

Monday, 3 September – **Embargoed till 4pm**

### **Chief Coroner releases annual suicide statistics**

Chief Coroner Judge Neil MacLean has today released provisional annual suicide statistics for the year ending 30 June 2012.

This is the third year Judge MacLean has made the annual suicide statistics available.

In the past year the total number of suicides was 547, which is a decrease from the previous year by 11. The average number of suicides for each of the past five years is 543.

“The annual number of suicides has remained relatively constant, but our latest figures show some concerning trends,” Judge MacLean said.

“Significant is the jump in teenage suicide numbers, and the continued rise of Maori suicides, in particular young Maori.”

The figures show:

- A significant rise in the number of suicides in the 15 to 19-year-old age group over the past year, from 56 (2010/11) to 80 (2011/12). The average number of suicides per year for this age group over the past four years is 55.
- A suicide in the 5 to 9-year-old age group, which is the youngest suicide case since the Ministry of Justice’s Coronial Services Unit (CSU) began collecting comprehensive suicide statistics in 2007. The sensitivities around this case are obvious and no further details about it will be made public.
- Over the past year, the number of Maori suicides has increased for most age groups, in particular the 15 to 19-year-old group, which is almost double the average of the previous four years. The average number of suicides per year for this age group, over the past four years, is around 21. There were 37 suicides recorded for this age group this year (2011/12).
- Suicides in the Christchurch region (Timaru to Kaikoura) have risen from 67 (2010/11) to 81 (2011/12). The average number of suicides per year for this region over the past four years is 74. The figure of 67 deaths last year reflected the drop in suicides post-earthquake. The phenomenon of a drop in the suicide rate after a large scale crisis event, such as a natural disaster, has been observed elsewhere.
- The number of suicides dealt with by coroners for the West Coast, Marlborough and Christchurch rose from 89 (2010/11) to 117 (2011/12).
- The rate of suicides in the 50 to 74-year-old group has dropped. The rate of suicides for unemployed people remains high compared to employed people. Students and retired people also continue to have a high rate of suicide.

“I continue to believe we need to gently bring the issue of suicide from out of the shadows,” Judge MacLean said. “Coroners have a responsibility to encourage the informed public discussion about how best to reduce the rate of suicide. To have that discussion we need up-to-date and complete information.”

**Note:**

The CSU suicide figures for 2010 differ from Ministry of Health figures released last month. There are several reasons for this. The classification system used by the Ministry of Health to code underlying cause of death is not strictly comparable with the system used by CSU to assign 'intent'. CSU data includes active cases before Coroners where intent has yet to be conclusively established. This means that the CSU figures include deaths that may eventually be found not to be suicides. In addition, Ministry of Health figures are recorded by calendar year.

NOTE: All reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the following information is accurate and current, but as a lot of it is still provisional there may be some variances in final figures.

**Table 1. Provisional Suicide Deaths and per 100,000 rates July 2007 – June 2012**

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
<b>Total</b>	540	531	541	558	547	2717
<b>Per 100,000</b>	12.20	12.04	12.26	12.65	12.34	

Note: Then per 100,000 population rate shown has been calculated following Statistics New Zealand annual population estimates.

**Table 2. Male and female provisional suicide deaths and rates per 100,000 population between July 2007 and June 2012 (n=2717)**

Year	Males		Females		Gender Rate Ratio (M:F)
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Rate
2007/2008	405	19.35	134	6.15	3.02:1
2008/2009	394	18.61	137	6.23	2.87:1
2009/2010	401	21.44	140	6.29	2.85:1
2010/2011	419	19.36	139	6.20	3.01:1
2011/2012	405	18.58	142	6.30	2.85:1

Note: The per 100,000 population rate shown has been calculated following Statistics New Zealand annual population estimates.

**Table 3. Provisional Suicide deaths reported to the Coroner by age and gender between July 2011 and June 2012 (n=547)**

Age Group (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
5-9	1	0.67	0		1	0.34
10-14	6	4.06	5	3.55	11	3.81
15-19	55	34.37	25	16.53	80	25.70
20-24	54	31.57	12	7.54	66	19.99
25-29	37	24.74	10	6.74	47	15.78
30-34	30	22.36	14	9.78	44	15.86
35-39	29	21.70	12	8.18	41	14.63
40-44	45	30.21	10	6.10	55	17.59
45-49	44	29.12	12	7.40	56	17.88
50-54	25	16.86	13	8.28	38	12.44
55-59	28	21.72	5	3.71	33	12.51
60-64	16	13.75	7	5.79	23	9.69
65-69	3	3.22	4	4.10	7	3.67
70-74	7	9.57	1	1.26	8	5.24
75-79	11	21.90	4	6.89	15	13.85
80-84	7	19.00	3	6.41	10	11.96
85 +	7	25.81	5	10.25	12	15.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>18.58</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>6.30</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>12.34</b>

Note: The per 100,000 population rate shown has been calculated following Statistics New Zealand annual population estimates for the 2012 year.

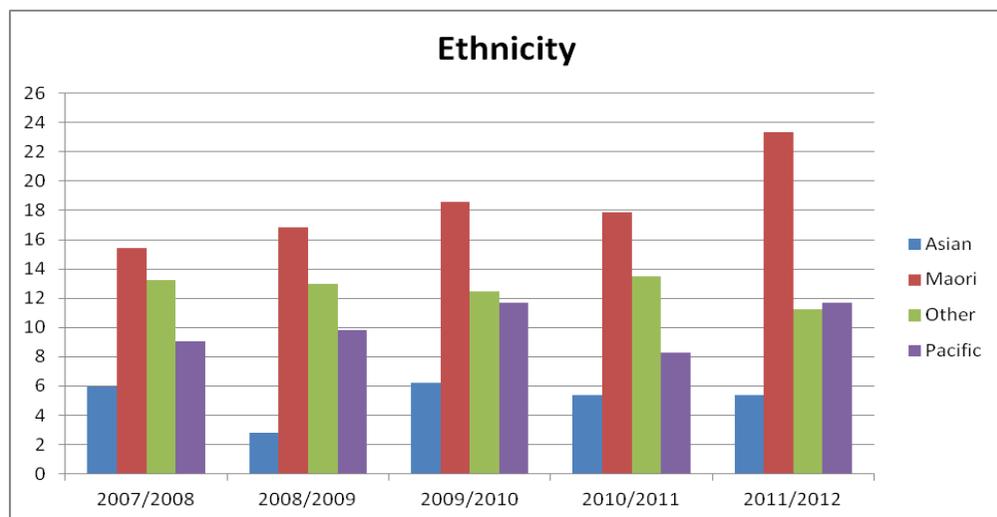
**Table 4. Provisional suicide deaths reported to the Coroner by ethnicity between July 2007 and June 2012 (n=2717)**

Year	Asian		Māori		Pacific		Other	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2007/2008	21	5.93	87	15.39	24	9.05	408	13.26
2008/2009	10	2.82	95	16.81	26	9.81	400	13.00
2009/2010	22	6.21	105	18.58	31	11.69	383	12.45
2010/2011	19	5.36	101	17.87	22	8.30	416	13.52
2011/2012	19	5.36	132	23.34	31	11.69	365	11.24

Note: The per 100,000 population rate shown has been calculated following Statistics New Zealand annual population for the 2006 census year.

Table 4 shows provisional suicide deaths by ethnicity between July 2007 and June 2012. The small numbers and volatile nature of these data for Pacific and Asian peoples makes reliable estimation of the patterns very difficult and may be misleading.

**Figure 1. Provisional suicide rates by ethnicity per 100,000 population between July 2007 and June 2012 (n=2717)**



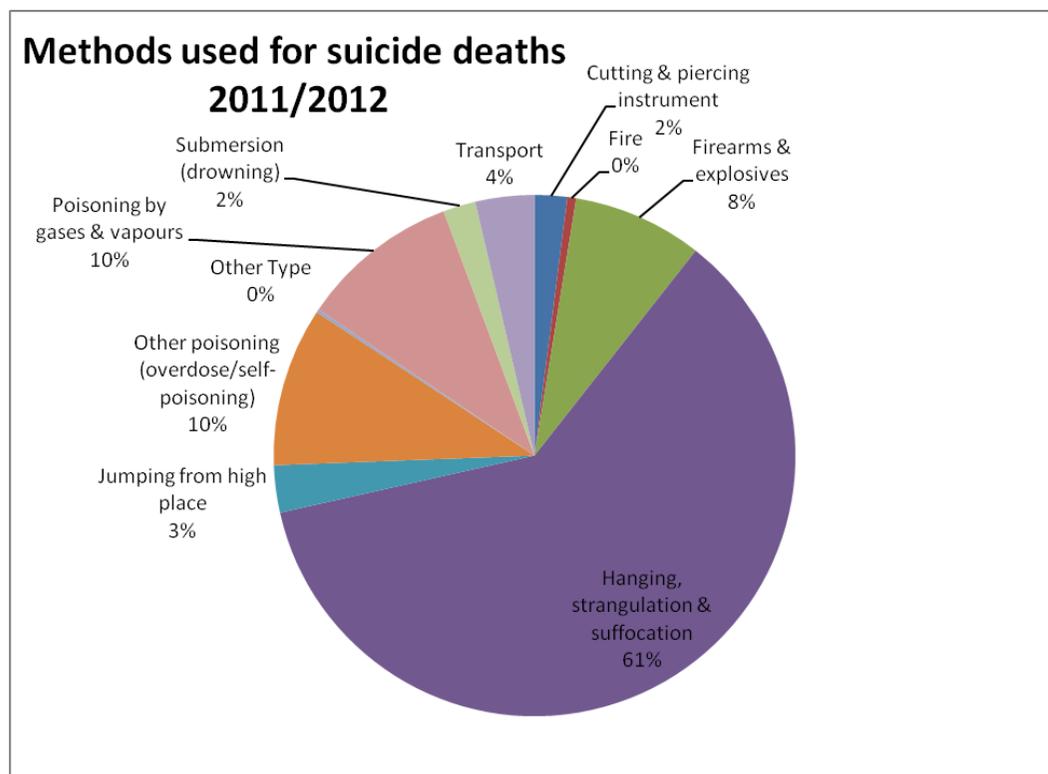
Note: The per 100,000 population rate shown has been calculated following Statistics New Zealand annual population for the 2006 census year.

Ethnic groups have classified in the following groups: Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, Other (including European, Not Elsewhere classified and New Zealand European). The small numbers and volatile nature of these data for Pacific and Asian peoples makes reliable estimation of the patterns very difficult and may be misleading.

**Table 5. Provisional Suicide deaths reported to the Coroner by method between July 2007 and June 2012 (n=2717)**

Method Type	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
Cutting & piercing instrument	10	15	9	4	11	49
Fire	4	10	3	10	3	30
Firearms & explosives	45	50	50	38	44	227
Hanging, strangulation & suffocation	295	277	321	306	333	1532
Jumping from high place	11	17	19	12	16	75
Other poisoning (overdose/self-poisoning)	72	82	66	96	54	370
Other Type			1	2	1	4
Poisoning by gases & vapours	83	56	56	61	54	310
Submersion (drowning)	11	9	10	17	11	58
Transport	9	15	6	12	20	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>2717</b>

**Figure 2. Provisional Suicide deaths by method used between July 2010 and June 2012 (n=547)**

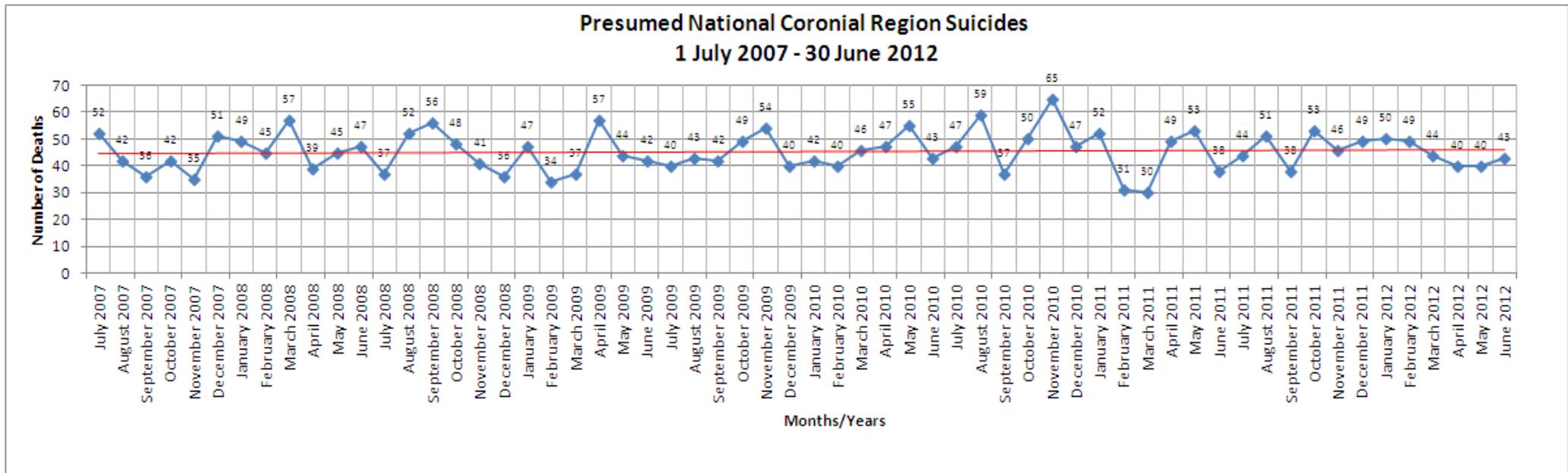


**Table 6. Provisional Suicide deaths by Coronial Region between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2012**

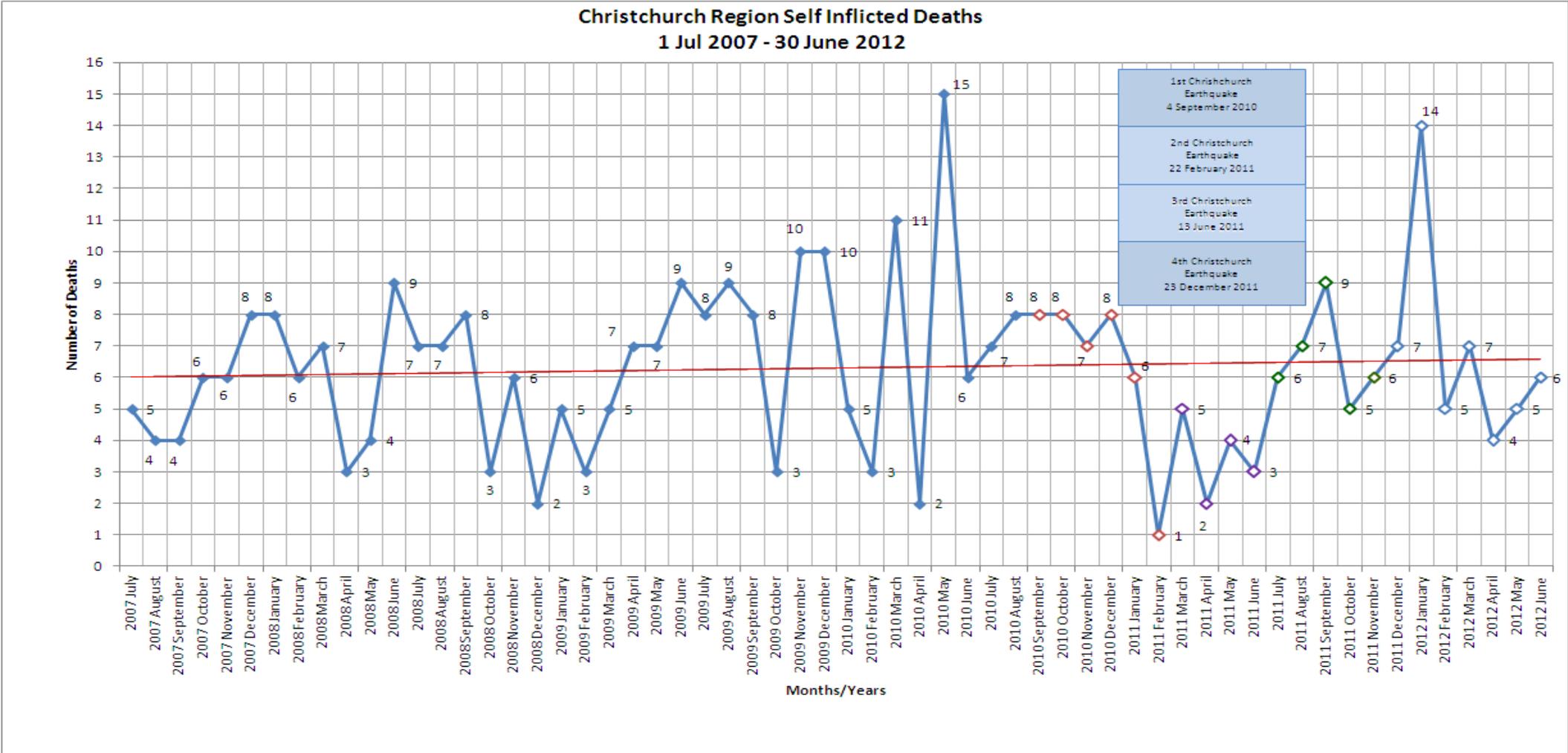
Coronial Court Name	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Auckland CS	154	146	139	151	137
Christchurch CS	92	70	80	89	117
Dunedin CS	37	50	60	45	42
Hamilton CS	48	68	55	49	40
Hastings CS	35	32	32	37	35
Palmerston North CS	53	53	54	53	51
Rotorua CS	35	53	44	60	51
Wellington CS	64	40	57	52	48
Whangarei CS	22	19	20	22	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>547</b>

Please note: A Coronial Region encompasses the geographical area a coroner’s office has jurisdiction over. The Coronial Region is identified by the location of the office.

**Graph 1. National trendline**



Graph 2. Provisional Suicide deaths in relation to the Christchurch earthquakes



**Table 7. Provisional Suicide deaths by employment status between July 2007 and June 2012**

Employment Status	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
Child not at school			1			1
Employed	232	207	208	200	195	1042
Home Duties	9	13	13	7	7	49
Other	29	17	11	21	8	86
Prisoner	4	3	5	9	2	23
Retired/Pensioner	56	56	54	53	53	272
Still Enquiring		1	6	13	24	44
Student	37	51	42	50	53	233
Unavailable	2	6	4	4	2	18
Unemployed	140	138	163	157	155	753
Unlikely to be known	31	39	34	44	48	196
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>2717</b>

**Table 8. Provisional Suicide deaths of Maori ethnicity, by age and gender, reported to the Coroner between July 2007 and June 2012**

Age Group (years)	2007/2008		2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012	
	Female	Male								
10-14	2	2	3	4	1	1	4	3	4	5
15-19	4	12	14	10	8	10	7	21	12	25
20-24	2	11	4	10	5	11	5	12	6	13
25-29	2	9	4	4	2	13	2	11	3	15
30-34	3	10	1	10	1	8	3	6	6	7
35-39	7	4		6	2	11	2	3	2	5
40-44	3	5	2	6	2	10	1	7	2	10
45-49	1	2	1	2		7	2	5	1	5
50-54		4	1	3	1	2	1	5	2	3
55-59		3	1	3	3	3				4
60-64		1		3	1	2		1		1
65-69				1						
70-74				2		1				1
Total	24	63	31	64	26	79	27	74	38	94