



Coroners Court of Victoria

Asia Pacific Coroners Society Conference 2014

**A Profile of risk factors of suicide
amongst middle aged men,
evidence of help seeking
and
avenues of prevention intervention**

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Outline

- Why we have focused on the cohort of suicide deaths of middle aged men
- What the VSR has told us about middle aged male suicides compared to other suicide deaths (*all other persons*)
- What the VSR has told us about the profile of the middle aged men cohort for 2009-2010
- What are the avenues for prevention, are they case by case and/or systemic?

OVERVIEW SUICIDE IN VICTORIA, 2009 AND 2010

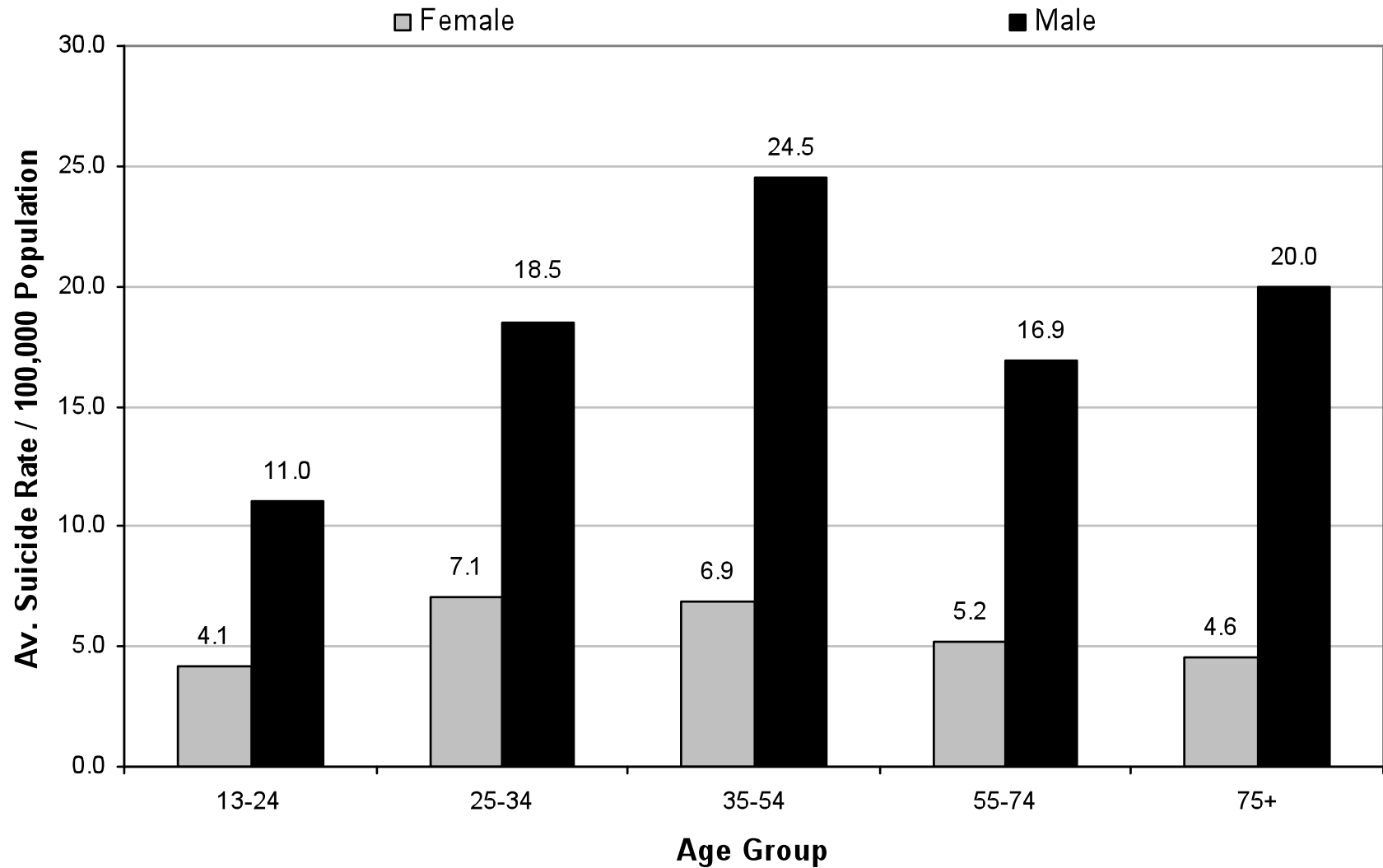
During 2009 and 2010 there were 1,123 deaths classified as suicide in the Victorian Suicide Register.

In 2009 there were 586 and in 2010 there were 537.

Of these, 851 (75.8%) were of males and 272 (24.2%) were of females.

Victorians aged 35-54 years comprised the greatest proportion of suicides in our community, 479 (42.7%) in the two year period: 372 males and 107 females.

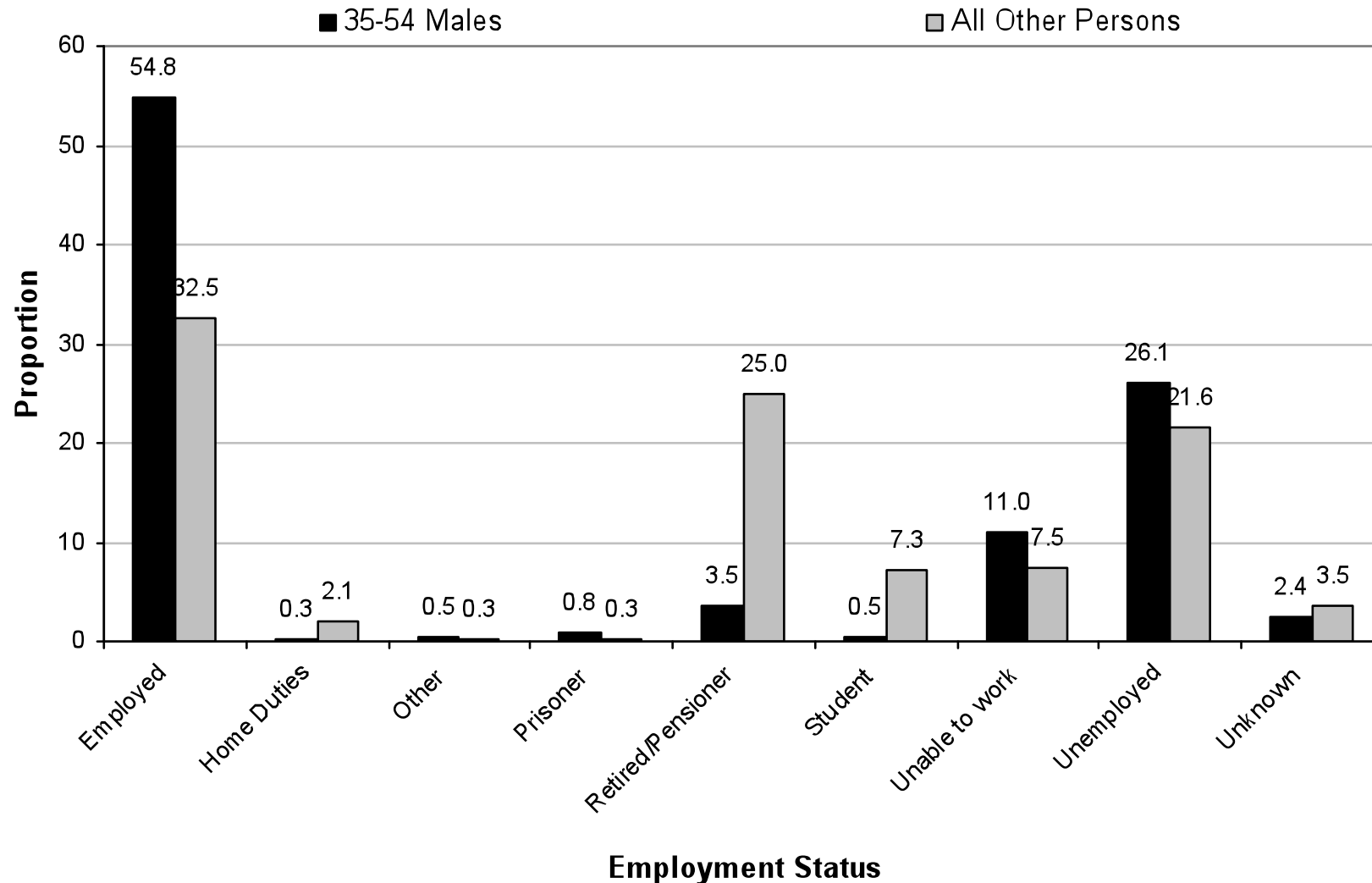
Average rate per 100,000 population 2009-2010



Region of usual residence

Region of Usual Residence	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
<i>Melbourne Metropolitan</i>	230	61.8	502	66.8
<i>Regional Victoria</i>	132	35.5	229	30.5
<i>Other Location</i>	10	2.7	20	2.7

Employment status of cohort of middle aged men and all other persons.



Relationship status of cohort of middle aged men and all other persons.

Relationship Status	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
In a relationship - dating	21	5.6	73	9.7
In a relationship - de facto or domestic partner	40	10.8	86	11.5
In a relationship - married	70	18.8	168	22.4
In a relationship - other	1	0.3	3	0.4
Not in a relationship	240	64.5	421	56.1

Culminate legal contacts of cohort of middle aged men and all other persons.

Patterns of Contact with Legal Service	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
No proximate legal service contact	268	72.0	587	78.2
Police only	61	16.4	104	13.8
Courts only	9	2.4	16	2.1
Corrections only	6	1.6	7	0.9
Police and courts	16	4.3	25	3.3
Police and corrections	2	0.5	4	0.5
Courts and corrections		0.0	1	0.1
Police, Courts and Corrections	10	2.7	7	0.9
Total	372	100.0	751	100.0

Stressors coded in the VSR

Four major types of stressors

1. **Physical ill health** – pain, injury, illness and disability
2. **Mental ill health** – ICD-10
3. **Interpersonal stressors** – death of partner etc, conflict, ill-health of partner, family or friends/acquaintances
4. **Situation stressors** – work, financial, legal, sexuality, isolation, abuse (includes perpetrators and victims), education, bullying (includes perpetrators and victims), substance, other and exposure to suicide

Culminate identified stressors of cohort of middle aged men and all other persons.

Stressor Profile	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
No Identified Stressor (s)	1	0.3	9	1.2
Physical Ill Health Only	3	0.8	24	3.2
Diagnosed Mental Illness Only	6	1.6	4	0.5
Interpersonal Stressor Only	11	3	12	1.6
Situational Stressor Only	6	1.6	15	2
Physical Ill Health AND Diagnosed Mental Illness	0	0	19	2.5
Physical Ill Health AND Interpersonal Stressor	4	1.1	31	4.1
Physical Ill Health AND Situational Stressor	11	3	28	3.7
Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Interpersonal Stressor	3	0.8	8	1.1
Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Situational Stressor	5	1.3	14	1.9
Situational Stressor AND Interpersonal Stressor	54	14.5	103	13.7

Culminate identified stressors of cohort of middle aged men and all other persons continued

Stressor Profile	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
Physical Ill Health AND Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Interpersonal Stressor	6	1.6	26	3.5
Physical Ill Health AND Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Situational Stressor	17	4.6	22	2.9
Physical Ill Health AND Interpersonal Stressor AND Situational Stressor	79	21.2	115	15.3
Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Situational Stressor AND Interpersonal Stressor	56	15.1	97	12.9
Physical Ill Health AND Diagnosed Mental Illness AND Situational Stressor AND Interpersonal Stressor	110	29.6	224	29.8

Situational stressors for middle aged men cohort and all other persons

Stressor Profile	35-54 Years Males		All Other Persons	
	n = 372	%	n = 751	%
Work	159	42.7	224	29.8
Financial	170	45.7	248	33
Legal	124	33.3	192	25.6
Sexuality	12	3.2	37	4.9
Isolation	48	12.9	112	14.9
Abuse (Victim or Perpetrator)	101	27.2	218	29
Education	16	4.3	74	9.9
Bullying	45	12.1	114	15.2
Substance	210	56.5	287	38.2
Other	105	28.2	186	24.8
Exposure to Suicide – Family	35	9.4	60	8
Exposure to Suicide – Friend	5	1.3	11	1.5



Three groups within the cohort

67.2% (n=250) of the middle aged men cohort had contact with health services proximate to their death.

32.7% (n=122) men had **no evidence** of contact with health services proximate to their death

48.8% (n=122) of the cohort who did have access with health services, only had access with general practitioners.

PROFILE DATA	With Contact	GP Only contact	Without contact
CALD	17.6	19.7	13.1
Overseas	12.4	13.9	9.8
Employed	50.4	51.6	63.9
Not in a relationship	64	62.3	65.6
Married/defacto	30.8	32.8	27
Physical illness/injury	44.8	45.1	31.9
Pain	18.8	21.3	7.4
Work as a stressor – includes looking for work	46.8	50	34.4
Employed and work as stressor	54	96.8	32
Financial stressor	48	45.9	40
Legal stressor	35.2	40.2	29.5
Partner conflict	54.4	43.4	38.5
Partner separation	47.2	47.5	23.8
Evidence of previous attempt &/or self-harm &/or suicidal ideation	83.2	99.2	40.2
Prescribed an antidepressant	51.6	69.7	
Prescribed benzodiazepine+	34.8	47.5	

The impact of alcohol in this cohort

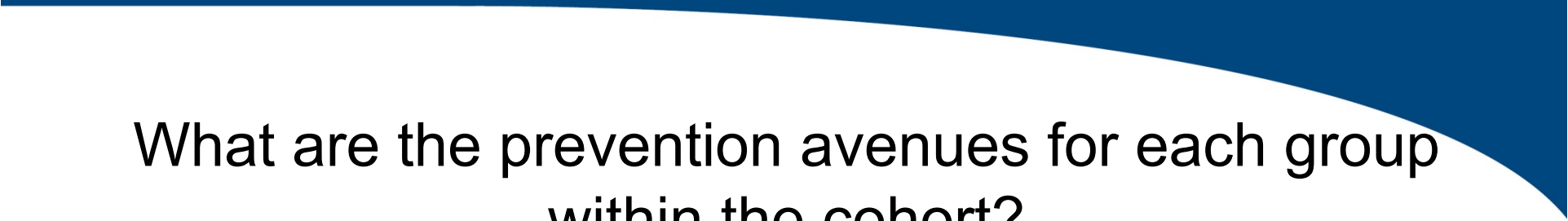
There were 41.6% (n=155) with either a clinically documented substance dependency diagnosis or had evidence of sustained use from two separate sources.

Of these 96.7% had an alcohol dependency.

51% (n=79) had evidence of more than one substance and 60.7% had evidence of alcohol dependency as one of the substances.

Of the 49% (n=76) with evidence of a single substance dependency, for 76.3% it was alcohol.

Post-mortem toxicology showed 47% of the middle aged men cohort had no alcohol detected and 43.8% at 0.05 or above.



What are the prevention avenues for each group within the cohort?

The VSR data tells us that by the time men with more than one stressor help-seek, they are already overwhelmed.

Thoughts on avenues for prevention

- **With contact to health services**


- Case by case investigation outcome
- Systemic

- **GP only contact**

- Education
- Access to services

- **Without contact**

- Community education



Making recommendations about systemic changes requires the advice and input of service providers who currently deliver services to this cohort or would like to, and to middle aged men, because in this case, especially in the areas of support with interpersonal and situational stressors, their needs are not being met.



QUESTIONS ?