

# Trends in Rates and Methods of Suicide

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United States, 1985-2004

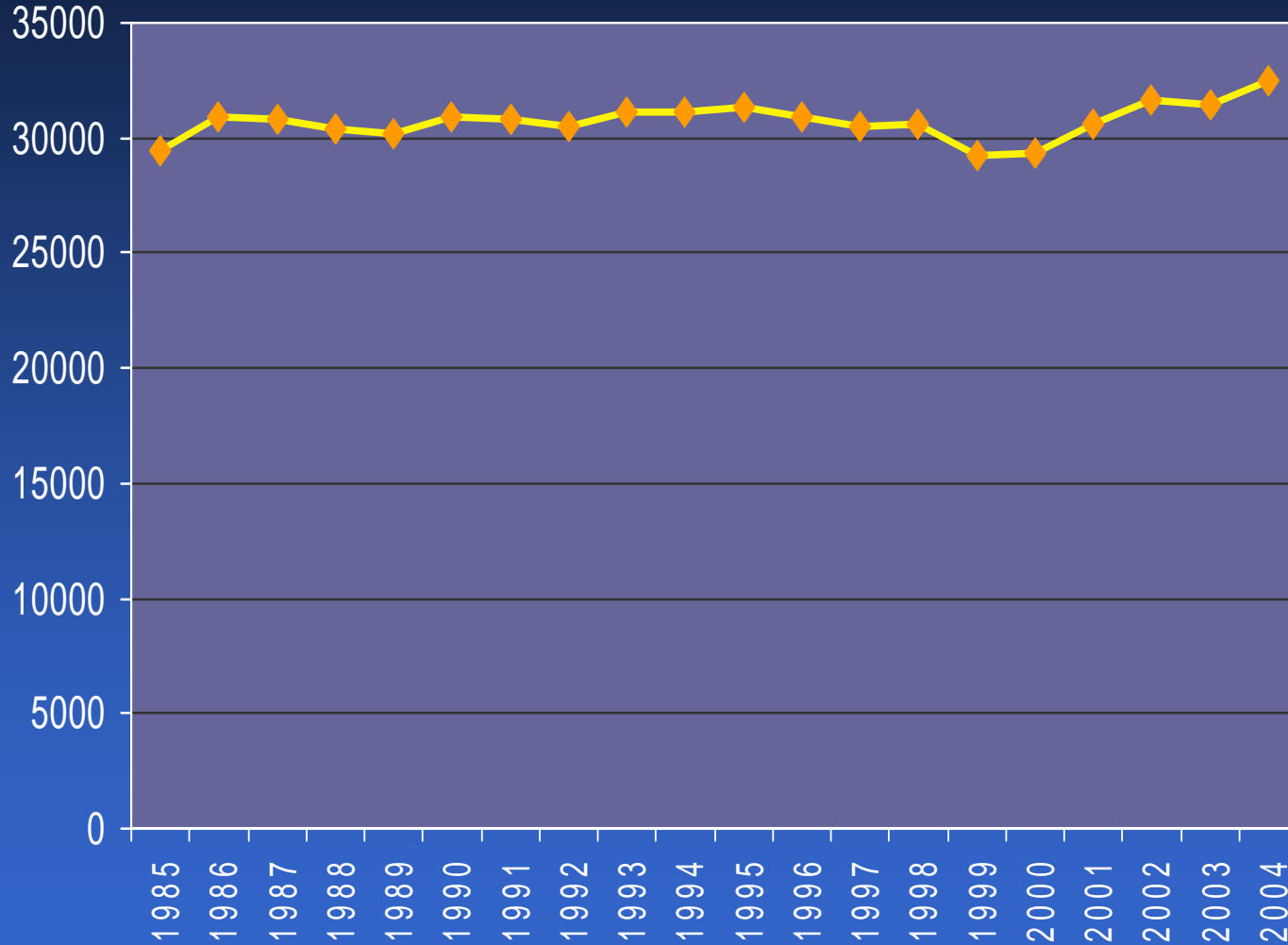
Based on US Vital Statistics data accessed from:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Available from URL:

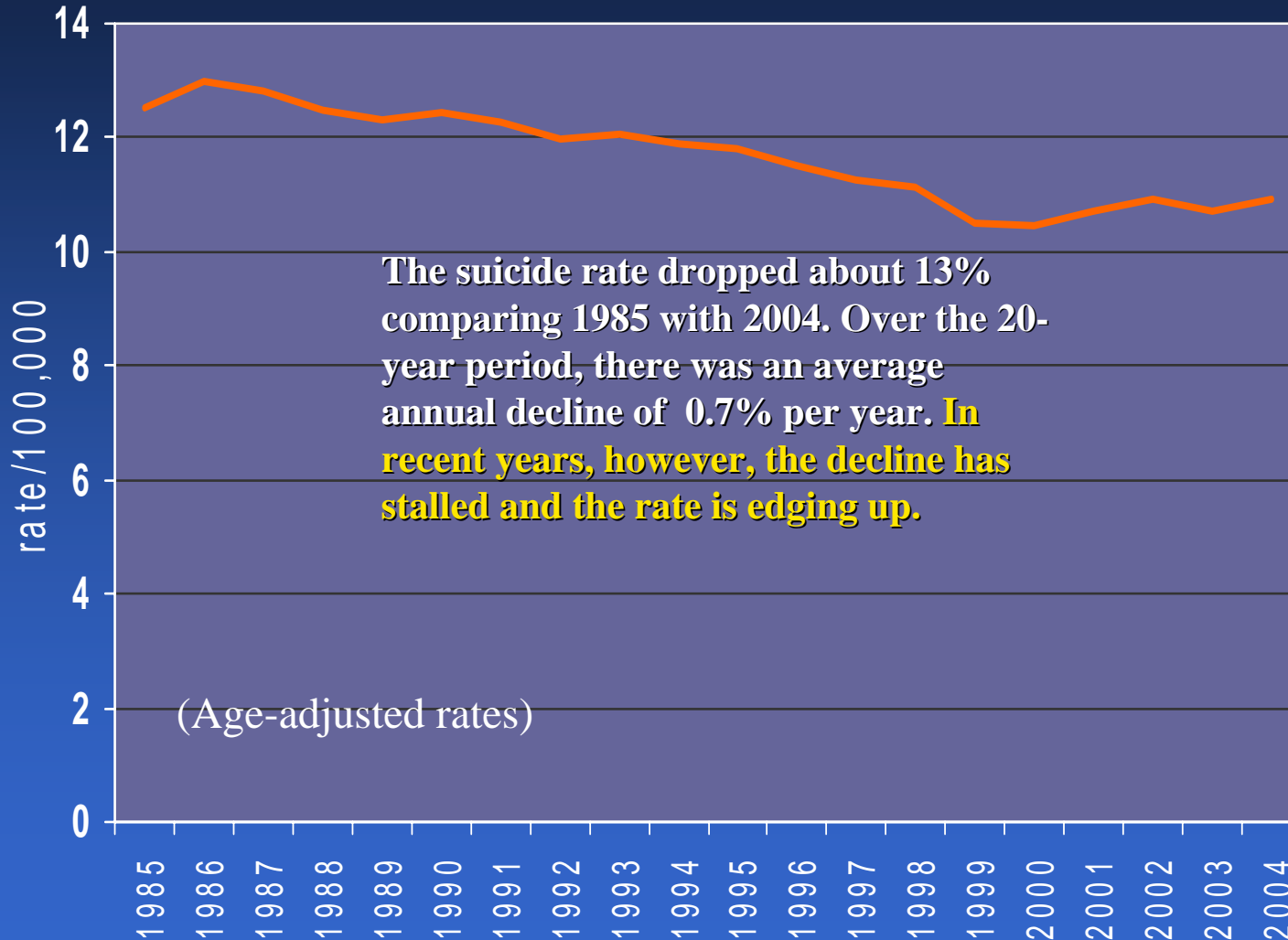
[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars)

# U.S. Suicide Deaths (numbers)



**What looks like long-term stability followed by recent increases in suicide is masked by showing only the *number* of deaths. The US population is increasing.**

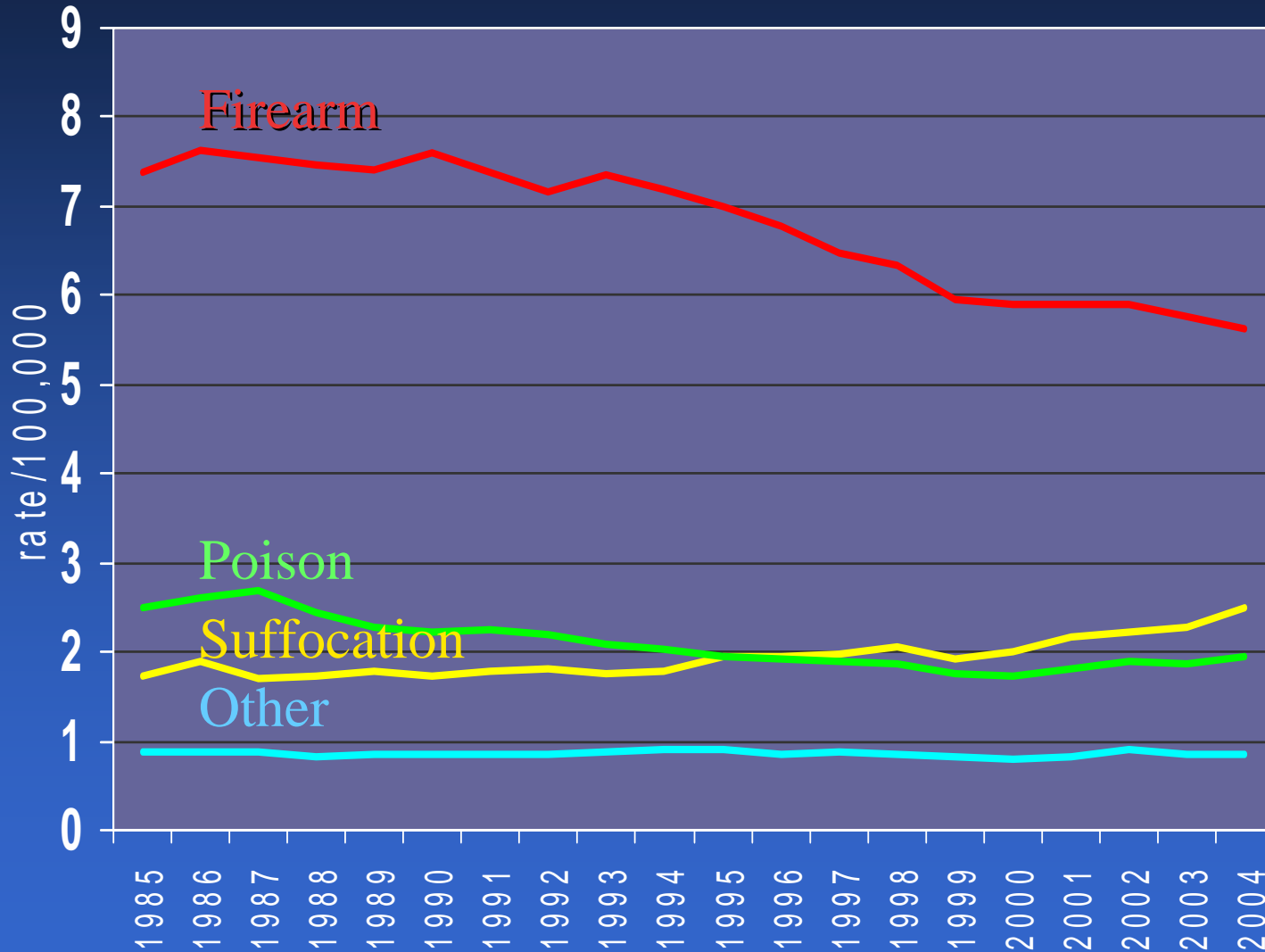
# U.S. Suicide Deaths (rate/100,000)



## Decline

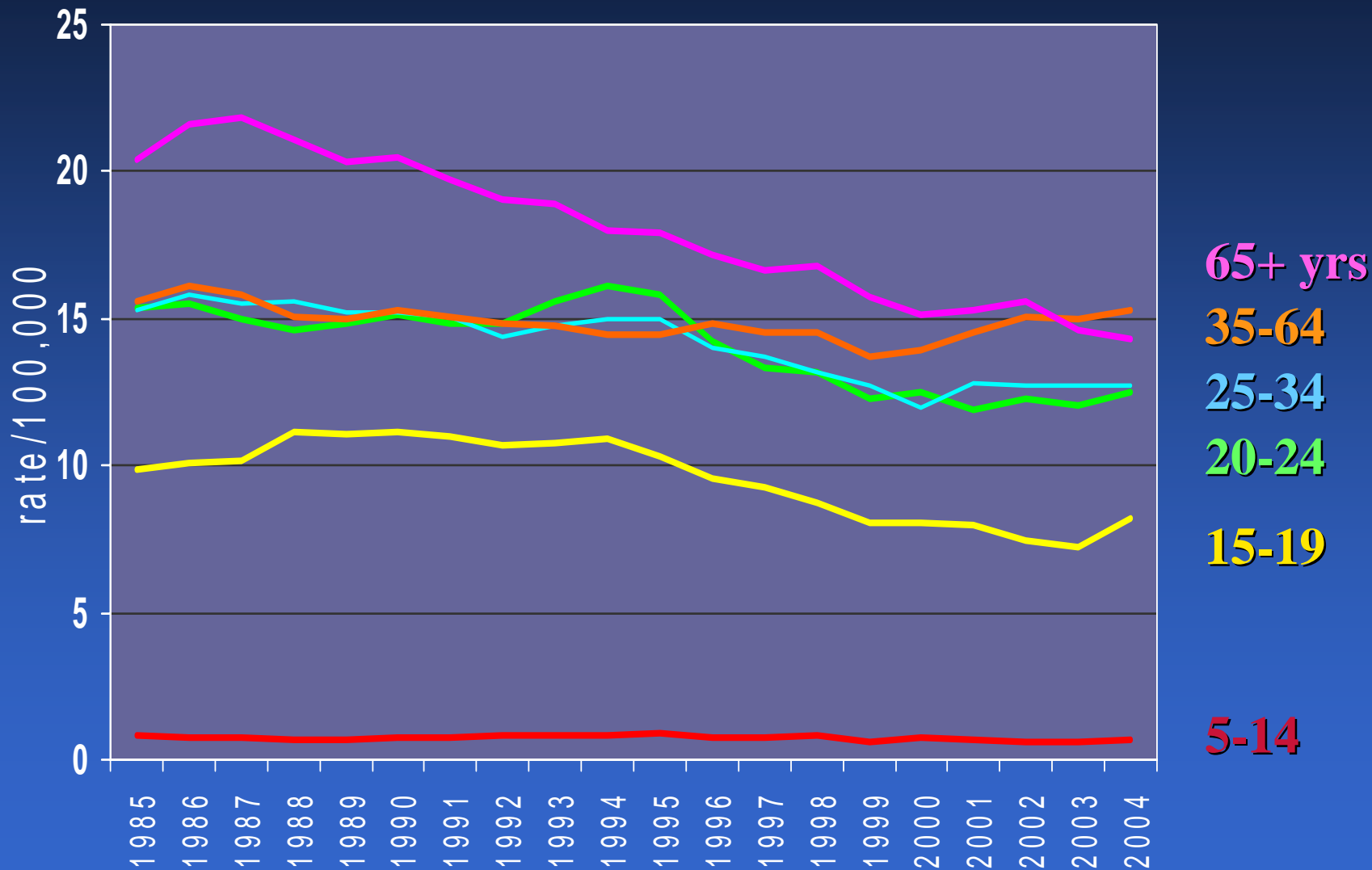
The suicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population) has declined. About 4,300 fewer deaths occurred in 2004 than if 1985 rates had applied.

# U.S. Suicide Rate, by Means



**Firearms**  
The decline in the suicide rate has largely been due to a decline in firearm suicides, particularly in the 1990s.

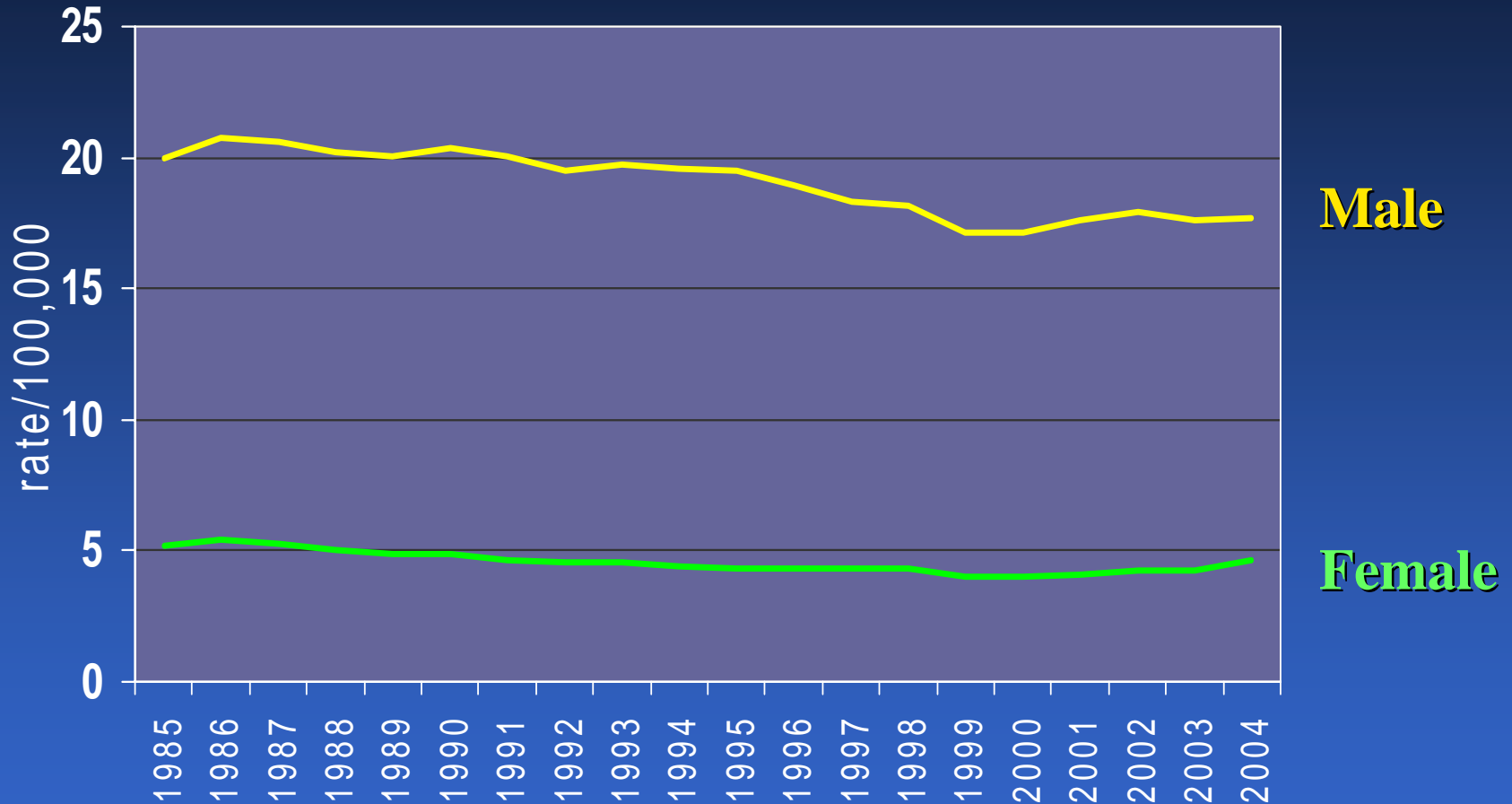
# U.S. Suicide Rate, by Age Group



# Age Groups with Declining Rates

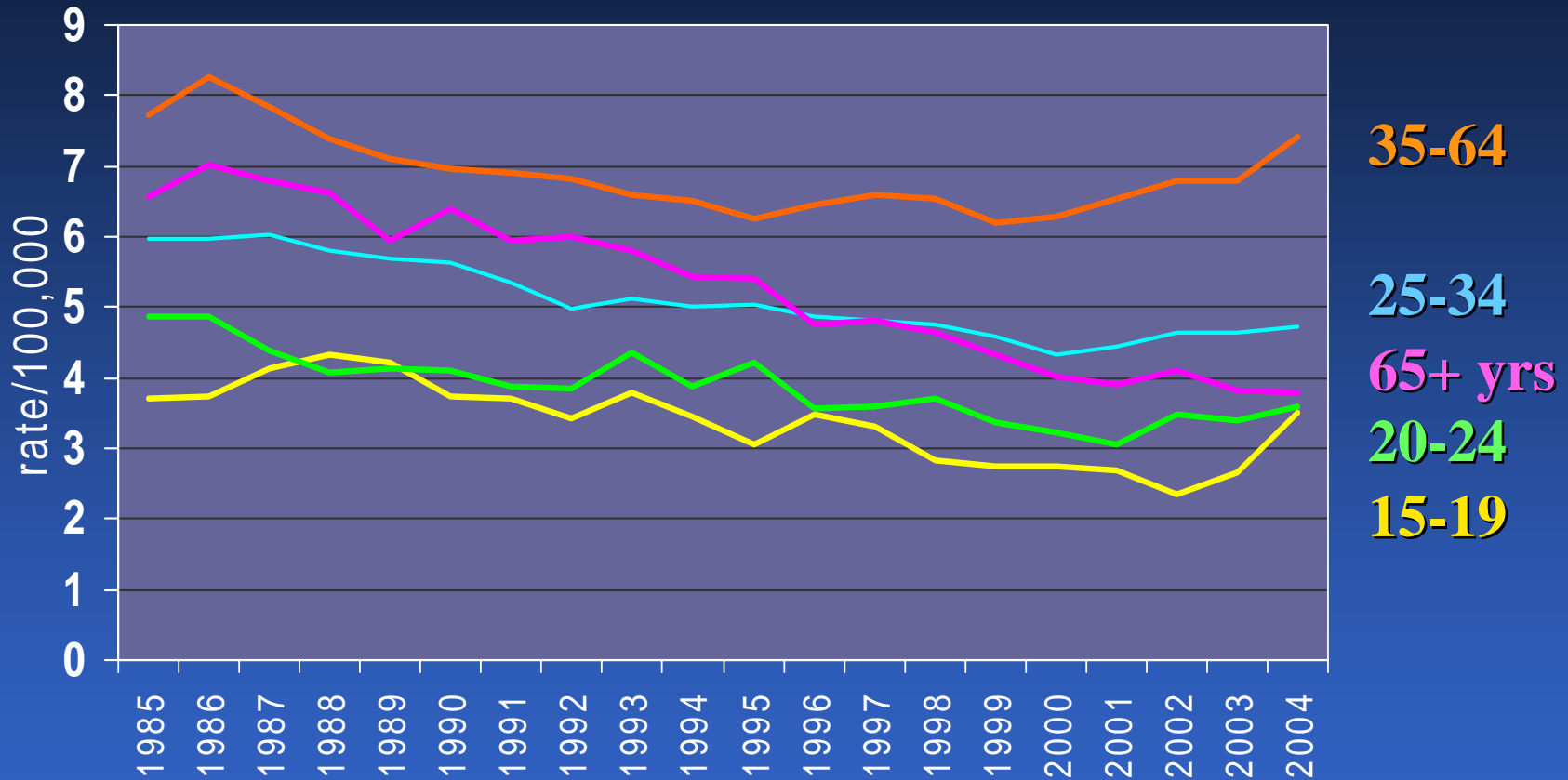
- Elders
- Younger adults
- Youths
- Not the middle-aged (35-64 years)
- 2003 marked the first year in the 1984-2004 period in which the suicide rate of 35-64 year-olds equaled that of elders

# US Suicide Rate, by Sex



Declines were seen among both males and females until the early 2000s.

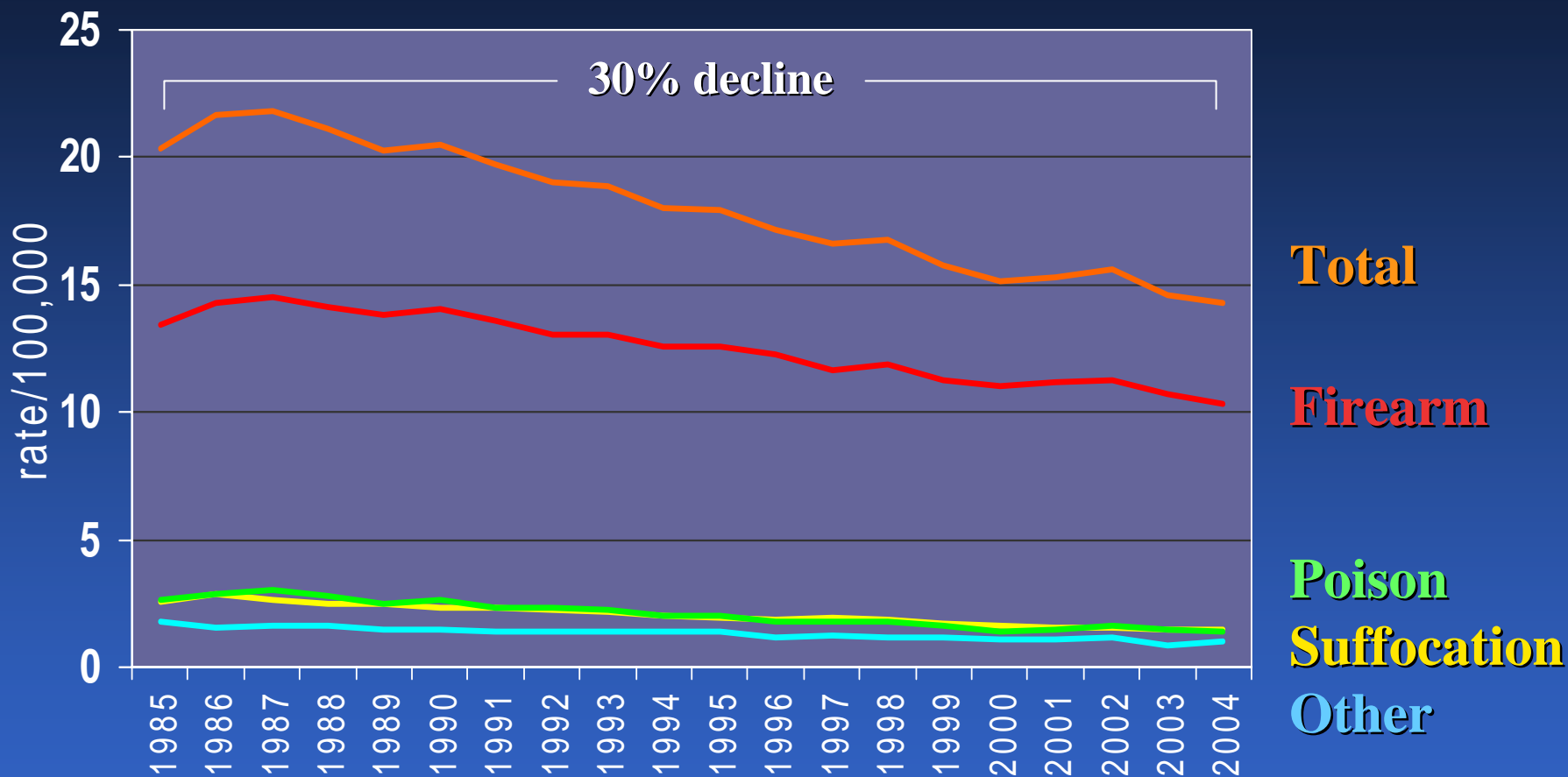
# Female Suicide Rate, by Age Group



Elder female suicide rates declined steadily throughout the period; all age groups declined in the 1990s. Middle-aged women's rates have increased since 1999.

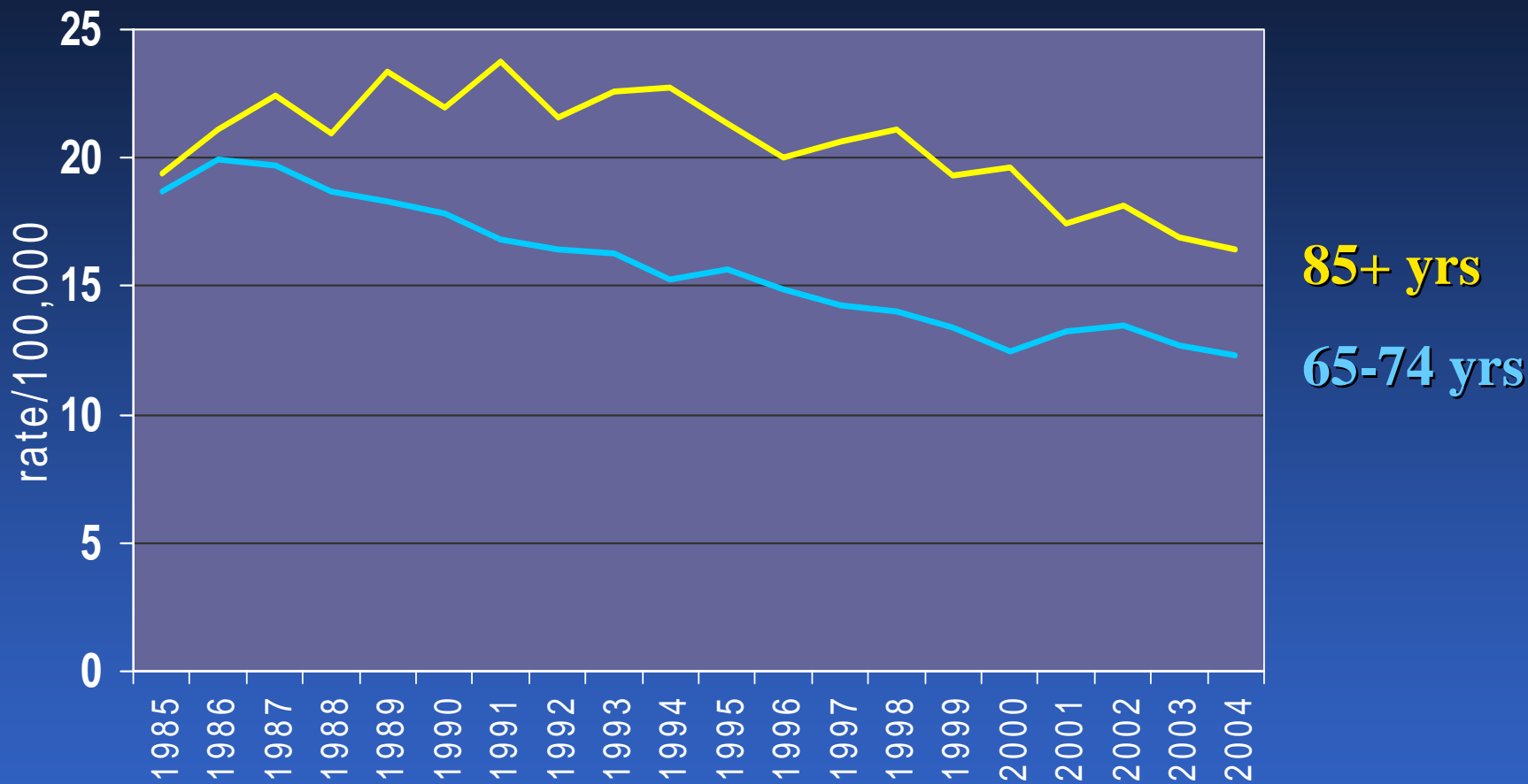


# Suicide Rate, 65+ year-olds



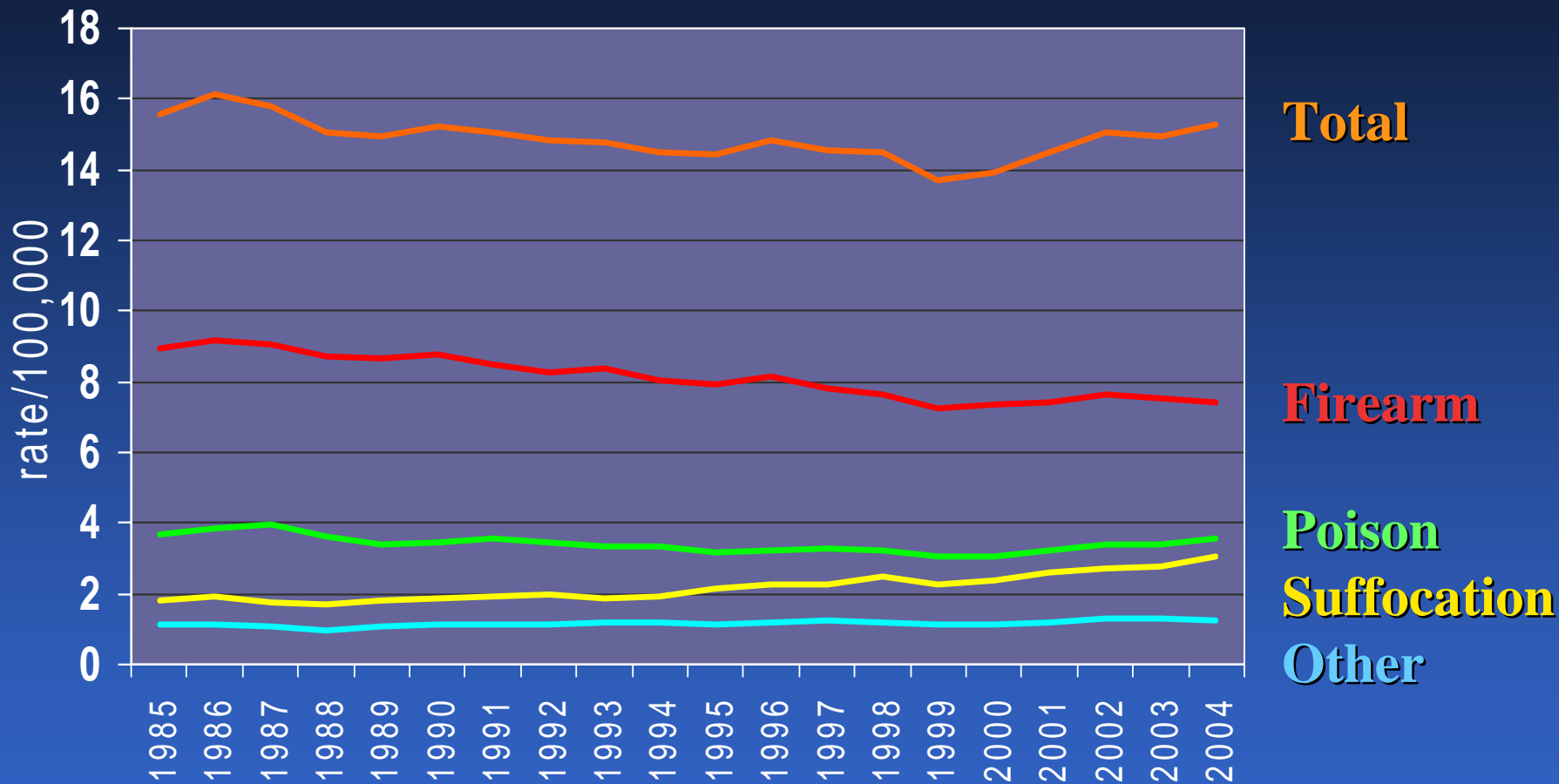
The suicide rate for elders declined steadily by all methods; drops in firearm suicide were the major contributor. During the 20-year period, the rate declined an average of 1.8% annually, or about 30% when comparing the 1985 rate with the 2004 rate.

# Suicide Rate, 65+ by Age Group



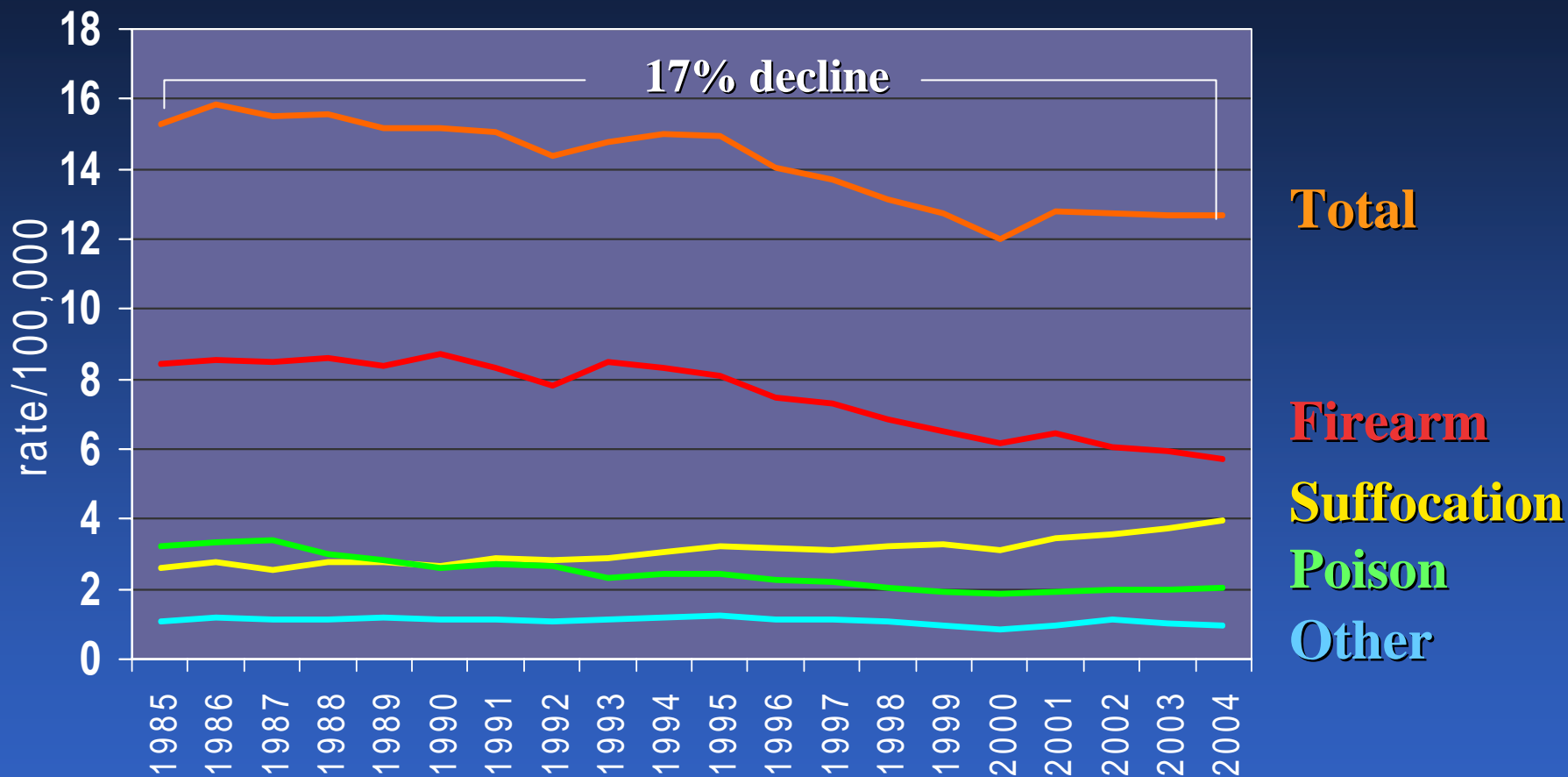
The decline in suicide rates among the older-old began more recently than among the younger-old.

# Suicide Rate, 35-64 year-olds



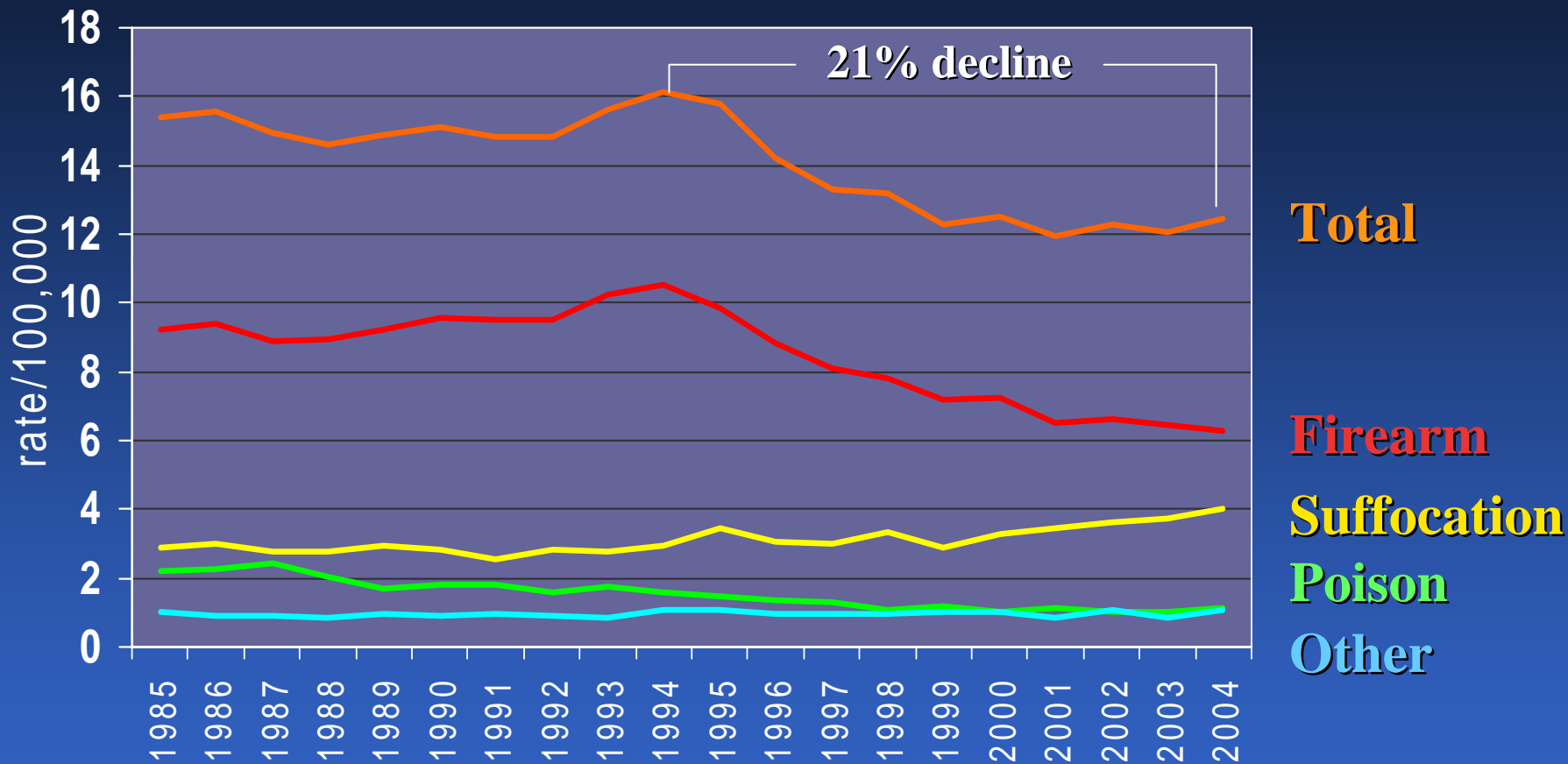
The suicide rate for middle-aged adults declined by roughly 12% from 1985-1999 but increased steadily after 1999. Because this is a large group comprising half of the suicides in the country, the recent increase is notable.

# Suicide Rate, 25-34 year-olds



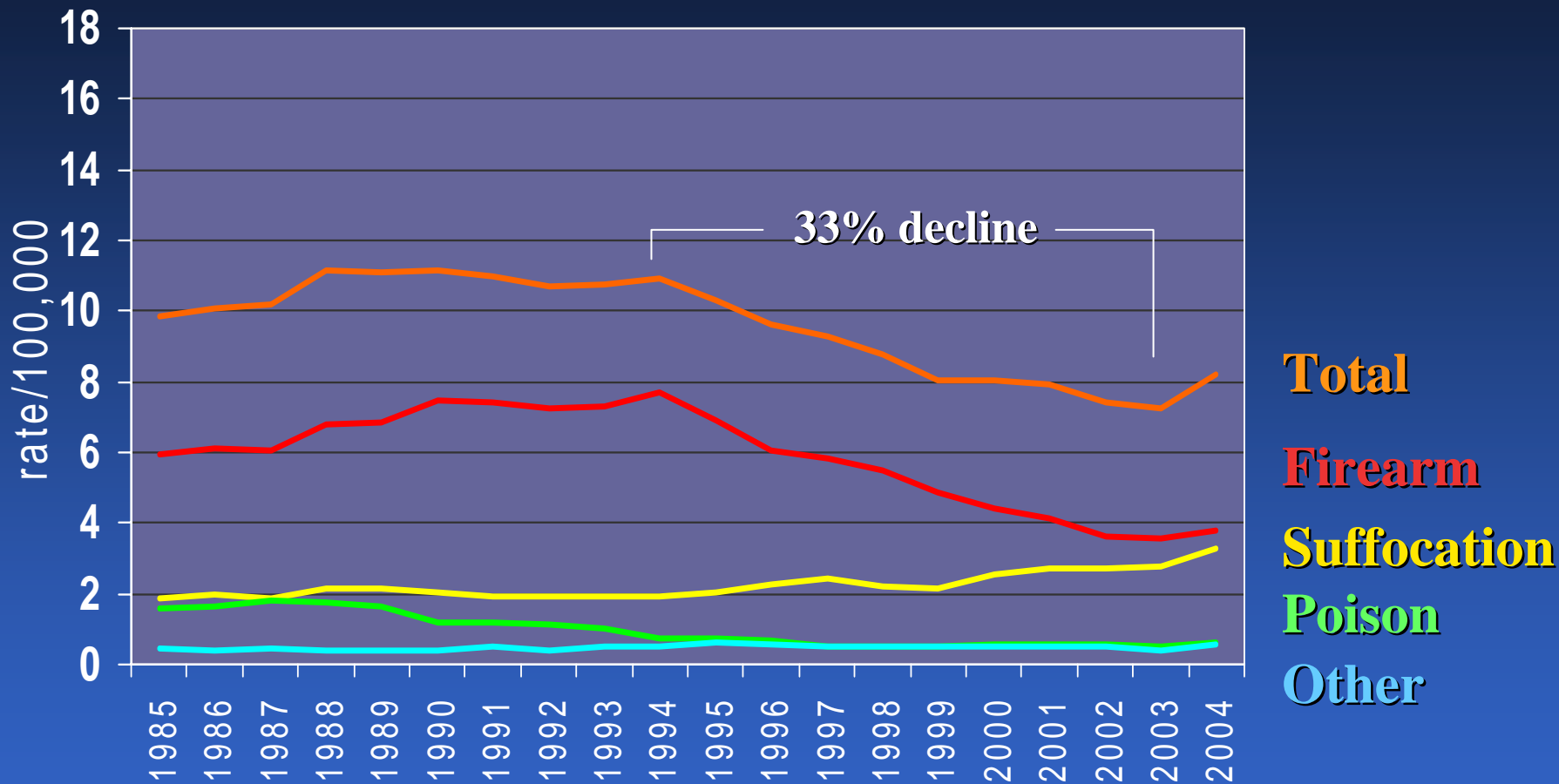
The suicide rate for 25-34 year-olds declined an average of 0.9% annually, or about 17% when comparing 1985 with 2004. A drop in firearm suicides led the decline; a drop in poisonings also contributed. Suffocation suicides have been increasing. The overall rate has been flat from 2002 to 2004.

# Suicide Rate, 20-24 year-olds



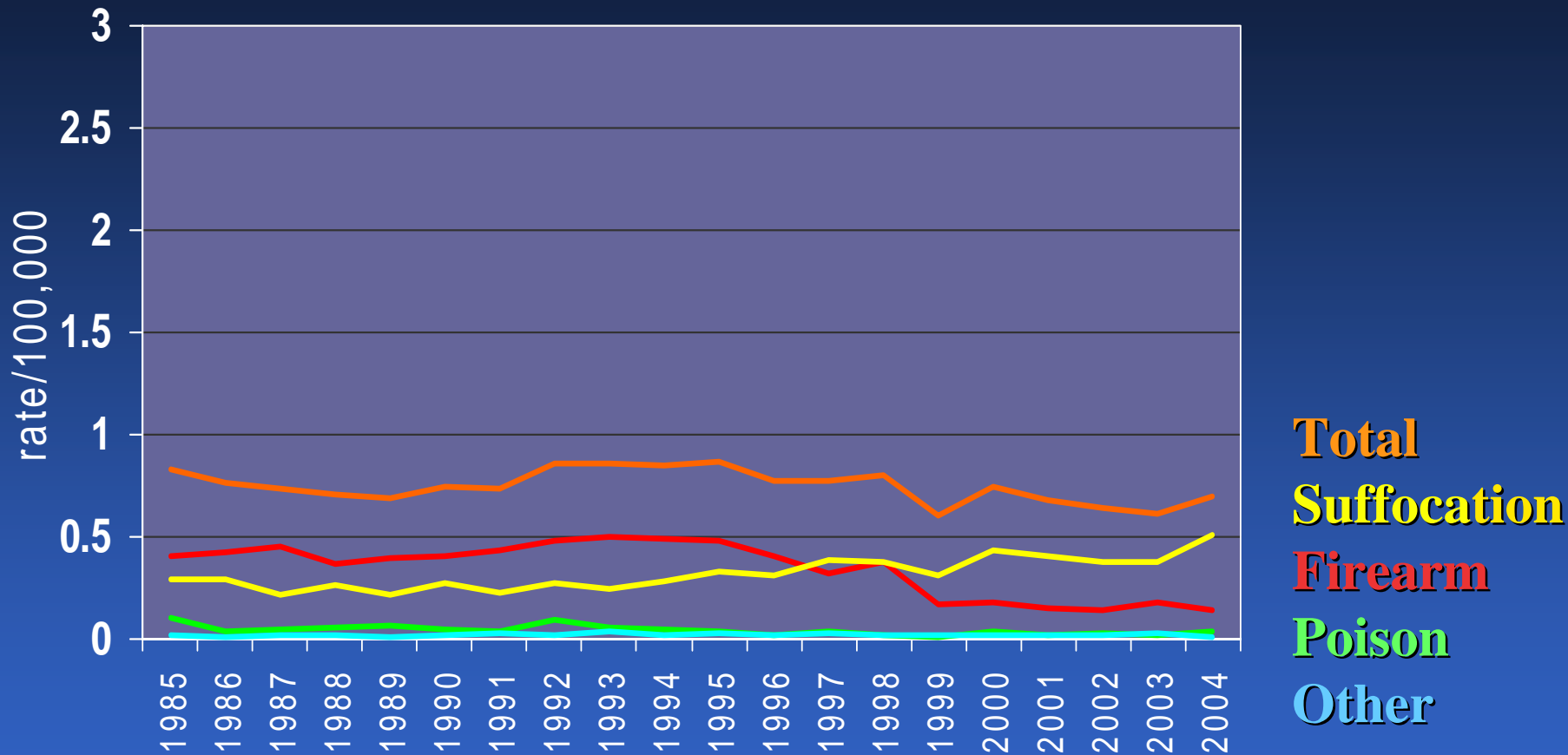
The suicide rate for young adults did not begin to decline until the mid-90s and then declined sharply. During the 10 years 1995-2004, suicides dropped an average of 2.4% annually, closely mirroring drops in firearm suicides. Suffocations have been increasing.

# Suicide Rate, 15-19 year-olds



The suicide rate for teens began declining sharply in the mid-90s. During the 10 years 1994-2003, suicides dropped an average of 3.8% annually, or 33% when comparing 1994 with 2003. Rates rose in 2004. Suffocations increased in the 2000s.

# Suicide Rate, 5-14 year-olds



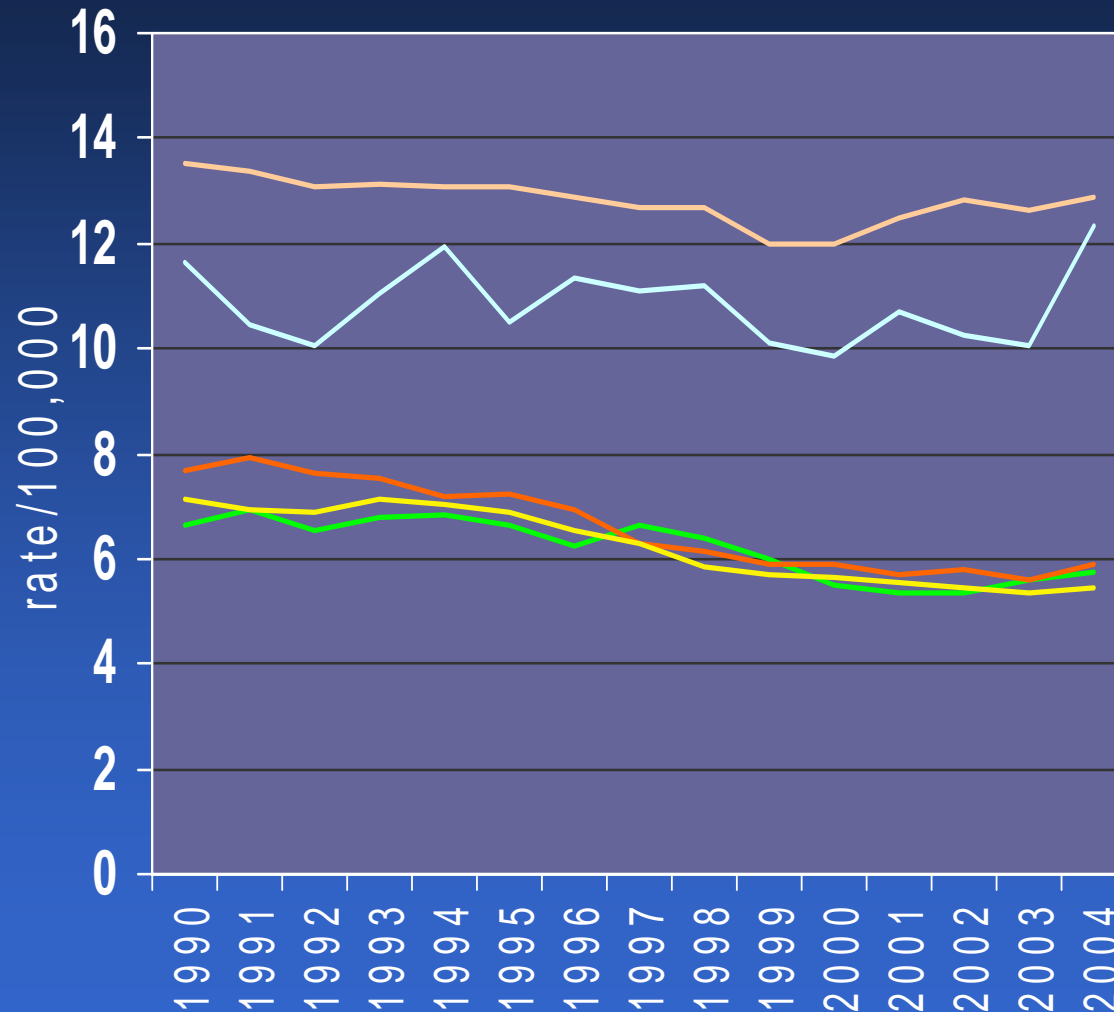
The suicide rate for children is very low (see change in scale on left axis) and is based on relatively small numbers (250-300 deaths per year). The rate began to decline in the mid-90s. This is the one age group in which suffocations have begun outnumbering shootings.

# In Which Racial/Ethnic Groups Has the Suicide Rate Dropped?

- Steady, strong drops in suicide rates among Hispanics, Black Non-Hispanics, and Asians, leveling off recently.
- More gradual decline among White Non-Hispanics in 1990s, followed by increases in the 2000s. Strong decline among white youths and elders but increases among the middle-aged.
- American Indian rates fluctuated; no steady trend. Based on 200-400 cases annually.



# US Suicide Rate, by Race/Ethnicity



White Non-Hispanic

American Indian

Black Non-Hispanic

Hispanic

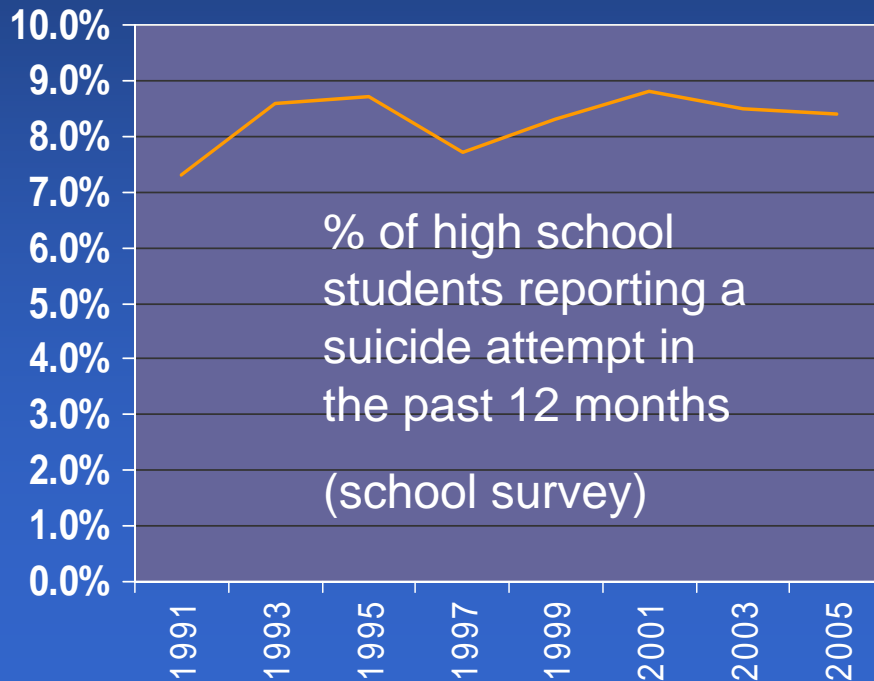
Asian

Note: Data on Hispanic ethnicity not available before 1990

# US Suicide Attempt Rates

- Attempt rates have not changed significantly, according to two national self-report surveys.

## Youth Risk Behavior Survey

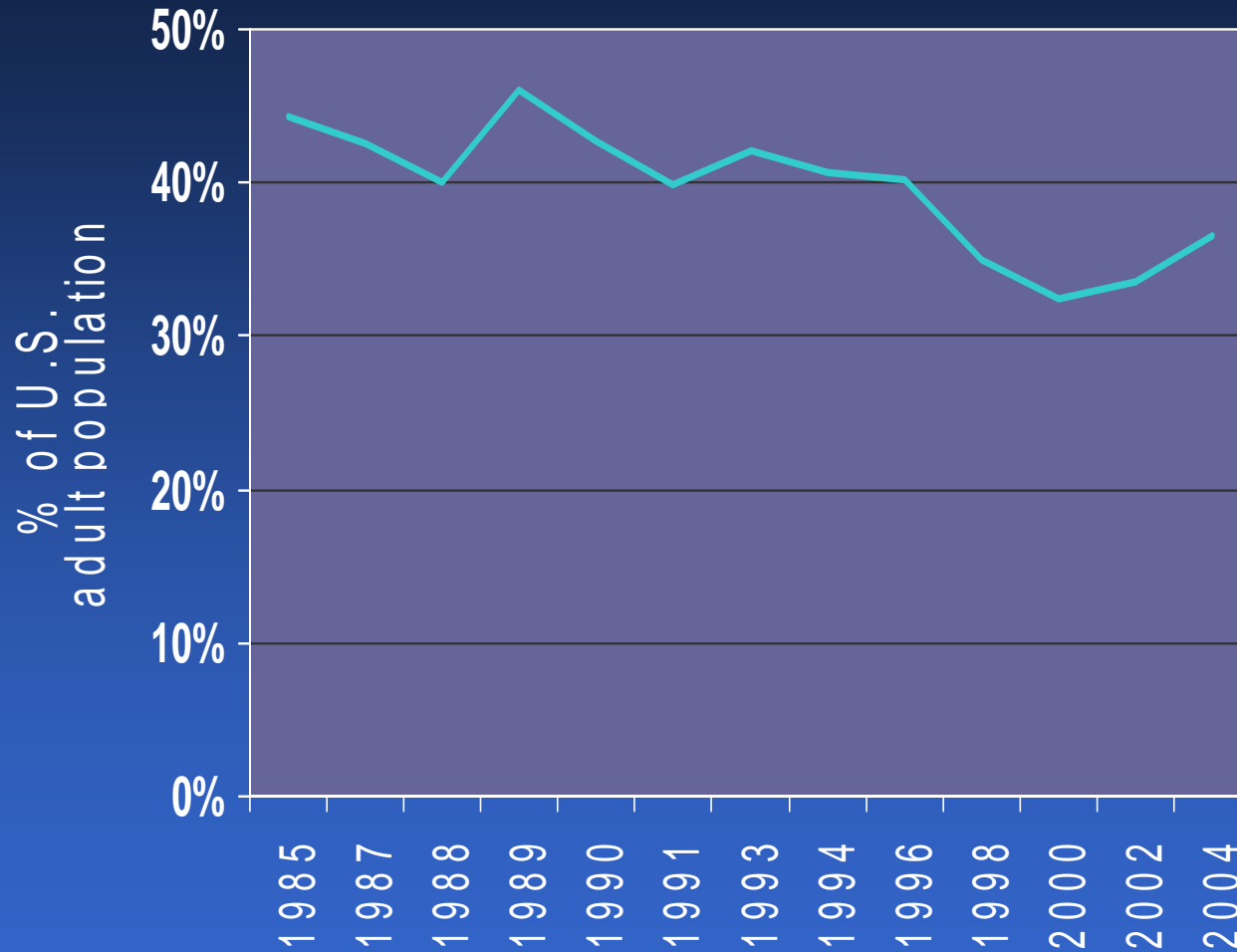


## National Comorbidity Survey

Made a suicide attempt or gesture in past 12 months	
1990-92	0.7%
2001-03	0.8%

Household survey, ages 18-54

# % of Population with Guns at Home



Source:  
NORC  
General Social  
Survey

# Summary

- Suicide rates declined over the 20-year period.
- The decline is led largely by declines in firearm suicides.
- Elder and youth suicide rates have declined; suicide among the middle-aged has not.
- Declines have been strongest among Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans.
- The declines of the 1990s have stalled or reversed in the early 2000s for all age groups except elders.
- Recent increases are largely among suffocation suicides.

# Questions, Comments?

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