism of Injury



Suicide Deaths by Age and Sex

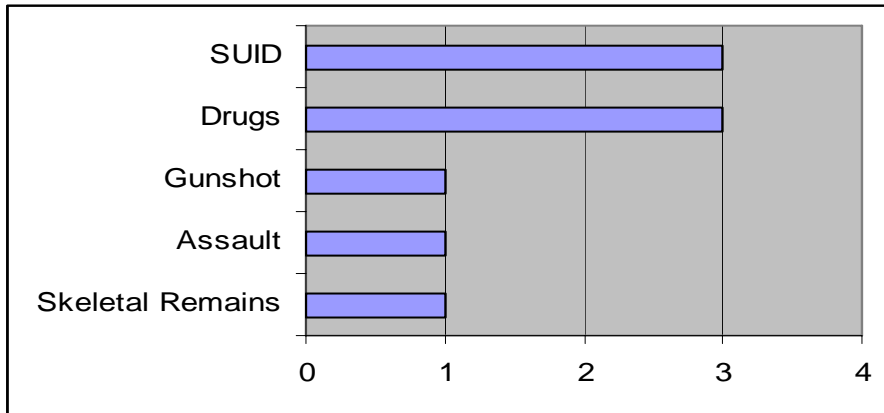


*Blue bars are male and red bars female.

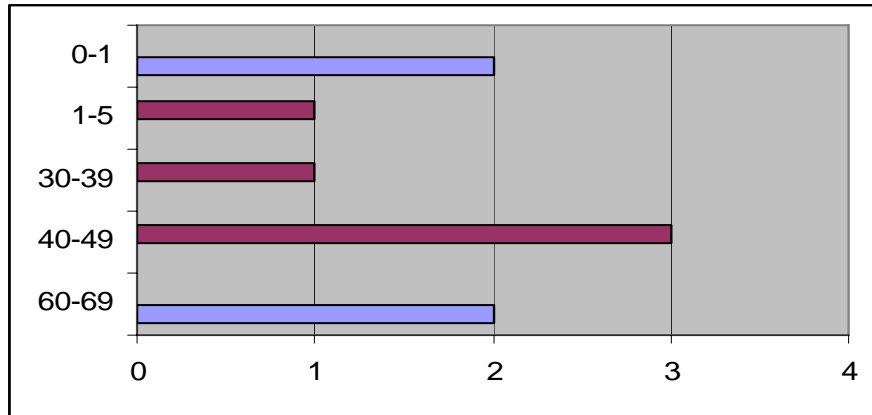
UNDETERMINED:

There were nine investigated deaths whose manner of death was listed as undetermined. Three were listed as Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths (SUID). Three were drug related. One was by gunshot and one by assault. One was a complete set of skeletal remains.

Undetermined Deaths



Undetermined Deaths by Age and Sex



*Blue bars are male and red bars are female

HOMICIDE:

There were six homicide cases: Four by assault and two by gunshot. There was alcohol in 66% of all the victims with an average blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 gm%.

By age approximately 17% were between 0-1, 17% between 1-5, 17% between 20-29, 17% between 30-39, 17% between 40-49 and 17% between 50-59 year of age.

Homicide Deaths

