

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

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

During 2010 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's office assumed jurisdiction in 107 death investigations that involved forensic autopsies, toxicological examinations, viewing and summary reporting. In addition, 167 other additional cases were reported and investigated and no jurisdiction was assumed (NJA).

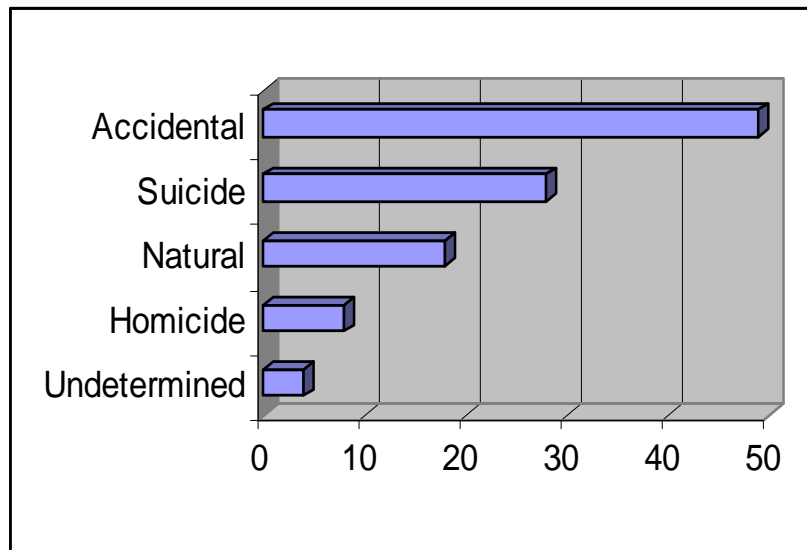
From time to time local agencies brought miscellaneous bones to the Medical Examiner to determine if they were of human origin.

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**

During 2010 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's Office conducted 107 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 2010



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

ACCIDENTAL:

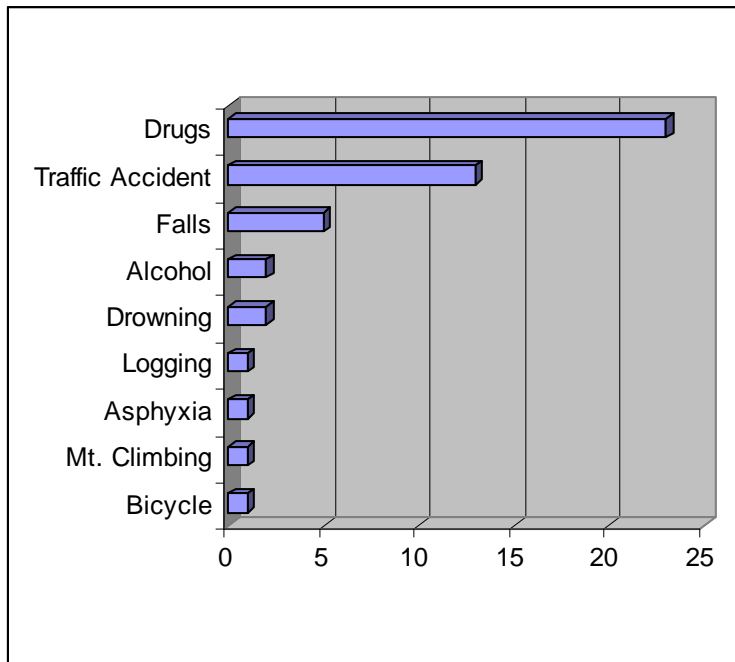
There were 49 total investigated accidental deaths of which 33 were male and 16 female. The cause of death was as follows: Drugs (23), Traffic accidents (13), Falls (5), Alcohol (2), Drowning (2), Logging-private (1), Asphyxia-industrial (1), Mt. Climbing (1) and Bicycle jumping (1).

By age, approximately 5% were between birth and 1 year old, 7% between 16-19, 18% between 20-29, 22% between 30-39, 14% between 40-49, 16% between 50-59, 8% between 60-69, 8% between 70-79 and 2% between 90-99 years of age.

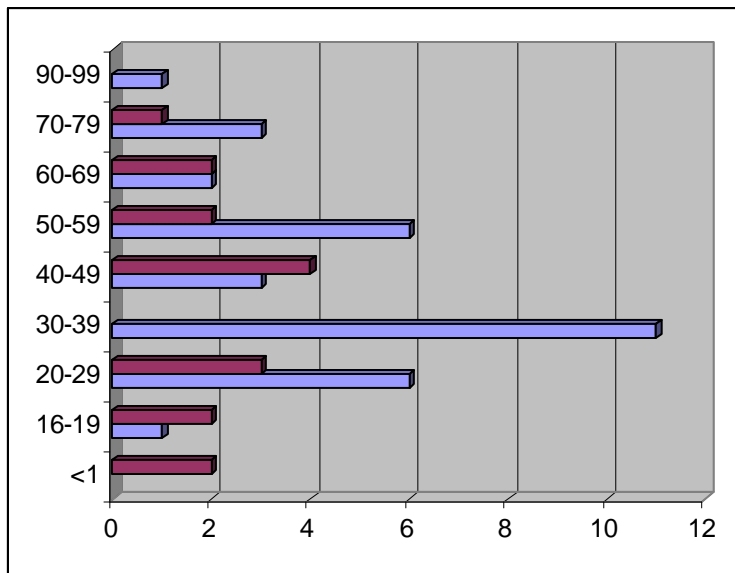
In the traffic deaths, alcohol was present 31% of the time with an average blood alcohol concentration of 0.31 gm%. Seatbelts were not worn in 31% of the deaths. A helmet was worn in the one motorcycle death. Five of the traffic deaths involved pedestrians. In the traffic deaths, methamphetamine and marijuana were present one time.

In the drug deaths, heroin was present 52% of the time, antidepressants 34%, benzodiazepines 26%, methadone 22%, marijuana 17%, methamphetamine 13%, oxycodone 13%, cocaine 8% and fentanyl 4%.

Accidental Deaths



Accidental Deaths by Age and Sex



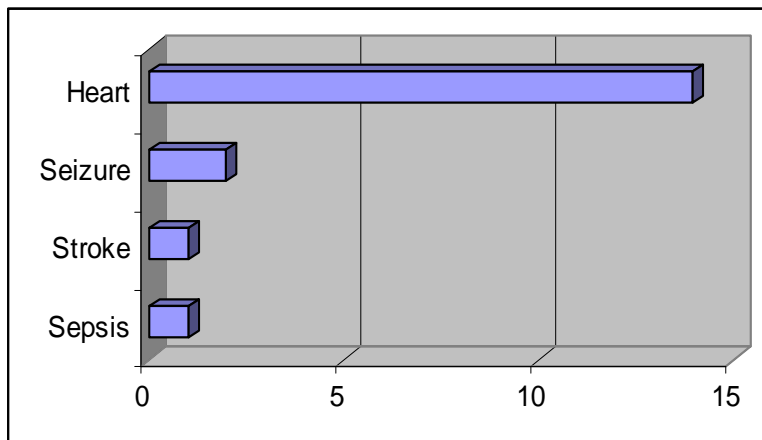
* Blue bars are male and red bars are female.

NATURAL:

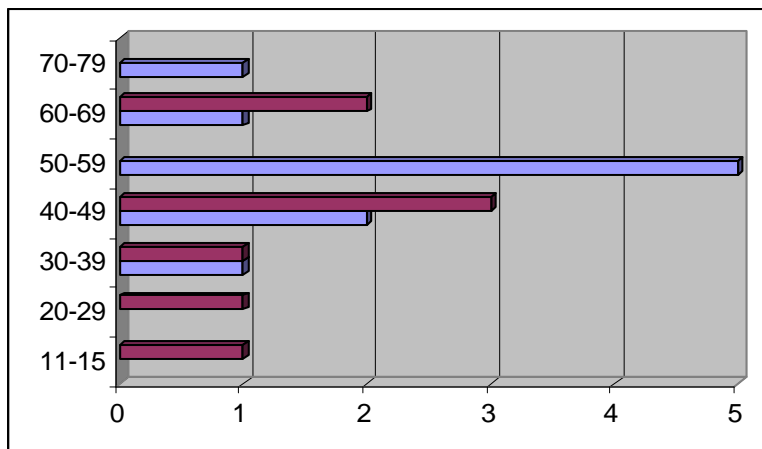
There were 18 total investigated natural deaths of which 10 were male and 8 female. The cause of death was as follows: Heart (14), Seizure (2), Stroke (1) and Sepsis (1).

By age, approximately 5% were between 11-15, 5% between 20-29, 11% between 30-39, 28% between 40-49, 28% between 50-59, 16% between 60-69 and 5% between 70-79 years of age.

Natural Deaths by Cause



Natural Deaths by Age and Sex



*Blue bars are male and red bars are female.

SUICIDE:

There were 28 total investigated suicide deaths of which 19 were male and 9 female. The cause of death was as follows: Gunshot (13), Drugs (5), Hanging (4), Suffocation (2) Auto exhaust (2) Traffic accident (1) and Alcohol (1).

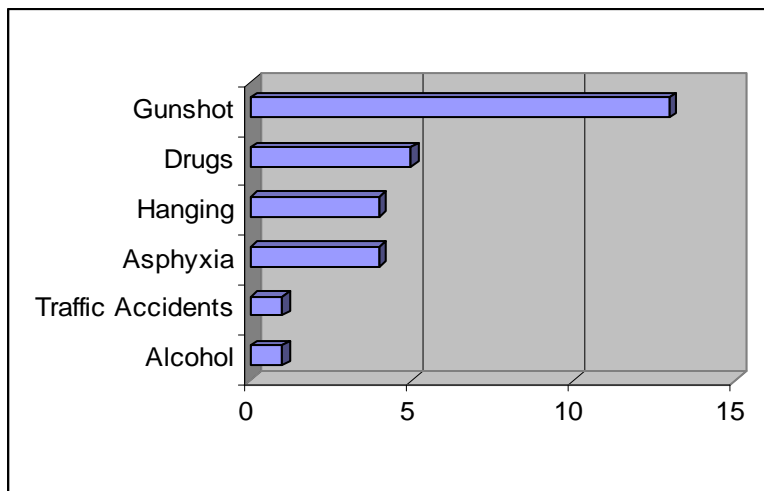
By age, approximately 3% were between 11-15, 3% between 16-19, 14% between 20-29, 18% between 30-39, 18% between 40-49, 25% between 50-59, 3% between 60-69, 3% between 70-79 and 10% between 80-89 years of age.

Alcohol was a factor in 21% of all suicide deaths with an average blood alcohol reading of 0.22 gm%.

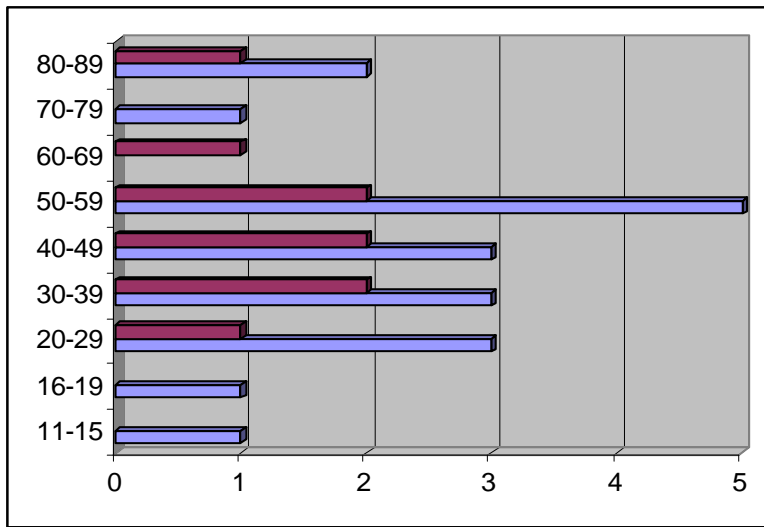
In the drug deaths, acetaminophen was present 60% of the time, antidepressants 40%, heroin 20% and methadone 20%.

In the gunshot suicides, handguns were used 69% of the time, shotguns 15% and rifles 15%. Alcohol was present in 31% of the gunshot victims with an average reading of 0.16 gm%.

Suicide Deaths by Mechanism of Injury



Suicide Deaths by Age and Sex



*Blue bars are male and red bars female.

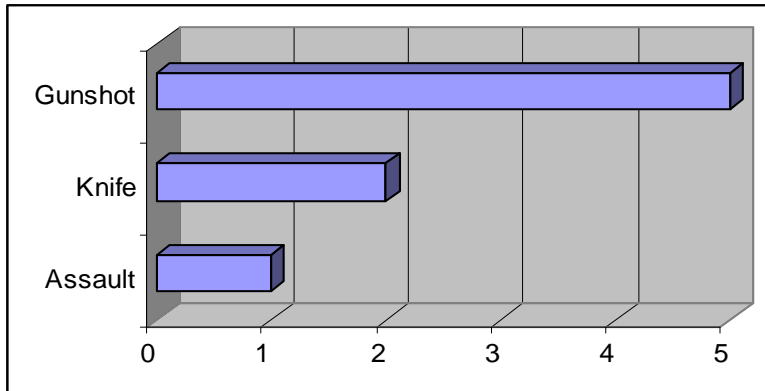
HOMICIDE:

There were eight homicide cases: Five by gunshot, two by knife and one by physical assault. Four were male and four female. There was alcohol in 25% of all the victims with an average blood alcohol concentration of 0.09 gm%.

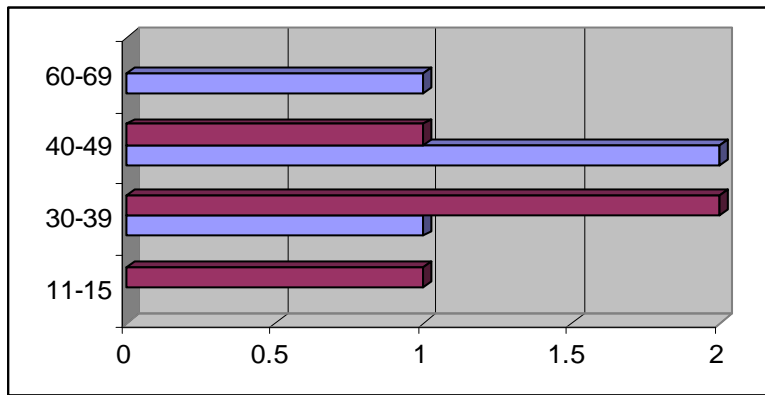
In the gunshot deaths, three used pistols and two used shotguns. Methamphetamine was present in 25% of the victims.

By age approximately 13% were between 11-15, 37% between 30-39, 37% between 40-49 and 13% between 60-69 years of age.

Homicide Deaths



Homicide Deaths by Age and Sex

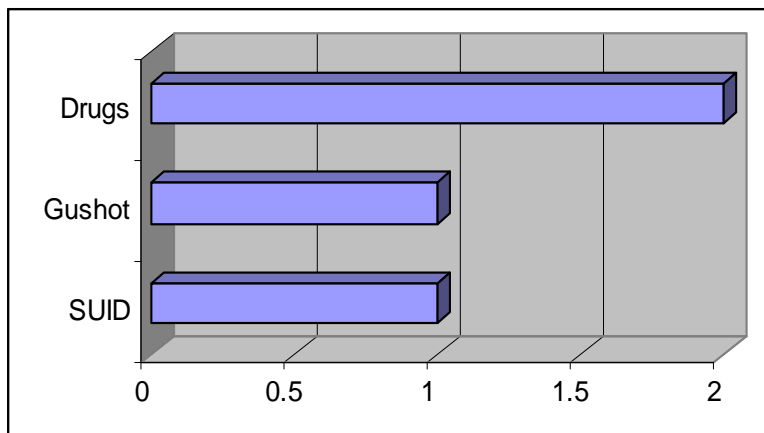


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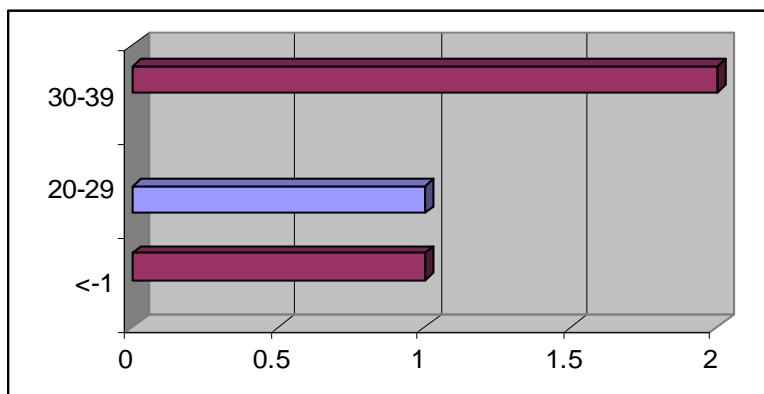
UNDETERMINED:

There were four investigated deaths whose manner of death was listed as undetermined. Two were drug related (suicide vs. accidental?), one by gunshot (suicide vs. accidental?) and one Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID). Three were female, one male.

Undetermined Deaths



Undetermined Deaths by Age and Sex



*Blue bars are male and red bars are female