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SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS:
STATISTICS 1976.

Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
N.S.W. Department of the Attorney-General and of Justice
Box 6, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., 2001

City Coroner: J.B. Goldrick, Stipendiary Magistrate
Assistant City Coroner: T.M. Weir, Stipendiary Magistrate
Coroners Court
44-46 Parramatta Road, Glebe, 2037

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS

STATISTICS 1976

City Coroner J.B. Goldrick S.M.
 Assistant City Coroner T.M. Weir S.M.

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries	1309	1475	1263	1589	1446
Fire Inquiries	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>
	<u>1322</u>	<u>1493</u>	<u>1271</u>	<u>1597</u>	<u>1463</u>

Findings as to Manner and Cause of Death

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
1. <u>Suicide</u>	357	376	311	336	342
2. <u>Suicide While Insane</u>	4	10	8	1	5
3. <u>Open Finding</u>	138	99	141	181	130
4. <u>Accidental Drug Death</u>	-	-	30	54	68
5. <u>Accidental Drowning</u>	-	-	65	70	59
6. <u>Traffic</u> - Inquest adjourned and followed by committal proceedings when person charged manslaughter or culpable driving.					
(a) Committed for trial	-	-	-	47	40
(b) Discharged	-	-	-	14	11
(c) Dealt with in Children's Court	-	-	-	2	3
7. <u>Traffic</u> - Inquest adjourned when prima facie case of manslaughter or culpable driving established against known person.	-	-	-	16	3
8. <u>Other Traffic Accidents</u>					
- 1972, 1973 & 1974 figures include Categories 6 & 7	359	479	366	440	381
9. <u>Other Accidents</u>					
- 1972 & 1973 figures include Categories 4 & 5	343	382	248	293	236

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
10(a) <u>Adjourned</u> and followed by committal proceedings when person charged <u>Murder</u> or <u>Non-Traffic Manslaughter</u> .	39	49	31	42	63
10(b) <u>Adjourned</u> when prima facie case <u>Murder</u> or <u>Non-Traffic Manslaughter</u> established against known person.	-	-	-	-	1
11. <u>Killed</u> by person since deceased or unknown.	10	7	11	13	13
12. <u>Excusable</u> and Justifiable Homicide	2	1	1	1	1
13. <u>Natural Causes</u>					
(a) Whilst driving motor vehicle - not included in Categories 6, 7 or 8.	-	-	-	-	24
(b) Others	<u>57</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>66</u>
	<u>1309</u>	<u>1475</u>	<u>1263</u>	<u>1589</u>	<u>1446</u>

N.B. Figures relate to Inquiries conducted and finalised in the respective calendar years, not to deaths occurring. In 1976, 65% of all Inquests etc., were finalised within three (3) months of death, 18%, 8% and 4% within 4, 5 & 6 months of death, respectively, and 5% beyond six months. In the last quarter of 1976 the comparable percentages were 74, 14, 7, 2 & 3.

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

SUICIDE FINDINGS - CATEGORIES 1 & 2

TOTAL 347

1. <u>SEX</u> - Male	236
- Female	<u>111</u>
	<u>347</u>

2. <u>AGE</u> To 12 years	-
13 - 19	18
20s	64
30s	60
40s	68
50s	63
60s	36
70 plus	<u>38</u>
	<u>347</u>

3. MARITAL STATUS

Married	143
" (separated)	34
Single	106
Divorced	21
Widow/Widower	42
Not stated	<u>1</u>
	<u>347</u>

4. METHOD

OVERDOSE		94
-Barbiturates	66	
- " + Alcohol	13	
-Other sedative	9	
- " " + Alcohol	1	
-Heroin	2	
-Methadone	1	
-Insulin	1	
-Others	<u>1</u>	
	<u>94</u>	
SHOOTING		65
HANGING		47
GAS - Appliance		33
- Exhaust		27
JUMPING FROM HEIGHT		30
POISON Insecticide	5	
Weed Killer	2	
Cyanide	1	
Hydrochloric Acid	1	
Ether	1	
Others	4	14
LIE OR JUMP UNDER TRAIN		9
STABBING		6

DROWNING	5
BURNING	4
ELECTROCUTION	4
SUFFOCATION	3
CUT THROAT	2
CRASH CAR	2
LIE IN FRONT OF CAR	2
	<u>347</u>

5. ALCOHOL (Blood)

Nil	230	(66%)
Below .08%	33	(10%)
.08% Plus	65	(19%)
Not Stated	19	(5%)
	<u>347</u>	

6. SUICIDE NOTE (Found and Produced)

Yes	143
No	204

7. ANY TREATMENT OF PSYCHIATRIC NATURE

Yes	111
No	229
Not Stated	7

8. PREVIOUS INDICATIONS (Prior Attempts or Threats)

Yes	155
No	188
Not Stated	4
	<u>347</u>

9. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Australia	246
England	24
Yugoslavia	7
Greece	6
Hungary	6
New Zealand	6
China	5
Italy	5
Poland	5
Germany	4
Czechoslovakia	3
Scotland	3
Austria	2
Estonia	2
Finland	2
Holland	2
Ireland	2
Portugal	2

Russia	2
Canada	1
Chile	1
France	1
Gilbert Islands	1
Indonesia	1
India	1
Israel	1
Japan	1
Malaysia	1
Malta	1
South Africa	1
Turkey	1
Uruguay	1
	<u>347</u>

10. OCCUPATION

MALES

Professional	14
Executive	3
Commercial	28
Clerical	12
Tradesman	37
- Apprentice	2
Unskilled	34
Semi-Skilled	3
Pensioner	42
Unemployed	24
Retired	9
Student	5
Customs Officer	1
Teacher	1
Driver	5
Factory	6
Restaurant	2
Shop	1
Lab. Assistant	1
Seaman	1
Driving Instructor	1
Decorator	1
Policeman	1
Prisoner	1
Computer Operator	1
	<u>236</u>

FEMALES

Home Duties	45
Pensioner	34
Nurse	7
Office	6
Factory	5
Barmaid	3
Cleaner	2
Student	2
Unemployed	2
Shop	1
Teacher	1
Medical Practitioner	1
Domestic	1
Waitress	1
	<u>111</u>

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

OPEN FINDINGS - CATEGORY 3

No evidence manner and cause of death, or either	35
Left "Open" as between Suicide or Accident	<u>95</u>
TOTAL	<u>130</u>

OPEN - SUICIDE OR ACCIDENT

1. <u>SEX</u> - Male	60
- Female	<u>35</u>
	<u>95</u>

2. <u>AGE</u> To 12 years	-
13 - 19	7
20s	17
30s	19
40s	26
50s	17
60s	5
70 plus	3
Not Stated	<u>1</u>
	<u>95</u>

3. METHOD OF DEATH

OVERDOSE	55
- Barbiturate	23
- " + Alcohol	4
- " + Diazepam	1
- Other Sedative	14
- " " + Drowning in bath	1
- Anti-Depressant	6
- Alcohol + Diazepam	1
- " + Paracetamol	1
- " + Barbiturate	
+ Chloral Hydrate	1
- Others	<u>3</u>
	<u>55</u>

FALL FROM HEIGHT 12

DROWNING 15

GASSING 5

TRAIN - Struck by or Fall From 4

HANGING 2

STOWED WHEEL WELL BOEING 707 1

SHOOTING 1

95

4. OPINION AS TO MORE LIKELY MANNER

SUICIDE	41
ACCIDENT	14
EQUIVOCAL	40
	<u>95</u>

5. REASON FOR OPEN FINDING

LACK EVIDENCE INTENTION	41
INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE	22
MENTAL ILLNESS FACTOR	15
ALCOHOL FACTOR	11
ADDICTED OR HABITUATED DRUGS	5
POSSIBLE NATURAL CAUSE	1
	<u>95</u>

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

ACCIDENTAL (NON-INTENDED) DRUG DEATHS - CATEGORY 4 TOTAL 68

1. <u>HARD DRUGS</u>		<u>22</u>
Heroin	10	
Morphine	6	
" + Alcohol	1	
Methadone	4	
Cocaine	1	
2. <u>SEDATIVES. DEPRESSANTS (Alone)</u>		<u>26</u>
Chloral Hydrate. Elix-Nocte	9	
Dormel	5	
Barbiturates	9	
" + Diazepam	1	
Methaqualone	2	
3. <u>SEDATIVES + ALCOHOL</u>		<u>7</u>
Barbiturates	7	
Blood/Alcohol from .315% to .070%.		
4. <u>ALCOHOL (Alone)</u>		<u>6</u>
Blood/Alcohol %	.505 x 2	
	.425 x 2	
	.345	
	.290	
5. <u>OTHERS</u>		<u>7</u>
L.S.D.	1	
Amitriptylene	1	
Digoxin	2	
Insulin	1	
Colchicine	1	
Quinine	1	
6. <u>SEX</u> - Male		40
- Female		<u>28</u>
		<u>68</u>
7. <u>AGE</u> To 12 years		1
13 - 19		8
20s		24
30s		10
40s		6
50s		13
60s		5
70 plus		<u>1</u>
		<u>68</u>
8. <u>ADDICTED OR HABITUATED TO DRUGS (Including Alcohol)</u>		
Yes		58
No		5
Not Known		<u>5</u>
		<u>68</u>

9. THE EXPANSION OF THE HARD DRUG SCENE.

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
TOTAL "ACCIDENTAL" DRUG DEATHS	28	46	30	54	68
<u>DRUG</u>					
Heroin	1	2	-	2	10
Morphine	4	2	3	6	7
Methadone	-	1	-	1	4
Cocaine	2	-	1	-	1
Palfium	1	2	-	-	-
TOTAL HARD DRUG "ACCIDENTAL" DEATHS	8	7	4	9	22

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

ACCIDENTAL DROWNINGS - CATEGORY 5

TOTAL 59

1. SEX - Male 49
- Female 10
59

2. AGE To 5 years 14
6 - 12 2
13 - 19 6
20s 9
30s 7
40s 5
50s 7
60s 7
70 plus 2
59

3. SWIMMING ABILITY

Good 10
Fair 14
Slight 2
Nil (including young children) 15
Not Known 10
Not Applicable 8
59

4. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Australia 40
Philipines 3
England 2
Greece 2
New Zealand 2
East Germany 1
France 1
India 1
Ireland 1
Italy 1
Poland 1
Scotland 1
Wales 1
Yugoslavia 1
Not Stated 1
59

5. ALCOHOL (Blood)

Nil (including young children) 34
Below .08% 3
.08% plus 12
Not Known 10
59

6. CIRCUMSTANCES

<u>HOME POOL</u> - Child 5 years & under	10
- 7 year-old girl	1
- Epileptic	1
<u>ROCK FISHERMAN</u>	8
<u>OPEN SEA</u> -	1
- Fishing	1
- Attempted Rescue	1
- " " of Spearfisherman by Launch in Bombora	2
<u>SURF</u>	3
- After Injury to Spinal Cord	1
<u>NAVY DIVER</u>	1
<u>RIVER</u>	5
- Mental Patient in Epileptic Fit	1
<u>STILL WATER</u> - After Epileptic Fit	1
<u>FLOOD</u>	1
<u>ACCIDENTAL FALL</u> - Rock Pool	1
<u>WATER CHANNEL</u>	1
<u>DRUNKEN FALL</u>	5
- Into River	1
- From Trimaran	1
- " Runabout	1
<u>BOATING & CANOEING</u>	1
<u>EPILEPTIC FIT</u>	1
<u>CONTAINER OF WATER</u>	1
<u>SENILE OR MENTAL WANDERER</u>	1
<u>BATH</u>	3
- Overdose Sedatives	1
- " " + Alcohol	1
<u>PRAWN TRAWLER</u> - Hit by Barge	1
<u>INFANT</u> - Fall into Water Container	1
	<u>59</u>

7. HOME POOL DROWNINGS

Children 5 years and under

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Total Such Drownings	7	14	19	21	10
Total Accidental Drownings	46	57	65	70	59
Proportion	15%	25%	29%	30%	17%

These figures are for Inquests held in the respective years. They show a dramatic drop, both absolutely and relatively, for backyard infant drownings in 1976. The figures for actual dates of such deaths show an even more dramatic improvement. 38 of these fatal accidents have now occurred in the area covered by these Courts since July 1974. 7 occurred in the second half of 1974, 11 in the first half and 12 in the second half of 1975, and 3 in the first half and 5 in the second half of 1976. Undoubtedly this improvement is to be attributed to extensive press, radio and T.V. publicity and the efforts of such organisations as the N.S.W. Water Safety Council, S.P.L.A.S.H. and the Sutherland Shire Resuscitation Committee, which have resulted in greater public awareness of the dangers involved, of the need for effective safety barriers and better knowledge of emergency resuscitation methods.

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DEATHS - CATEGORIES 6, 7 & 8

TOTAL 438

The table indicates the status (driver, passenger, etc.) of traffic accident victims together with sex, age and alcohol factor. The figures certainly understate the alcohol factor. Many victims survive for considerable periods after injury. Where death occurs more than 24 hours after injury, blood alcohol analysis is not ordered. This accounts for the 76 (17%) "not known" cases. Survival even for a few hours will result in a lower reading and may result in a "nil" reading. The figures relate only to victims. They do not include drivers involved in fatal crashes but who survive them and frequently have consumed considerable quantities of alcohol.

As for previous years, the figures show that those most at risk on the roads are pedestrians - 175 out of 438, or 40%, of whom 74 (42%) were pedestrians aged 60 years and over.

In all categories male victims exceeded females, in most overwhelmingly.

Of all victims, 211 (48%) had not yet reached the age of 30 years. 140 out of the total of 438 (32%) were drivers, riders or occupants of motor vehicles who were in their teens or twenties.

104 victims (24%) had blood alcohol levels of .08% or more. In 1974 and 1975 this proportion was 21%.

Status	Driver	Passenger	M/Cycle Rider	Pillion	Pedal Cycle etc.	Pedestrian	Total	
Totals	104	89	54	10	6	175	438	
SEX	M	86	46	53	9	6	124	324
	F	18	43	1	1		51	114
AGE	To 12 years		14				31	45
	13 - 19	13	21	21	5	4	11	75
	20s	34	17	25	4	1	10	91
	30s	21	9	1			14	45
	40s	17	5	5			11	38
	50s	11	5	1	1		24	42
	60s	5	6			1	28	40
	70+	3	12	1			46	62
ALCOHOL	Not Known	15	9	5	1	1	45	76
	Nil (including children)	39	55	35	5	5	94	233
	Below .08%	8	9	2			6	25
	.08-.150	12	6	9	2		6	35
	.155-.250	23	9	3	1		13	49
	.255 plus	7	1		1		11	20

SYDNEY CORONERS' COURTS 1976

OTHER ACCIDENTS - CATEGORY 9

(i.e. Excluding Accidental Drug, Drowning and Road Traffic Deaths)

<u>CIRCUMSTANCES</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>
1. <u>FALLS</u>		98
Drunken	20	
At Work	2	
- From Garbage Truck	1	
- Down Lift Well	1	
Epileptic Fit	1	
Train	6	
Bus	2	
At Home	3	
From Building	5	
- Due Heart Attack	1	
- Bosun's Chair, Rope Corroded Sulphuric Acid	1	
" Cliff	2	
" - Rope Broke Climbing	1	
" Ladder	2	
" Window	2	
" Skate Board	2	
Balcony Wall Gave Way	1	
Down Stairs	6	
- Infant	1	
Into Bath	1	
Onto Sharp Stick	1	
From Horse	1	
Others (mostly aged persons)	35	

2. <u>BURNS</u>		<u>43</u>
Smoking in Bed or Chair	17	
- Affected Barbiturates	1	
House on Fire	4	
Burning Rubbish	2	
Bath	3	
Radiator	3	
Cooking Stove	1	
Young man & 3 girls at Service Station - Petrol poured on floor to clean fat - explosion when match lit.	4	
Methylated Spirits used to Refuel Kerosene Heater	1	
Filling Petrol Mower - Gas Pilot Light in Laundry	1	
Young Child Playing Matches	1	
Cleaning Bathroom with Kerosene - Lit Match	1	
Gunpowder in Motor Vehicle	1	
Car Catching Fire	1	
Petrol Can - Ignition - Knocked over onto Kerosene Heater	1	
3. <u>SUFFOCATION</u>		<u>3</u>
Smoke from Fire in House	2	
Drunk - Overlying Exercise Machine	1	
4. <u>INJURIES</u>		<u>25</u>
Hit or Run Over by Train	10	
- Drunk	1	
- Coal Trucks at Wharf	1	
By Tractor	2	
Struck by Lock Rim when Truck Tyre Tube Burst	1	
Rock Fall from Cliff onto Fisherman	1	

Cyclone Tracey	2	
Collision Land Tug & Boeing 707	1	
Vehicle Jack Slipped	1	
Car Rolled, being Repaired	1	
Falling Brickwork	1	
Crushed by Heavy Object	1	
Collapse old Gaol Wall	1	
Struck by Steel Girders being Loaded from Railway Truck to Semi-Trailer	1	
<u>5. FACTORY & SHIP</u>		<u>9</u>
Kiln Wall Collapsed During Demolition	1	
Loading Ship	1	
Explosion	2	
Crushed	5	
<u>6. GASSED</u>		<u>18</u>
Stove Left On	15	
Saucepan Boiled Over	1	
Faulty Appliance	1	
Sleeping in Car with Engine Running	1	
<u>7. ELECTROCUTION</u>		<u>11</u>
Faulty Appliance	7	
- Motor in Backyard Pool	1	
Home Renovations	3	
<u>8. CHOKING ON FOOD</u>		<u>10</u>
<u>9. STRANGULATION</u>		<u>4</u>
9 mos. Infant - Cardigan in Cot	1	
18 mos. Child - Cord in Cot	1	
Others	2	

10. OTHERS

15

Shooting	3
Collision in Speeding Boat with Wharf	1
Inhalation from Gas Being Used to Clean Freezer	1
Coronary Occlusion after Smoke Inhalation from Fire in Unit	1
12 year old Girl Elbowed in Back	1
Fumes (trapped by wind pressure on ventilators) from Bathroom Heater	1
Boxing Match	1
Motor Boat	1
18 mos. Child - Insect or Snake Bite	1
Inhalation Fumes (Oil Refinery Tank Overflow)	1
6 year old Boy Struck on Head by 11 & 10 year olds throwing stones	1
Inhalation Vomitus	1
Struck by Heavy Object	1

