

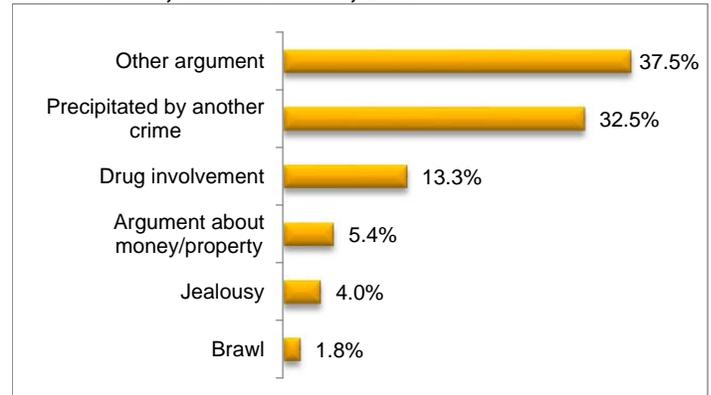
Homicide

Homicide is defined as a death resulting from the use of force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, group, or community when a preponderance of evidence indicates that the use of force was intentional. The National Center for Health Statistics also regards as homicide (a) arson with no intent to injure a person and (b) a stabbing with intent unspecified. Excluded are vehicular homicide without intent to injure, unintentional firearm deaths, combat deaths or acts of war, and deaths of unborn fetuses. Homicides can originate from any number of circumstances as shown by the National Violent Death Reporting System (Figure 22.1).¹ The majority of homicides are related to interpersonal conflicts.

Nationally, homicide is the 15th leading cause of death overall in the United States. It is the 2nd leading cause of death for persons 15-24 years of age, and the 5th leading cause for persons 25-34 years old. In the United States in 2008, 17,837 persons (crude rate of 5.9 deaths per 100,000 population) died as a result of homicide; firearms were used in 68.4% of these deaths.² The homicide rate for males was more than 3.5 times higher than that for females. Additionally, blacks accounted for approximately half of the homicide decedents. Age-specific homicide rates were highest for persons 20-24 years old.

The homicide rate for infants younger than 12 months-old is approximately 3.5 times that for children aged 1-4 years and is 60% of that for adolescents aged 15-19 years. Infants are at greatest risk for homicide during the first week of infancy, with especially high risk on the first day of life. Among homicides during the first week of life, 83% occur on the day of birth. The homicide risk on the first day of life is greater than 10 times the risk during any other time of life. Among homicides on the first day of life, 95% of victims are not born in a hospital. The 2nd highest peak in risk for infant homicide occurs during

Figure 22.1. Percentage of homicides by selected circumstances, United States, 2007



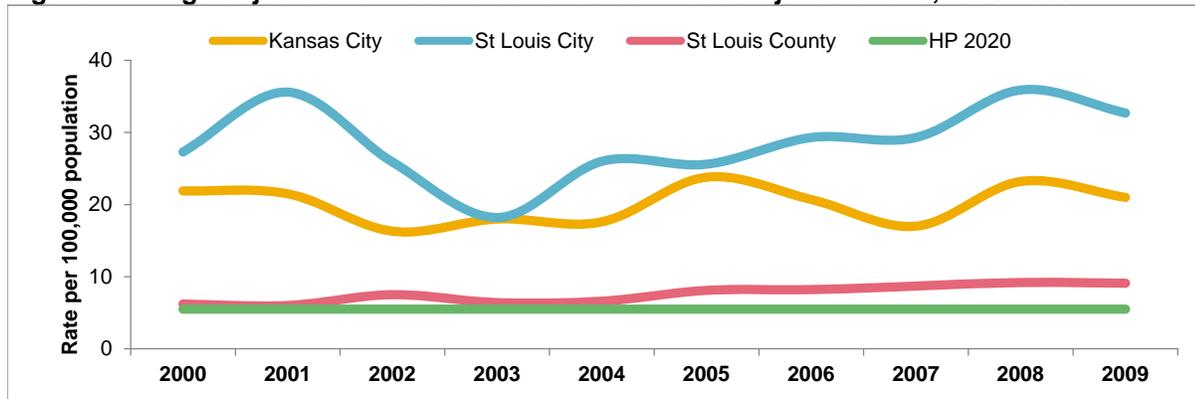
(adapted from *National Violent Death Reporting System, 2007*)

the 8th week of life and may be due to a caregiver's reaction to an infant's persistent crying; infant crying duration peaks at 6-8 weeks of age. Among homicides during the first week of life, 89% of perpetrators are female, usually the mother. Mothers who kill their infants are more likely to be adolescents and have a history of mental illness.

During 2009, 440 Missourians died as a result of homicide. Of the homicide victims, 72% were residents of just three jurisdictions: Jackson County with 111 deaths, St Louis City with 122 deaths, and St Louis County with 84 deaths. The age-adjusted death rates for these jurisdictions are shown in Figure 22.2; all exceed the *Healthy People 2020* objective of 5.5 homicides per 100,000 population.

According to the Violence Policy Center, Missouri's black homicide rate during 2008 was the highest in the nation, at 39.9 per 100,000 population. Missouri's rate was double that of the national average (www.vpc.org/studies/blackhomicide11.pdf). In 2009, the rate was 34.9 homicides per 100,000 compared to 3.3 homicides for whites.

Figure 22.2. Age-adjusted homicide rates for select Missouri jurisdictions, 2000-2009

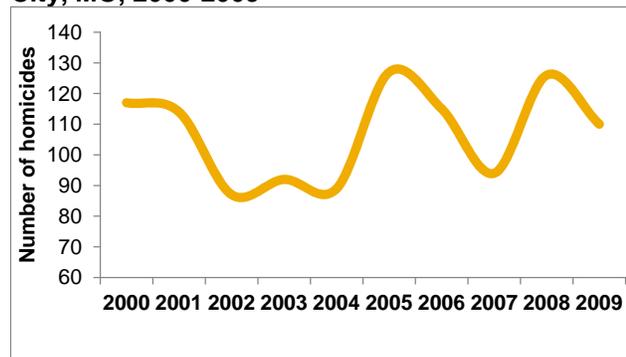


Kansas City

Police statistics

According to the Kansas City Police Department, there were 110 homicides in 2009 (www.kcpd.org) (Figure 22.3). Those deaths included Kansas City residents and non-residents, as well as justifiable homicides. Of the homicide victims, 80% were male. Furthermore, 75% were black, 18% white, and 6% Hispanic. Most of the victims (65%) were 17-34 years old, and 75% of the victims had criminal records. Firearms were used in 86% of incidents and 6% of individuals died as a result of a stabbing wound.

Figure 22.3. Total homicides recorded in Kansas City, MO, 2000-2009



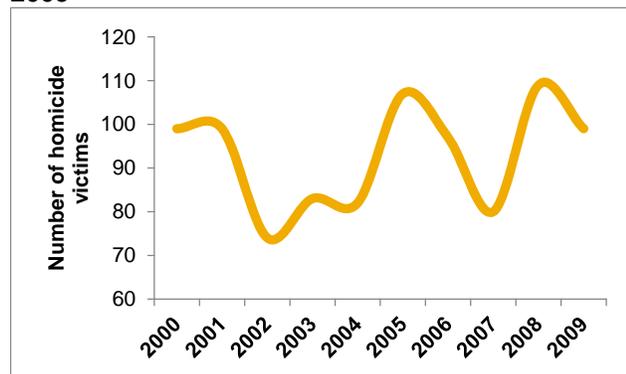
(source: Kansas City, MO, Police Department)

Health Department statistics

Although Health Department statistics are based on city residency, reported incidents did not have to occur within the city. Therefore, the statistics discussed here differ from those presented by the Police Department. (Figure 22.4) Table 22.1 displays the race/ethnicity breakdown of homicide decedents during 2009. Over 90% of the homicide deaths occurred among residents of Jackson County. Firearms were used in 77% of all homicides.

In 2009, the average age of death from homicide was 39.7 years and the median age of

Figure 22.4. Number of Kansas City, MO, residents who died as the result of homicide, 2000-2009



HOMICIDE



death was 26.0 years. The age distribution of homicide deaths is presented in Figure 22.5.

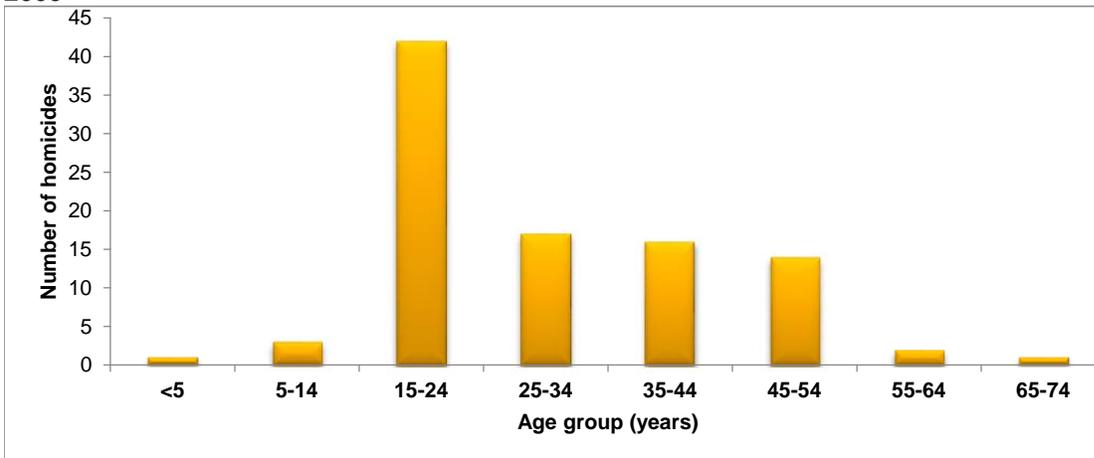
In 2009, homicide was the 10th leading cause of death for Kansas City residents, and 6th among males. Among non-Hispanic blacks it was the 3rd leading cause. For the period between 2005 and 2009, homicide was the leading cause of death among non-Hispanic black men 5-44 years of age,

Table 22.1. Homicide deaths among Kansas City, MO, residents, 2009

	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other	Total
Male	15	61	3	2	81
Female	4	14	0	0	18
Total	19	75	3	2	99

as well as among non-Hispanic black women 15-34 years of age.

Figure 22.5. Distribution by age of homicide deaths among Kansas City, MO, residents, 2009





Literature cited

¹ Karch DL et al. Surveillance for violent deaths - National Violent Death Reporting System, 16 states, 2006. *MMWR Surveill Sum* 2010;59:SS-4. www.cdc.gov

² Minino AM et al. Deaths: preliminary data for 2008. *Natl Vital Stat Rep* 2010;59:#2. www.cdc.gov/nchs