

# Confluence of suicide and drug overdose epidemics in young Australian males: common causality?

Young adult (aged 20–34) males experience higher mortality than females, and in age groups immediately younger and older, and with considerable variation in death rates over time. Trends in mortality and the cause structure of deaths among young adult Australian males over 1979–2011 are investigated, with a focus on suicide and drug overdose. Mortality data by age for the period 1979 to 2011 and Australian population figures were obtained from the ABS. Cause of death was investigated using relevant ICD codes, and mortality by cause was examined graphically over time according to various ICD aggregations. We find that although motor vehicle accident (MVA) mortality declined by half between 1980 and 1998 in males, this did not translate into a reduction in total young male mortality because of simultaneous increases in suicide, and drug-related deaths classified as either poisoning (external cause) or drug dependence (mental disorders). When both suicide and drug-related deaths declined concurrently after 1998, total 20–34 year male mortality declined by almost half (46%) over 1998–2011. Declines in external cause mortality accounted for 63% of the total mortality decline in 20–34 year males over 1998–2011. The close temporal coincidence (statistically significant) of increases and declines in suicide and drug-related deaths over a decade suggests related causality.

## About Professor Richard Taylor

Richard Taylor is Professor of International and Public Health, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW Sydney. His present research concerns the epidemiological transition and non-communicable disease and external cause epidemiology and prevention and control in Australia, other high income countries, and in middle and low income countries, particularly concerning cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer control, and suicide, focusing on populations in the Asia Pacific region. Research and service activities have resulted in 481 publications, including 272 refereed scientific articles, which, when combined with their citations, produces an H index of 33 (Scopus).

Light refreshment is provided

Venue: Room 305, Level 3, Samuels Building, UNSW Upper Campus, Randwick

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Parking: Available on L5 of the parking station; enter via Gate 11 Botany St, Randwick

Map: [www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/getting-uni/campus-maps](http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/getting-uni/campus-maps)

The School of Public Health  
and Community Medicine

# Seminar Invitation

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September  
12:00 - 1:00 pm  
Room 305 Samuels Building



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