

State Mental Health Policies and Incidence of Suicide

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Research Questions

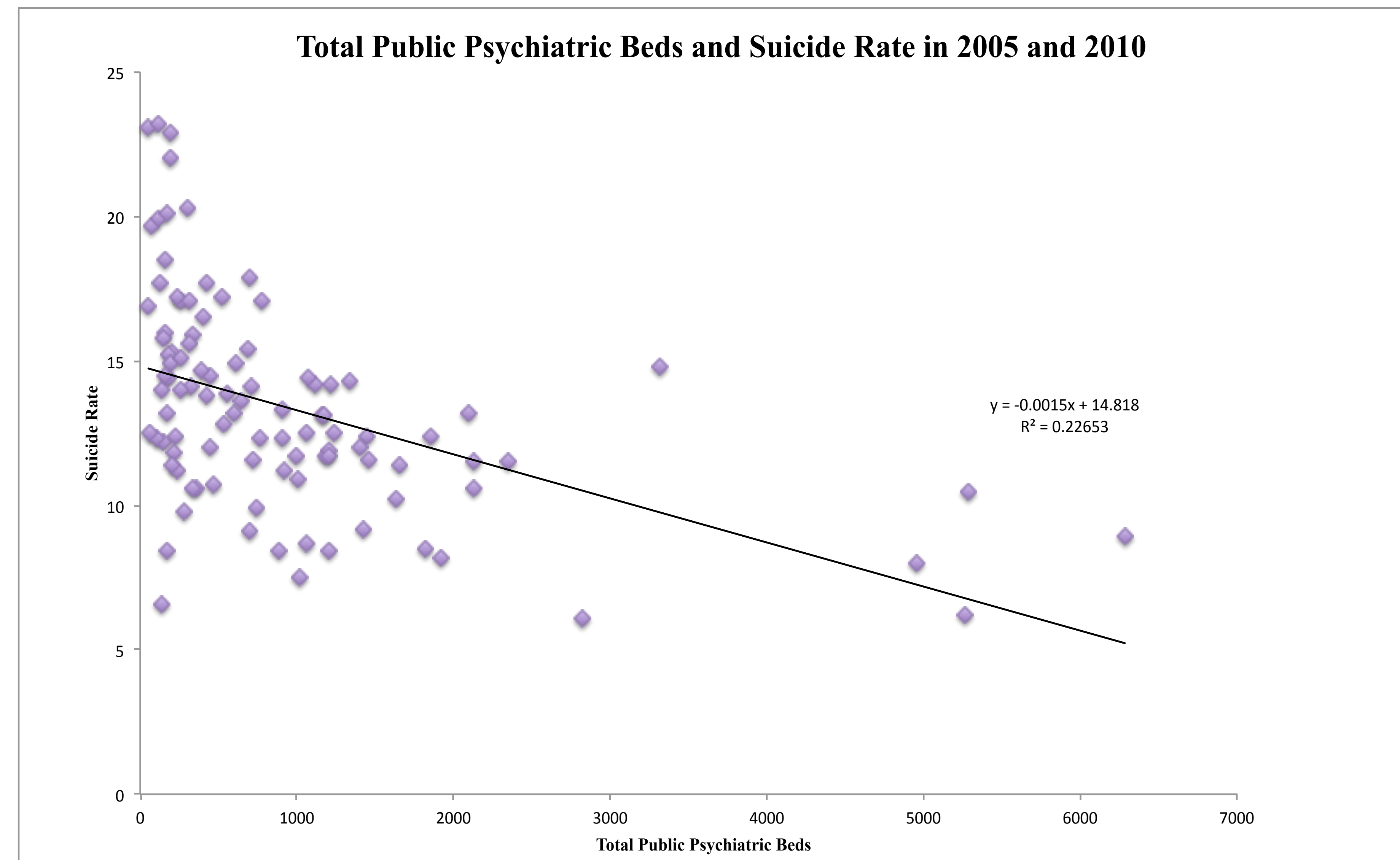
- I examine the effects of mental health hospital beds and the reduction of state public psychiatric beds.
- I focus specifically on the availability of treatment typically destined for uninsured chronically ill individuals and the effects it has on the community.

Theory

- The number of public psychiatric beds between 2005 and 2010 decreased by 14%. I believe that this will most likely have a negative effect on the suicide rates during this time period.
- I believe that the change in the accessibility of mental health resources will influence the incidence of suicide concurrently as it may influence whether an individual obtains services at a time of need.

Methodology

- My data includes the number of beds from the National Association of State Mental Health Program and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- The data includes the suicide rate from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and income rates from the Department of Commerce and state expenditures from the National Association of State Mental Health.



Findings

- Figure 1 shows the total suicide rate decreases with an increase in the number of public psychiatric beds devoted to mental issues.
- Table 1 shows a significant and negative relationship between the number of public psychiatric beds in a state and its suicide rate, controlled for per capita income and per capita mental health care expenditures. Overall, the data suggest that an increase in public psychiatric beds leads to a decrease in the suicide rate.

Table 1: Effects of Independent Variables on Suicide Rate

Independent Variable	Model 1
Per Capita Income	-0.000125 (-2.06)*
Per Capita Mental Health Expenditure	0.00909 (1.58)
Total Public Psychiatric Beds	0.00143 (-4.96)***
_const	0.002
R ²	0.263
N	100

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<.001; t-scores in parentheses

Conclusions

- The availability of public mental health resources remains largely unexplored. The availability psychiatric beds and community based health resources needs to be researched further.
- Going forward, the goal should be to ameliorate the current state of the mental health system and seek the integration of mental health and long-term treatments.

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