

# Summary Report

## Halton Self-Harm and Suicide Report

Self-harm is a serious public health issue in Halton Region and throughout Canada, particularly among adolescents and young adults. The [Halton Self-Harm and Suicide Report](#) examined self-harm injuries requiring an emergency department (ED) visit and/or hospitalization (2003-2013). This report also examined cases of self-harm resulting in death (suicide) from 2003-2011. The purpose of this report is to provide data on self-harm in Halton to inform prevention policies and programs.

Data for self-harm and suicide often underestimate the number of self-harm injuries occurring in a population. In many cases, it can be difficult to determine if an injury was intentional, and self-harm attempts may be classified as unintentional or undetermined intent. This report only includes self-harm injuries that resulted in an ED visit, hospitalization or death, and only represents a small portion of the self-harm injuries within the population (see **Figure 1**).

Not all cases of self-harm involve an attempt to end one's life. Self-harm, such as cutting or burning oneself, may be done as a way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger, and/or frustration. Self-harm can be linked to a variety of mental health disorders. Due to the nature of the data available, it was not possible to distinguish between self-harm with and without the attempt to die by suicide. However, it is known that people who have presented to the ED with a self-harm injury in the past have a greater risk of dying by suicide than the general population.

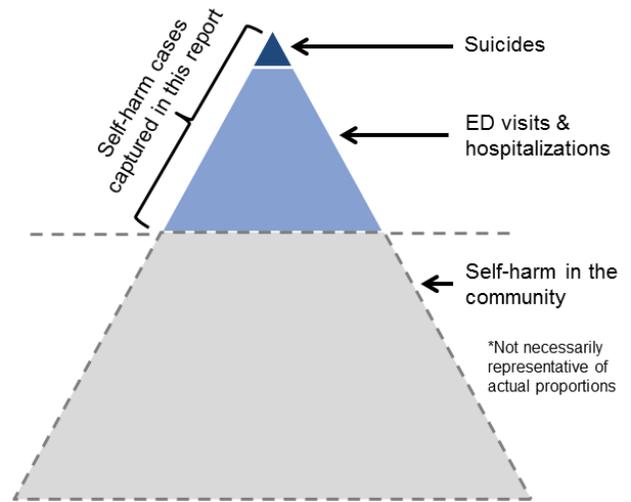
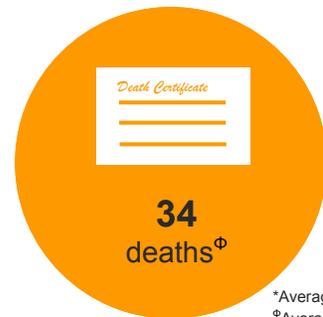


Figure 1: Pyramid of self-harm in the community

### Each year in Halton, self-harm resulted in an average of:



\*Average per year 2009-2013  
†Average per year 2007-2011

### Halton versus Ontario



The overall rates of ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths due to self-harm were either lower or the same for males and females in Halton compared to Ontario.



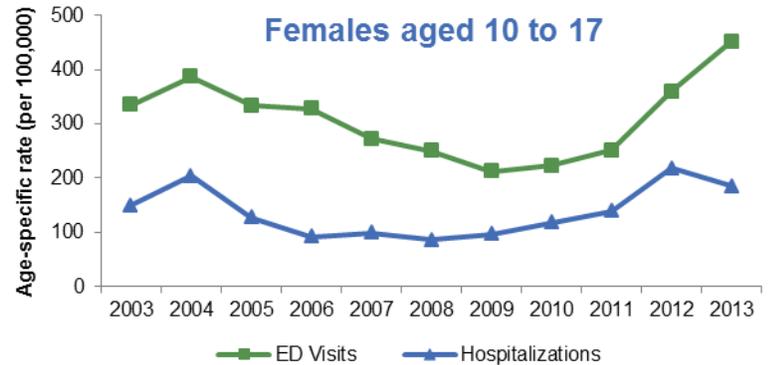
Almost **80%** of self-harm ED visits and hospitalizations were due to **self-poisoning**. The next most common type of self-harm injuries were those involving sharp objects.



**Suicide** accounted for **20%** of all injury-related deaths in Halton, and had twice as many deaths as motor vehicle collisions.

## Trends over time

- Since 2009, Halton females aged 10 to 17 have experienced an increase in ED visits due to self-harm (see **Figure 2**).
- Similarly, Halton females aged 10 to 17 (see **Figure 2**) and 18 to 24 experienced an increase in self-harm hospitalizations since about 2008.
- In general, rates of ED visits and hospitalizations due to self-harm among Halton males of all ages and females aged 25 and over have either decreased slightly or remained relatively stable since 2003.
- There were no significant changes in suicide rates in Halton between 2003 and 2011.



**Figure 2:** Age-specific rate of ED visits and hospitalizations due to self-harm, females aged 10-17, Halton Region, 2003-2013

## Sex

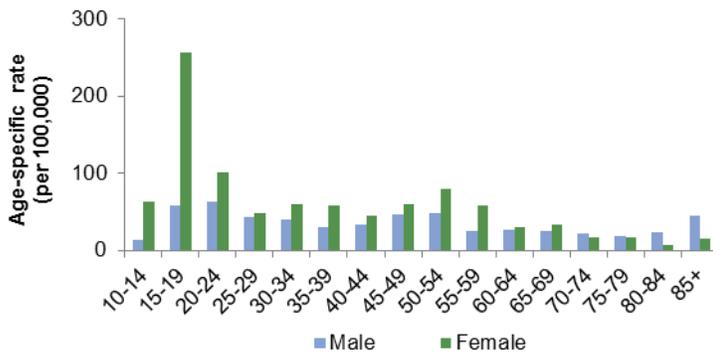


Halton females were **2x** more likely than males to visit the ED or be admitted to the hospital for self-harm.



Halton males were **2x** more likely than females to die by suicide.

## Age



**Figure 3:** Age-specific rate of hospitalizations due to self-harm, Halton Region, 2009-2013 combined

- Females aged 15 to 19 had the highest rates of ED visits due to self-harm in both Halton and Ontario. From ages 15 to 19 onwards, the rate of ED visits due to self-harm typically decreased with increasing age for males and females.
- Females aged 15 to 19 also had the highest rates of hospitalizations due to self-harm in both Halton and Ontario. The rate of hospitalizations due to self-harm typically decreased with increasing age for males and females (see **Figure 3** for Halton).
- Halton residents aged 10 to 17 had the lowest rate of deaths by suicide, and ages 50 to 74 had the highest rate.



**Municipality** of residence was related to varying rates of self-harm. Burlington residents had the lowest and Halton Hills residents had the highest rates of ED visits and hospitalizations for self-harm. There were no differences in suicide rates.



**Income** was also related to self-harm rates. The rate of ED visits and hospitalizations due to self-harm generally decreased as neighbourhood income increased in Halton. There were no differences in suicide rates by income.



For the complete [Halton Self-Harm and Suicide Report](#), the [Halton Injury Report](#) and other reports on injuries in Halton, visit [halton.ca/healthstats](http://halton.ca/healthstats) and see the Injuries section.