

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

**2000 ANNUAL REPORT**

During 2000 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's office assumed jurisdiction on 107 death investigations that involved forensic autopsies, toxicological examinations, viewing and summary reporting. Besides the above investigations 147 additional cases were reported and investigated and no jurisdiction was assumed (NJA). The medical evidence collected on 34 reported sexual assault cases in Whatcom County was processed by the Medical Examiner's office and summary reports were provided to the involved agencies.

It would appear the autopsy case load is increasing at a significant pace. From 1991 through 1997 the average number of autopsies per year was 83 but from 1998 through 2000 the case load increased to an average of 97 autopsies per year, an increase of nearly 17%. There has also been a corresponding increase in the number of sexual assault cases reported and in the number of NJA cases.

The Medical Examiner also participated in the multi-disciplinary Child Death Review Committee for 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.

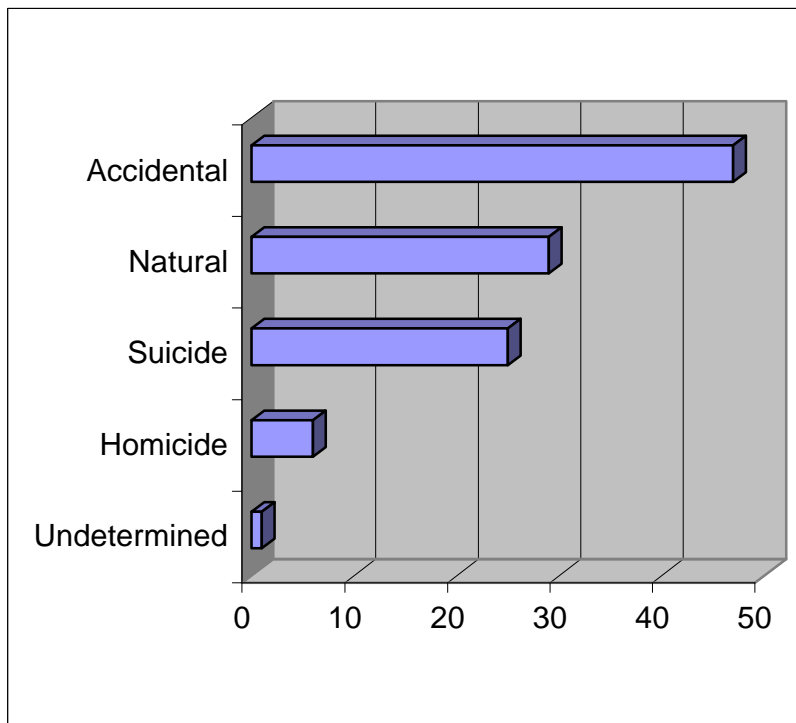
Teaching and public relations are also an important part of the Medical Examiner's office. Consulting was ongoing with the fire and police departments of the county and St. Joseph's Hospital. In addition, college classes toured the morgue facility. Several staff members from the Bellingham Police and Fire Departments and other county agencies were trained on and off site about how the medical examiner's office functions. The Medical Examiner also represented the office on numerous occasions to various civic organizations.

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**Gary Goldfogel, M.D.**  
**Whatcom County Medical Examiner**

During 2000 the Whatcom County Medical Examiner's Office conducted 107 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 Investigations 2000**



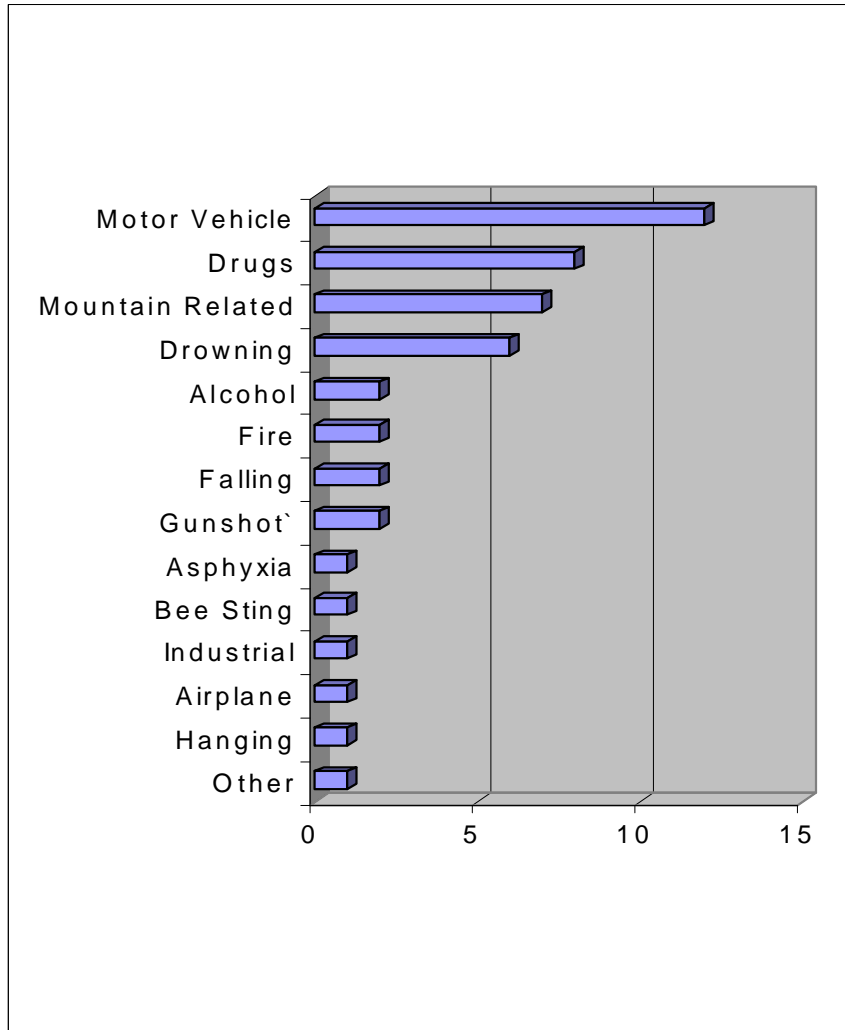
The causes of death shown on the above table are further broken down and displayed in the following pages.

**ACCIDENTAL:**

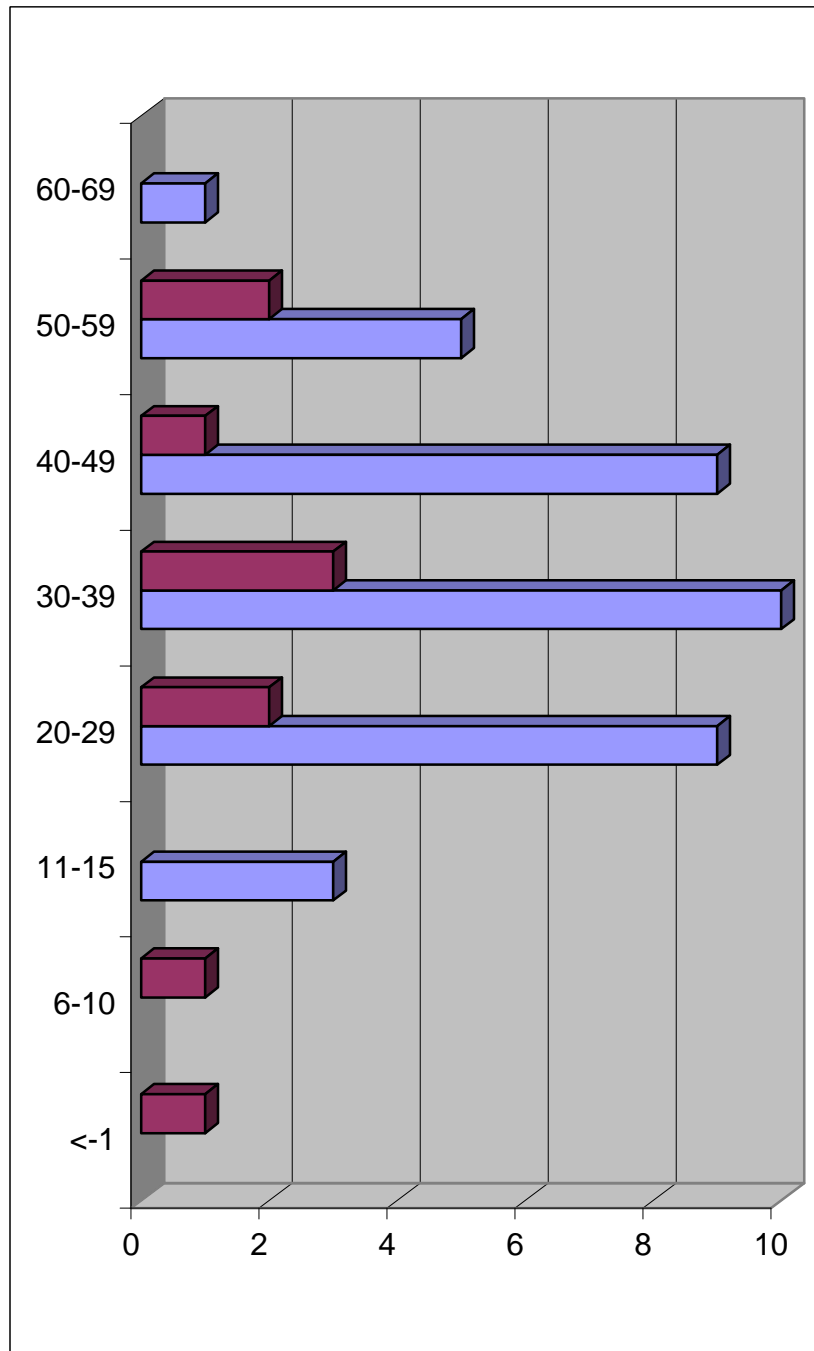
There were 47 total accidental deaths of which 37 were male and 10 female. The cause of death was as follows: Traffic (12), Drug overdose (8), Recreational (7), Drowning (6), Alcohol poisoning (2), Fire (2), Firearms (2), Falls (2), Aircraft (1), Industrial (1), Bee sting (1), Asphyxia (1), Hanging (1) and other (1).

By age approximately 2% of all accidental deaths were less than 1 year old, 2% between 6-10, 6% between 11-15, 23% between 20-29, 27% between 30-39, 21% between 40-49, 15% between 50-59 and 2% between 60-69.

**Accidental Death Causes**



**Accidental Deaths by Age and Sex**



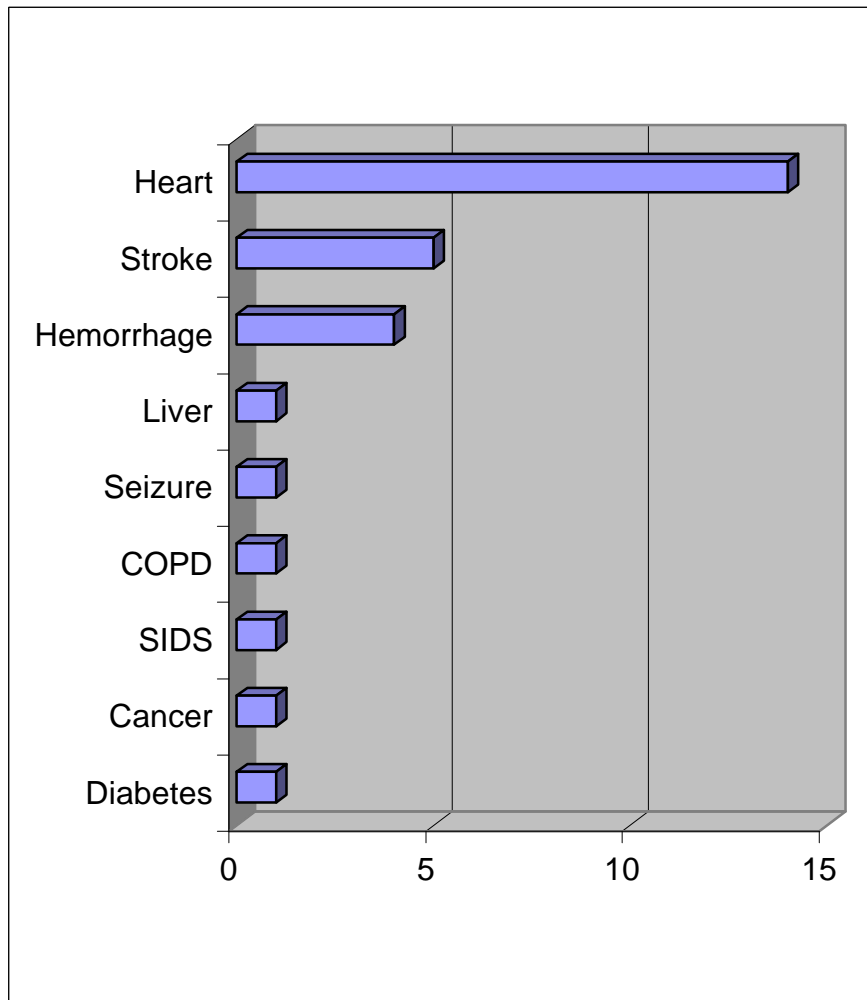
- Blue bars are male and red bars female.

**NATURAL:**

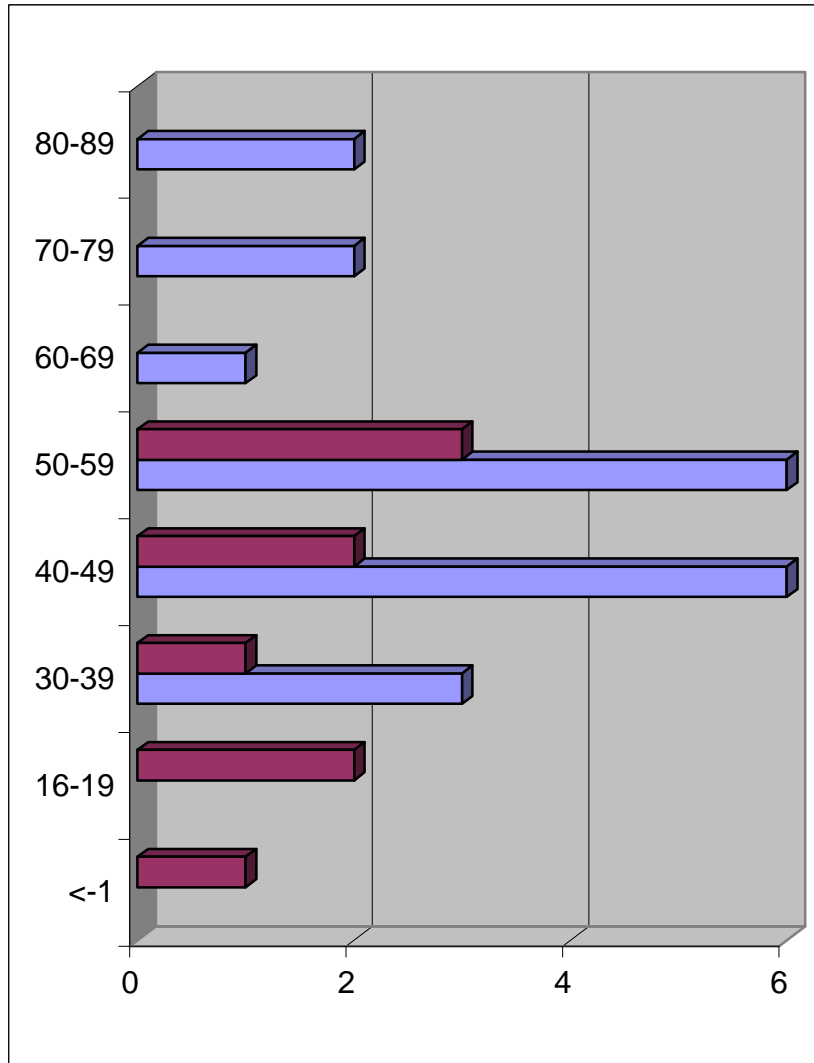
There were 29 total natural deaths of which 20 were male and 9 female. The cause of death was as follows: Heart related (14 ), Stroke (5), Hemorrhage (4), Liver (1), Seizure (1), COPD (1), Cancer (1), Diabetes (1) and SIDS (1).

By age approximately, 3% of all natural deaths were less that 1 year old, 7% between 16-19, 13% between 30-39, 28% between 40-49, 31% between 50-59, 3% between 60-69, 7% between 70-79 and 7% between 80-89.

### Natural Deaths by Cause



### Natural Deaths by Age and Sex



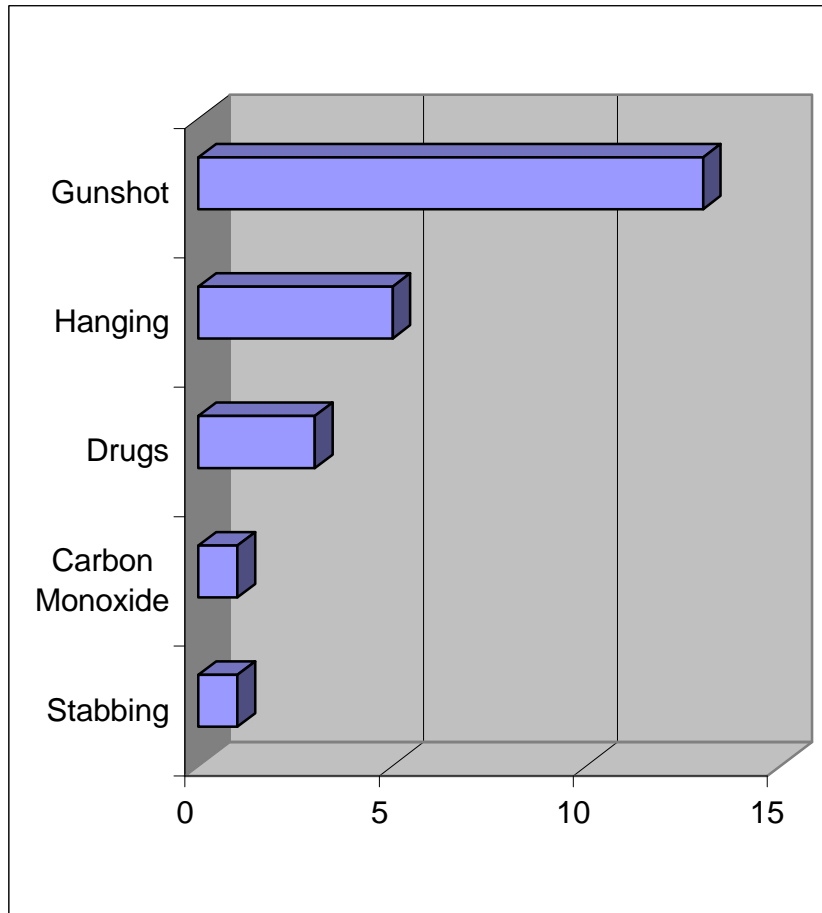
- Blue bars are male and red bars female

**SUICIDE:**

There were 25 total suicide deaths of which 21 were male and 4 female. The cause of death was as follows: Gunshot (13), Hanging (5), Carbon monoxide inhalation (3), Drugs (3) and stabbing (1)

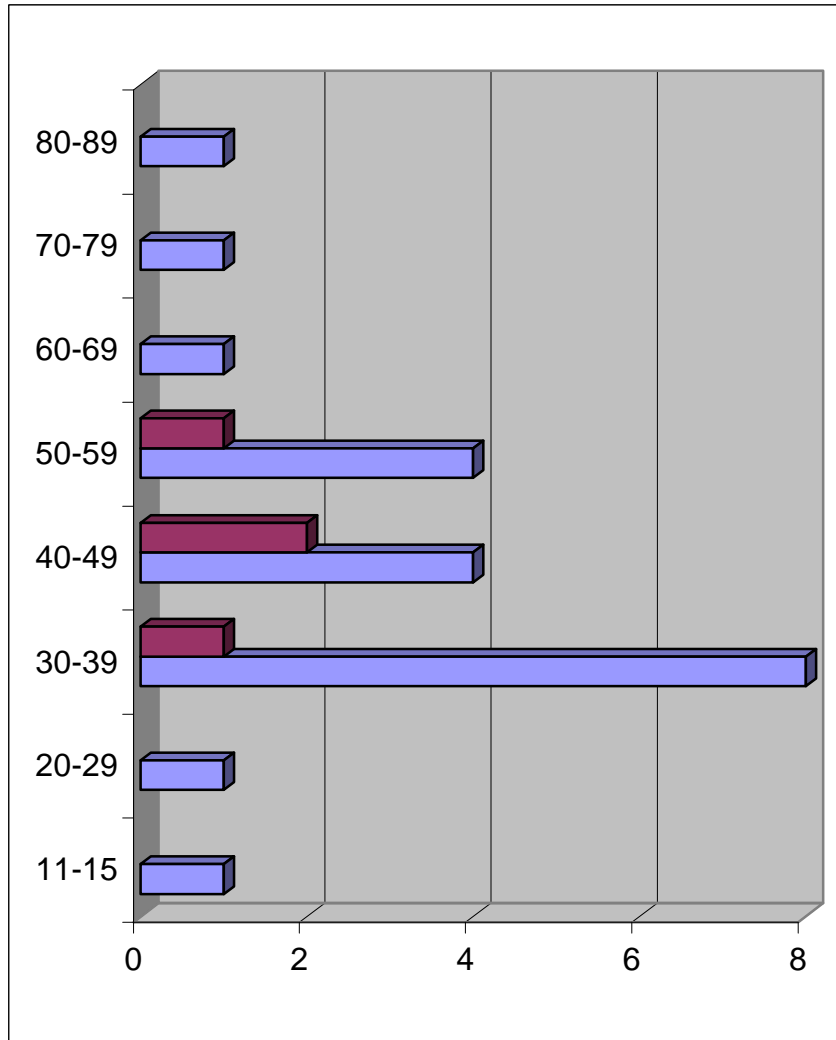
By age, 4% of all suicides were between 11-15, 4% between 20-29, 36% between 30-39, 24% between 40-49, 20% between 50-59, 4% between 60-69, 4% between 70-79 and 4% between 80-89.

**Suicide Deaths by Cause**





### Suicide Deaths by Age and Sex

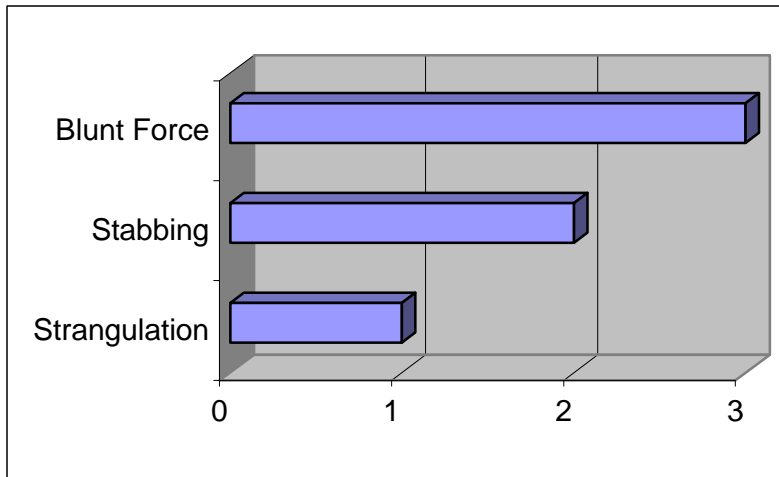


- Blue bars are male and red bars are female

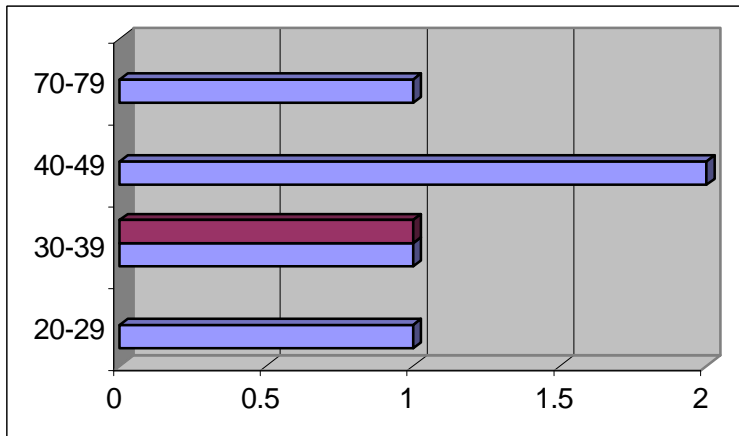
**HOMICIDE:**

There were 6 total homicide deaths of which 5 were male and 1 female. The cause of death was as follows: Blunt force trauma (3), Stabbing (2) and Strangulation (1). By age, 17% of all homicides were between 20-29, 34% between 30-39, 34% between 40-49 and 17% between 70-79.

**Homicide Deaths by Cause**



**Homicide Deaths by Age and Sex**



- Blue bars are male and red bars female

**UNDETERMINED:**

One Caucasian male body was found washed up on the beach at Pt. Roberts. Extensive attempt to identify the remains was made with negative results. The data was registered with the Missing Persons section of the WSP and in our national system as well as in the Canadian system. The body is an outstanding "John Doe".