

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

**2005 ANNUAL REPORT**

During 2005 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's office assumed jurisdiction in 113 death investigations that involved forensic autopsies, toxicological examinations, viewing and summary reporting. In addition, 133 other additional cases were reported and investigated and no jurisdiction was assumed (NJA). Medical evidence collected on 60 reported sexual assault cases in Whatcom County was processed by the Medical Examiner's office and summary reports were provided to the involved agencies.

The Medical Examiner also participated in the multi-disciplinary Child Death Review Committee for deaths of children under the age of 18. From time to time local agencies also 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.

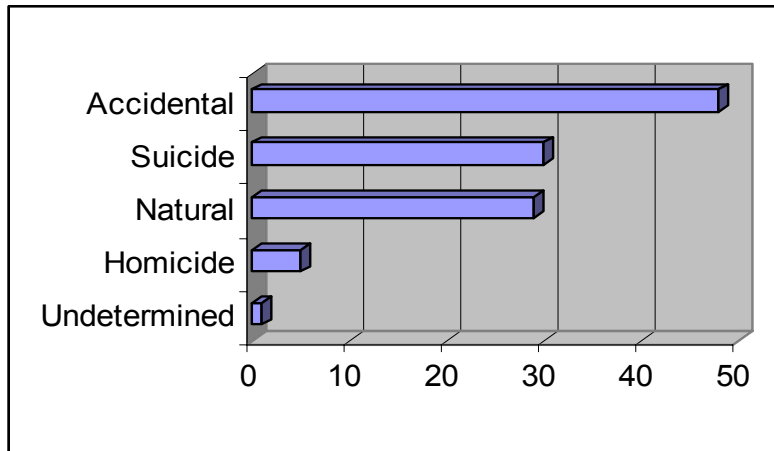
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**Gary Goldfogel, MD  
Whatcom County Medical Examiner**

## MEO Annual Report 2005

During 2005 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's Office conducted 113 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 ages and sex of those who died.

### Whatcom County MEO Death Investigations 2005



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

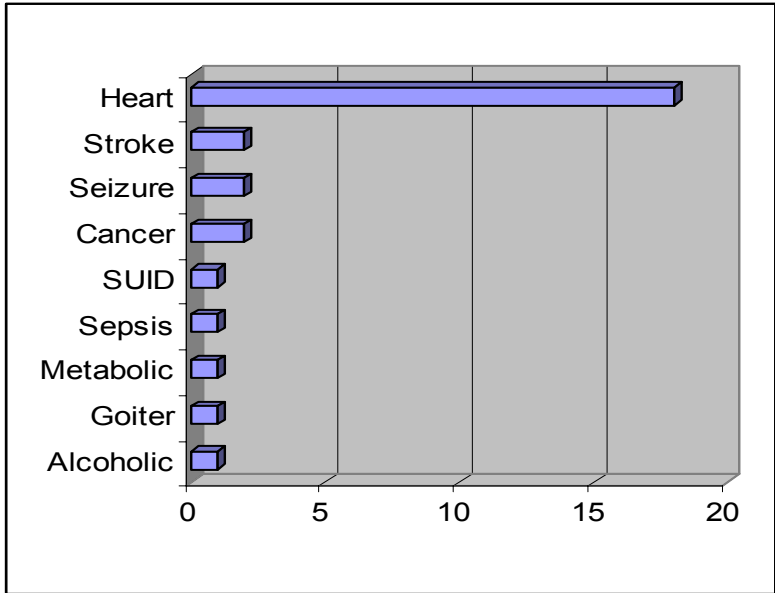
#### **NATURAL:**

There were 29 total natural deaths of which 17 were male and 12 female. The cause of death was as follows: Heart (18), Cancer (2), Stroke (2), Seizure (2), Goiter (1), SUID (1), Metabolic (1), Alcoholic (1) and Sepsis (1).

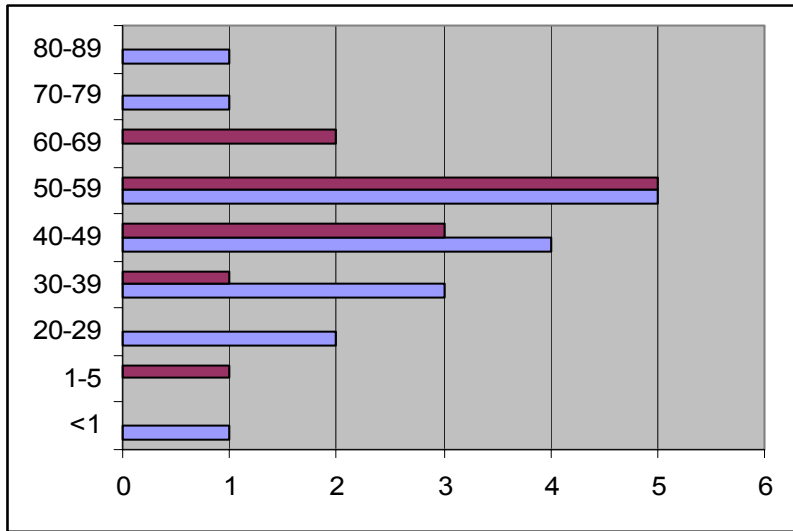
By age, approximately 3% were less than one year old, 3% between 1-5, 7% between 20-29, 13% between 30-39, 24% between 40-49, 34% between 50-59, 7% between 60-69, 3% between 70-79 and 3% between 80-89 years of age.

Marijuana were present in 10% of the natural deaths.

### Natural Deaths by Cause



### Natural Deaths by Age and Sex



\*Light bars are male and dark bars are female.

**ACCIDENTAL:**

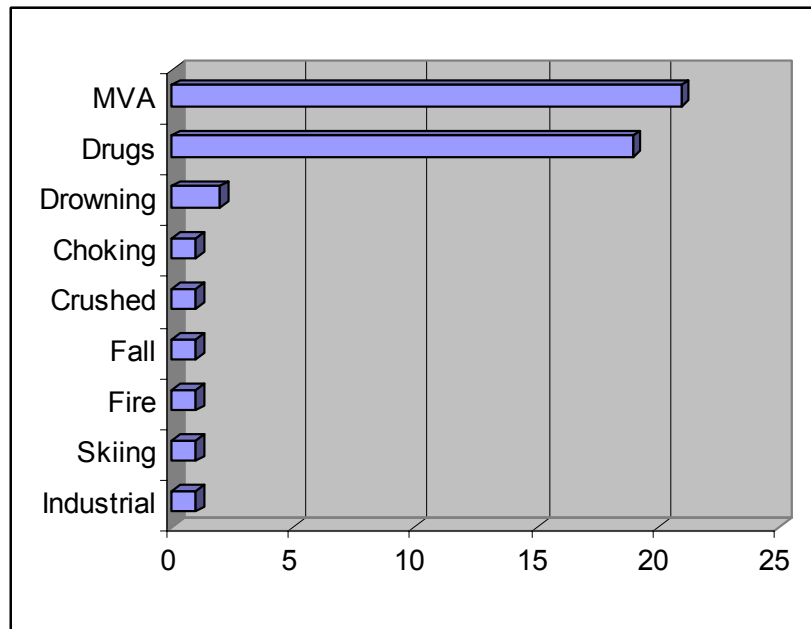
There were 48 total accidental deaths of which 34 were male and 14 female. The cause of death was as follows: Traffic Accidents (21), Drugs (19), Drowning (2), Choking (1), Crushed (1), Fall (1), Fire (1), Skiing (1) and Industrial accident (1).

In traffic deaths, alcohol was present 57% of the time with an average blood alcohol concentration of 0.20 gm%. Also marijuana was present 14% of the time in traffic deaths. Seatbelts were not worn in 43% of the deaths

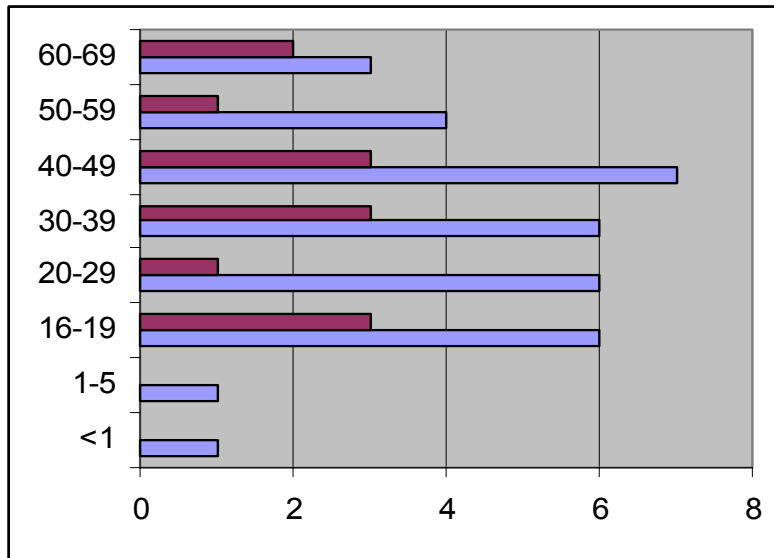
One of the drowning deaths had a blood alcohol of 0.17 gm%.

In drug related accidental deaths the following drugs were present and their percentage of the cases: Cocaine (32%), Methadone (32%), Prescription drugs (21%), Heroin (16%), Amphetamine/methamphetamine (16%) and dextromethorphan (16%). Multiple combinations of drugs were present in many of the deaths.

**Accidental Deaths**



### Accidental Deaths by Age and Sex



\* Light bars are male and dark bars are female.

### SUICIDE:

There were 30 total suicide deaths of which 23 were male and 7 female. The cause of death was as follows: Gunshot (11), Hanging (8), Drugs (6), Carbon monoxide (2), by Train (2), Laceration (1).

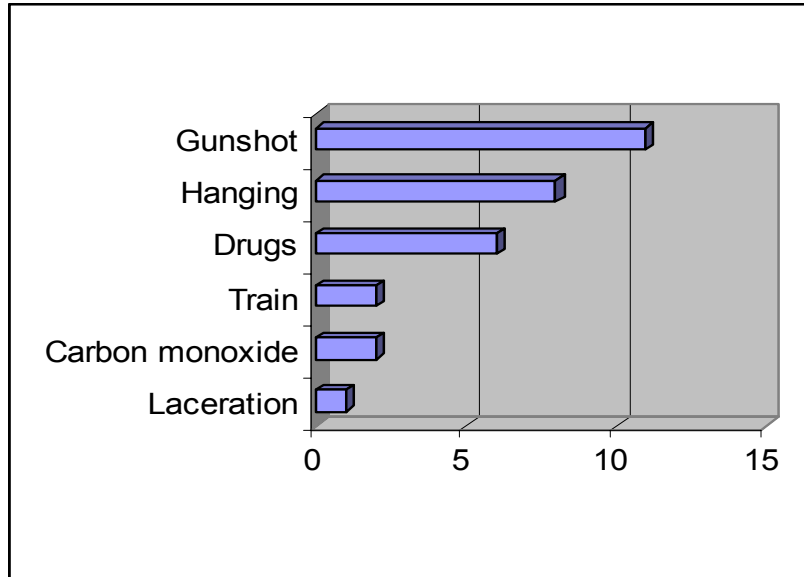
By age, approximately 9% were between 16-19, 16% between 20-29, 22% between 30-39, 16% between 40-49, 19% between 50-59, 9% between 60-69 and 3% between 70-79.

Alcohol was a factor in 20% of all suicide deaths with an average reading of 0.12 gm%. Marijuana was present in 27% of the gunshot deaths.

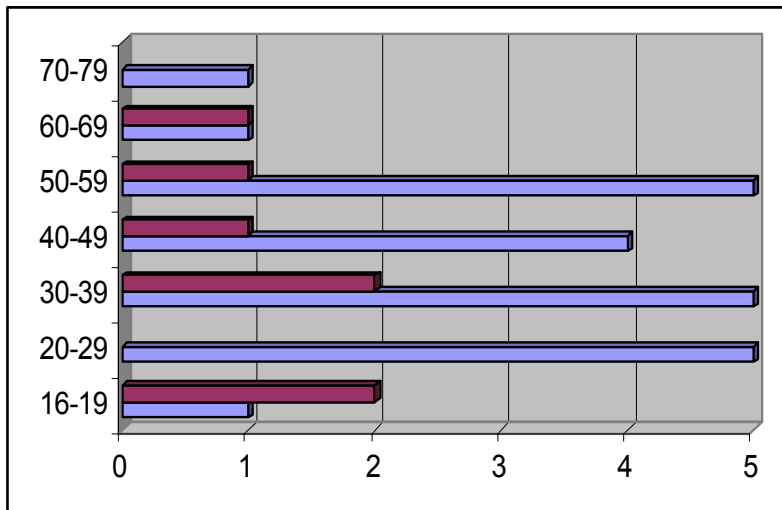
In the gunshot suicides, handguns were used 64% of the time and shotguns 36%.

In the drug related suicides opiates, cocaine, methamphetamine, methadone and prescription drugs were used.

### Suicide Deaths by Mechanism of Injury



### Suicide Deaths by Age and Sex



\*Light bars are male and dark bars female.

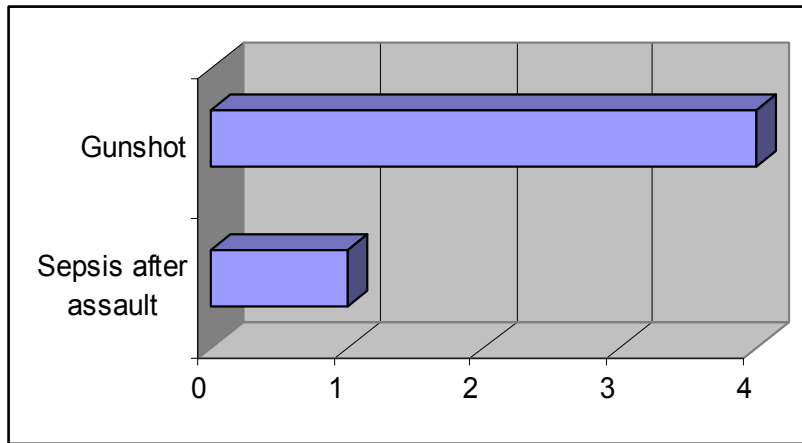
**HOMICIDE:**

There were five homicide deaths, four being male and one female. The cause of death was as follows: Gunshot (4) and sepsis following a physical assault (1). By age, 20 % of all homicides were between 16-19, 40% between 30-39, 20% between 50-59 and 20% between 60-69 years of age.

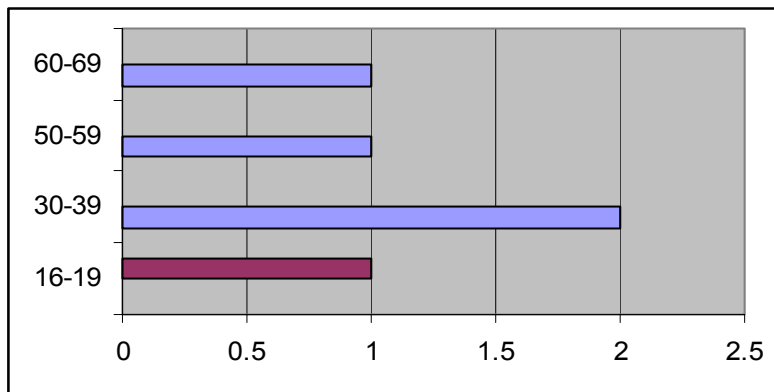
Cocaine and marijuana were present in one of the gun deaths.

Handguns were used three times and a shotgun once in the gun deaths.

**Homicide Deaths by Cause**



**Homicide Deaths by Age and Sex**



\*Light bars are male and dark bars female.

**UNDETERMINED:**

One was a full skeleton that was positively identified with manner of death undetermined.