

Hungarian Suicide Report (2023)



1. Fatal Outcomes (Suicides)

In 2023, there were a total of 1,593 suicides in Hungary. This translates to an average of 4.36 suicides per day, with a rate of 15.77 suicides per 100,000 population. Among all deaths in Hungary, suicides accounted for 1.24%.

Overall suicide rate: 1 person dies by suicide approximately every **329 minutes** (about **5 hours and 29 minutes**).

The distribution of suicides between men and women in Hungary reveals a significant gender disparity. In 2023, there were 1,159 male suicides, with a rate of 32.6 suicides per 100,000 men. This contrasts sharply with the number of female suicides, where the rate is considerably lower.

- Male suicides: 1,159 (rate of 32.6 per 100,000)
- Female suicides: 434 (rate of 8.3 per 100,000)

1 male dies by suicide every 451 minutes (about 7 hours and 31 minutes).

1 female dies by suicide every 1645 minutes (about 1 day, 3 hours, and 25 minutes).

Suicide rates vary significantly across **age groups** (2020 data):

- 15–24 years: 6.3 per 100,000
- 25–34 years: 10.3 per 100,000
- 35–44 years: 14.4 per 100,000
- 45–54 years: 21.9 per 100,000
- 55–64 years: 27.0 per 100,000
- 65 years and older: 33.8 per 100,000

Among **older adults (65 years and older)**, one person dies by suicide approximately every **28 hours**. In the **middle-aged group (45-64 years)**, a suicide occurs every **13 hours**. For **young adults (15-24 years)**, the rate is lower, with one suicide happening every **3 days and 12 hours**.

Between 2000 and 2020, the suicide rate per 100,000 population decreased by almost half. In 2000, there were 51 suicides per 100,000 men and 15 per 100,000 women. By 2020, this rate had fallen to 28 for men and 8 for women. During this period, the gap between male and female suicide rates slightly increased, with men being nearly four times more likely to die by suicide than women in 2020.

The decrease in suicide rates varied by age group between 2000 and 2020:

- The 25-54 age group saw the largest decrease, with rates falling by 57-67%
- The 15-24, 55-64, and 65+ age groups saw smaller decreases of 39-48%

By 2020, the most at-risk groups for suicide were men and women aged 55-64 and 65+, for both genders.

2. Nonfatal Outcomes (Suicide Attempts)

For every suicide, there are estimated* to be approximately 25 suicide attempts. In 2023, this means there were an estimated 39,825 suicide attempts in Hungary. Among younger individuals, the ratio of attempts to suicides is higher, potentially as high as 100:1. This indicates a significantly larger number of attempts among young people compared to older adults.

- Serious Thoughts of Suicide: Approximately 432,000 people (4.5% of the population).
- Suicide Plans: About 51,840 people (12% of those with serious thoughts).
- Suicide Attempts: Estimated 39,825 attempts (**9.22%** of those with serious thoughts of suicide).
- Suicides: 1,593 deaths.

3. Exposure and Suicide Loss Survivors

Exposed individuals are those who personally know someone who has died by suicide. Research (Cerel et al., 2019) estimates that for each death by suicide, approximately 135 people are exposed. In 2023, with 1,593 suicides, this equates to 215,055 people exposed to suicide in Hungary, a country with a population of 9.6 million.

Among those exposed, some experience severe distress and disruption in their lives. These individuals are referred to as Suicide Loss Survivors, and more than 6 individuals (Drapeau & McIntosh, 2020) are deeply affected by each suicide. This means there were approximately 9,558 suicide loss survivors in 2023.

Cumulatively, from 1990 to 2023:

- 53,317,782 people have been exposed to suicide
- 2,176,236 people have been severely impacted as suicide loss survivors.

4. Methods of Suicide (2023 Data)

When examining a 41-year period, it becomes clear that hanging is by far the most common suicide method in Hungary, accounting for 57.4% of all cases (Zonda et al.,

2013). This is followed by self-poisoning with drugs or chemicals at 24.2%, meaning these two methods together represent 81.6% of all suicides. The third most common method, though much less frequent, is jumping from heights, which has seen an increase in recent years.

The gender differences in methods are notable:

- Men are almost twice as likely to use hanging as women.
- In contrast, women are 2.5 times more likely to use self-poisoning than men.
- Women also use drowning and jumping from heights about twice as often as men, although these methods are generally rare.

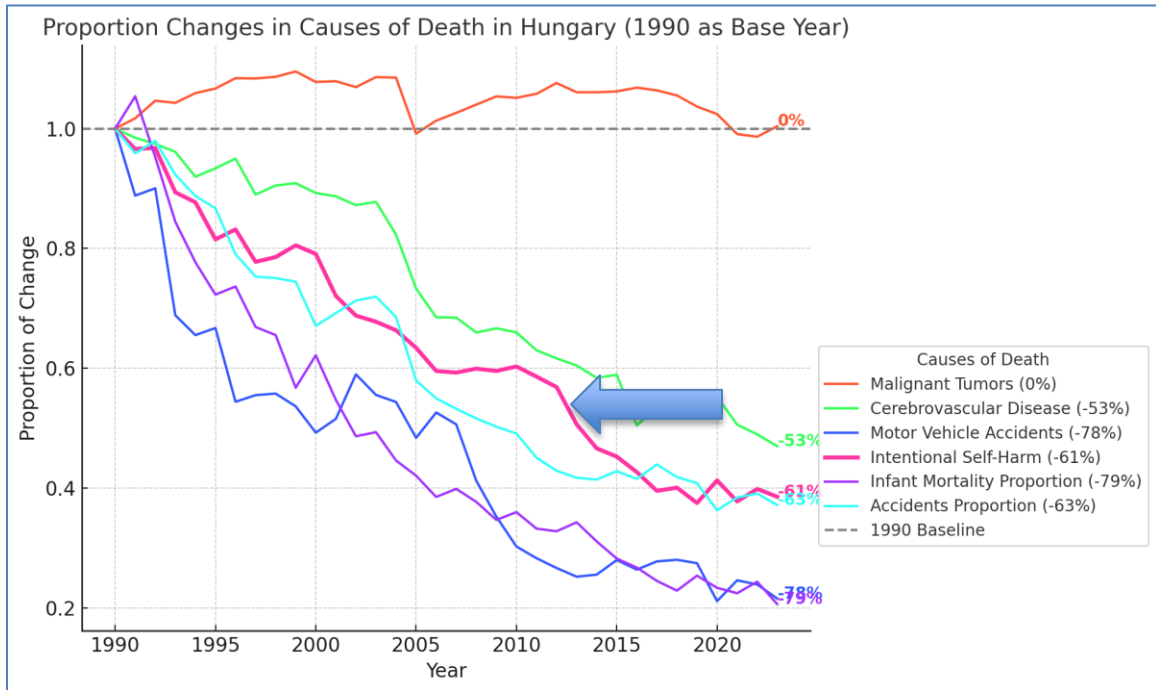
5. Top 10 Causes of Death in Hungary (2023)

Here is a list of the top 10 causes of death in Hungary in 2023, with their death rates per 100,000 people and the total number of deaths:

Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths	Rate per 100,000 (2022, 9.6 M population)
1	Cardiovascular diseases (e.g., heart disease, stroke)	57 680	600,8
2	Malignant tumors (cancers)	33 325	347,1
3	Chronic respiratory diseases (e.g., COPD, asthma)	10 254	106,8
4	Liver diseases (e.g., cirrhosis, hepatitis)	5 384	56,1
5	Cerebrovascular diseases (e.g., stroke)	5 256	54,8
6	Diabetes	4 872	50,8
7	Accidents (including motor vehicle accidents)	2 820	29,4
8	Kidney diseases	2 563	26,7
9	Suicide	1 593	16,6
10	Influenza and pneumonia	1 538	16,0

6. Suicide in Comparison to Other Causes of Death (1990-2023)

Suicide (death by intentional self-harm) rates have fluctuated significantly over the but **have dropped significantly since 1990**, marking one of the most notable improvements in public health efforts in Hungary. In 1990, the suicide rate was among the highest in the world. Since 1990 a **61% reduction in suicide rates is experienced**, with the rate falling from 51 per 100,000 men and 15 per 100,000 women in 2000 to 28 per 100,000 men and 8 per 100,000 women in 2020.



Despite this, Hungary still faces challenges, particularly among older and middle-aged men, who remain at the highest risk. However, suicide remains one of the leading causes of death, especially when compared to other preventable deaths such as accidents or chronic diseases. The chart illustrates the proportional change in the leading causes of death in Hungary from 1990 to 2023.



The data provided in this report is sourced from the **Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (KSH)**, Hungary's Central Statistical Office. For more information, please refer to their official website: [KSH Data on Mortality](#). The calculations were made by the **Alapítvány az Öngyilkosság Ellen** (www.ongyilkossagmegelozesellen.hu), **Bérdi Márk**.

*The basic ratios of suicide-related behaviors, such as **12%** of individuals with serious thoughts of suicide making plans, and **30%** of those with plans attempting suicide, are widely consistent across various international studies. This consistency allows these ratios to be applied across different countries when estimating suicide-related behaviors, even in contexts where country-specific data may be limited. Studies by **Kessler et al. (1999)** and **Nock et al. (2010)** have shown that these patterns are reliable across diverse populations and provide a solid foundation for cross-national application in estimating suicide risks.

References

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