



MEN COMMITTING SUICIDE: A RESPONSE TO LOISE PERRY

John Davis



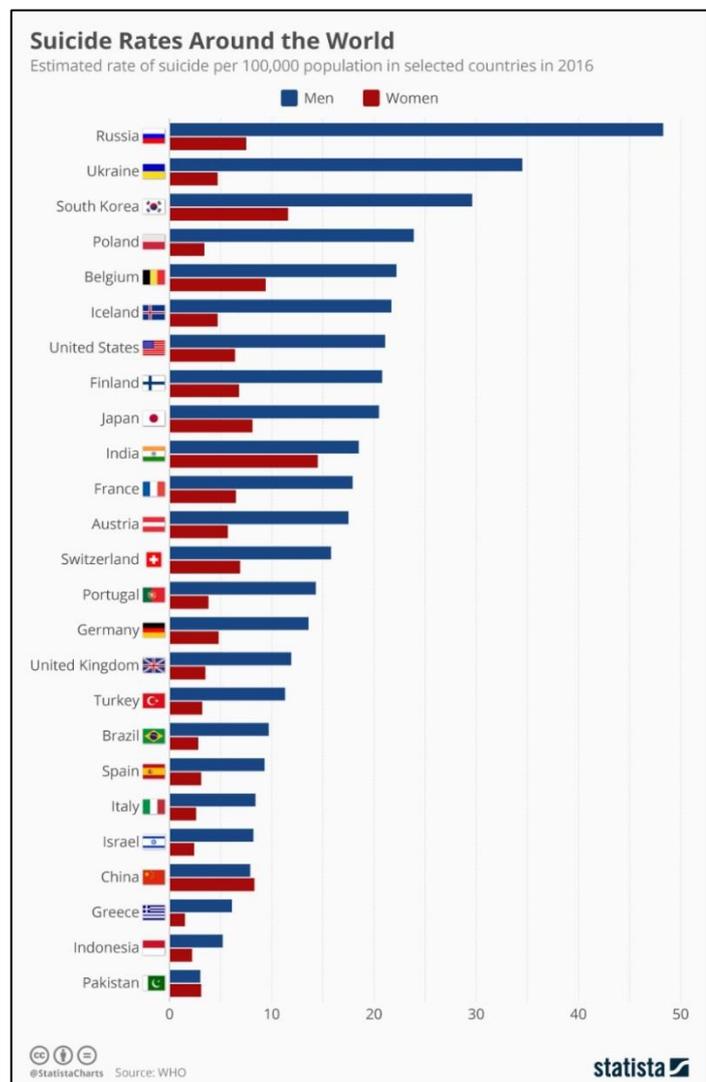
ABSTRACT

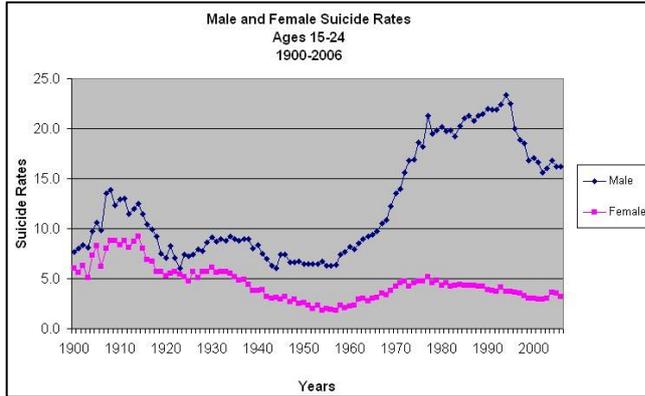
My article responds to Louise Perry's "Time to Stop Using Suicide for Political Point-Scoring." Ms. Perry writes about men committing suicide. Her conclusion is that men, and men's Rights Activists (MRAs), are using the gender suicide gap as a means of scoring political points against feminists and feminism (as opposed to being a genuine effort solve the problem of the gender suicide gap). Ms. Perry implies that men are at fault for the gender suicide gap and men committing suicide. Her article is premised on fiction and myth about male suicide currently in fashion among intersectional feminists. My article addresses some of those misconceptions, providing information about the realities of the gender suicide gap and realities about men committing suicide.

Keywords: gender suicide gap, intersectional feminism, men's health, misandry, suicide

Louise Perry has written a controversial article for *Quillette* titled, “Time to Stop Using Suicide for Political Point-Scoring.” Ms. Perry’s article is about *men* committing suicide. Her conclusion is that men, and men’s Rights Activists (MRAs), are using the gender suicide gap as a means of scoring political points against feminists and feminism (as opposed to being a genuine effort solve the problem of the gender suicide gap). Ms. Perry implies that men are at fault for the gender suicide gap and men committing suicide. Her article is premised on almost every fiction and myth about male suicide that is currently in fashion among intersectional feminists (for example, gynocentric readings of data, the attribution of toxic masculinity, dismissals of misandrist affect). My article addresses some of those myths with some information about the realities of the gender suicide gap and realities about men committing suicide.

Let’s start with Ms. Perry’s assertion that men commit suicide at about twice the rate of women worldwide. That statistic understates the problem. The worldwide gender suicide gap is about 3.2 to 1, with men committing suicide more than women. In some developed countries (such as the U.S. and India) the gap is closer to 4:1. In younger groups, such as in the U.S. in the age group 15-24, the gender suicide gap is over 6:1. Young men committing suicide worsens the problem because when a young man commits suicide, it exacerbates the gender suicide gap. Young men committing suicide means that many more years of men’s lives are lost in the gender suicide gap than if older men commit suicide.



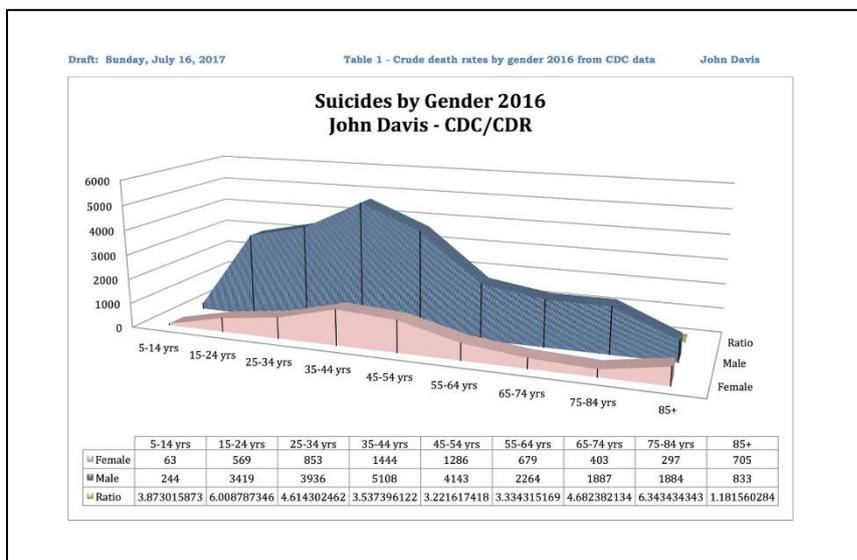


The complete toll on men, as a gender, from young men committing suicide, is incalculable.

Ms. Perry presents a myth that the gender suicide gap is caused by men’s toxic masculinity keeping them from discussing their feelings. This is a thinly

disguised victim-blaming tactic. Ms. Perry suggests that if men engage in “cuddling groups” with other men, then, they will overcome their toxic masculinity, become less-defective men, and cure their depression and suicide by “talking about their emotions.” Science presents us with a different reality. We know from extensive studies, that men’s biological DNA markers respond in the exact opposite manner as women to major depressive disorder. Men do not respond to talk therapy as women respond to it. Men require a special kind of intervention known as situational distress therapy. Notwithstanding massive amounts of money expended for women’s health, not one penny has been allocated by any governments, or institutions, to study the special types of therapy necessary for men with clinical depression.

Ms. Perry then goes on the accuse MRAs of being extreme by suggesting that the gender suicide gap is due to “persecution of men by feminists and their allies.” This belief by MRAs is hardly extreme. It is well grounded in analysis of Western laws, and, Western institutions. If we analyze raw data regarding male suicides, we can infer some general conclusions from the data.



These data show that the gender gap in suicide is constant throughout men’s lives, and that men are more at risk for suicide than women throughout their entire lifetimes. What this graph also

demonstrates is that the gender suicide gap widens when men are forced into contact with our misandrist and male-oppressive institutions (such as education, the workplace, the military and, in old age especially, our medical institutions).

The next myth Ms. Perry advances is that women attempt suicide more often than men. In Ms. Perry's words: "This isn't intended as a 'gotcha' to the anti-feminists. Well, it is a bit I suppose—I am tired of hearing people bang on about suicide statistics when they're ignorant of the facts." Ms. Perry's accusation that MRAs are ignorant is ironic. Her information comes from one study in Germany in which the authors (with amazing confirmation bias) concluded that women reporting to physicians in emergency rooms that they had suicidal ideation meant that women attempted suicide more often than men. The source of this myth appears to be a study (Hegerl et al., 2009) completed in Europe, and, analyzed by the Psychiatry Department of the University of Leipzig.

The data collection on the study was very good to excellent. Consequently, the data is sound. However, like much of feminist advocacy research, the article draws some specious and spurious conclusions regarding the rate at which women as a gender, attempt suicide. It is clear from the analysis in the report that the authors intended, when they set out to write the article, to conclude that although men are more likely to engage fatal suicide methods, women (as a gender) are three times more likely to attempt suicide, therefore, women represent the most victims of clinical depression and suicidal ideation. The actual data do not support those conclusions.

First, the data counted suicide attempts by the same woman more than once. If a woman attempted suicide 6 times, unsuccessfully, the researchers counted that as 6 suicide attempts by women. Women tend to use equally lethal means of killing themselves, such as drug overdoses, the same as men. There is, however, a high probability that a person who ingests a drug overdose will be discovered before they die, and, given treatment, or, that they will change their minds and seek treatment. Men tend to use less tentative means. In the U.S. they use firearms (which may be an indication that men suffer much more seriously than women when they form suicidal ideation). In Europe men are most likely to hang themselves which is almost as irrevocable as the use of a firearm. (The studies prove that the means of committing suicide being available have no effect on the rate of suicide.) Since women choose revocable methods of suicide, it

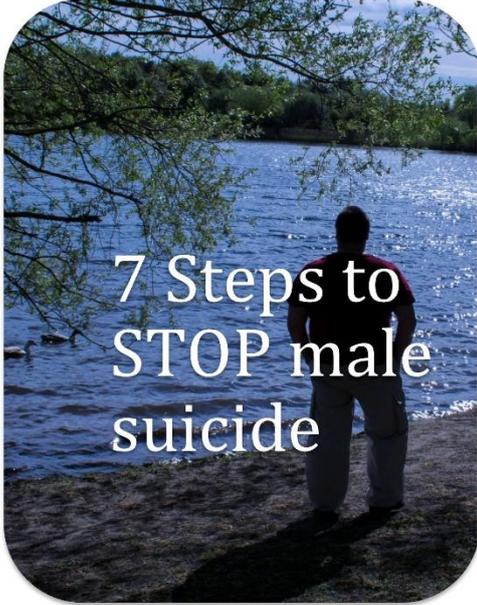
should be obvious that they will survive suicide attempts. If they survive suicide attempts, then, the same women are making the suicide attempts over time, instead of more women attempting suicide than men.

Second, the data are confused and non-homogenous. In some cases, the data collected were not how many actual suicide attempts were made (the data from emergency rooms accurately shows actual number of suicide attempts when the victim seeks treatment). Some of the data sources for women, however, were not SSAs (Serious Suicide Attempts); they were merely reports to physicians that the woman had attempted suicide, rather than an actual documented event of suicide (such as we would receive from emergency rooms).

Having recited stereotyped myths about men committing suicide, Ms. Perry concludes her article with a litany of gender stereotypes, about men, that firmly affixes the blame for male suicide on the victims. Addressing all of Ms. Perry's false stereotypes about men is beyond the scope of this response. However, we can point out some important considerations that Ms. Perry carefully avoided in her article.

Recent conclusive studies (Stemple, Flores, & Meyer, 2017, for example) show that men are victims of women's sexual assault at about the same rate as the other way around. Intersectional feminists, such as Ms. Perry, vehemently deny these realities. Feminist researchers (Dario & O'Neal, 2018; Elliott, 1994), however, have conclusively demonstrated that men suffer from sexual victimization from female perpetrators as much, or more, than women suffer from male perpetrators. We live in a "culture of denial regarding the prevalence of women perpetrating sex crimes against men," in the words of feminist researcher Dr. Miriam S. Denov (2004). This denial covers up one of the most serious factors pushing men to suicide, and which drives the gender suicide gap. Men are very vulnerable (especially as boys and young men) to sexual crimes perpetrated against them by women and girls. The sexual assault of boys and men has a delayed effect. As the male victim matures, the sexual assault has interfered with his neurological development and the development of his psycho-sexual skills. This interference results in the boy, as a man, being socially isolated and subject to major depressive disorder. It is also important to note that research (Seney et al., 2018) proves that clinical depression in men biologically compels them to sexual dysfunction and substance abuse.

Putting all political points aside, if we are going to address seriously and professionally the gender suicide gap (instead of blaming men as the victims), then we need to use reliable, unbiased measures to assess data, such as examining what comprises one's "overall life satisfaction" (Stoet & Geary, 2019). In addition, we should take the following seven steps to curtail male suicide:



-  STOP the media war on men and boys
-  STOP the war on men and boys in our institutions
-  STOP female sex predators from abusing men and boys
-  Fund medical research for depression in men
-  GIVE men their reproductive rights
-  STOP lawmakers and judges from destroying men

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AUTHOR PROFILE



John Davis is a retired public official and international lawyer who writes on current gender issues. He was educated at Case Western Reserve University (BA), Seattle University School of Law (JD), and New York University School of Law (LL.M post-doctoral). John is fluent in seven languages (including ancient Latin and Greek). He has held positions such as Assistant Attorney General, United States Speaker, and Assistant District Attorney, Chief Wing JAG, U. S. Air Force Auxiliary, and Supreme Court Law Clerk. The author of eight books, John currently edits *Gender Studies for Men*, which publishes “balanced discussions of contemporary gender issues” on www.medium.com

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