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Technical Reports

Trends in suicide mortality, 1955–1989: America, Africa, Asia and oceania

Data and statistics on suicide mortality were published for 25 European countries, and showed important heterogeneities with reference to both absolute values and trends over time^{1,2}.

The World Health Organization (WHO) mortality database includes some data on suicide mortality for 28 other countries (Canada, the United States and 14 countries from Latin America; 2 from Africa; 8 from Asia; Australia and New Zealand). The quality and reliability of mortality data is undoubtedly much more heterogeneous and open to criticism for most of these countries as compared to European data. This implies that any data and statistics on suicide mortality in these areas of the world (with the exceptions of North America, Israel, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Oceania) should be interpreted with utmost caution.

These uncertainties and considerations notwithstanding, we considered useful to produce in a standard format available data on suicide mortality in various areas of the world, with the aim of giving at least some major baseline information of interest for health statistic, public health and analytic epidemiology.

Materials and methods

Death certification numbers from suicide, and estimates of the resident population, stratified for sex and five-year age group, were derived from copies of the original computer tapes of the WHO database, which included data for the following 28 countries.

Americas. The WHO database contains some data on mortality and population for 49 American countries or territories. Excluded were all countries with less than 2 000 000 population. Out of the 24 countries left, only those with age-stratified mortality and population figures of sufficient detail were retained: eight countries (Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua) were excluded at this stage. The analysis is based on data from Canada, the United States, and the remaining 14 central and southern American countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay (reporting areas only, as included in the WHO database and related publications), Peru, Puerto Rico (a self-governing commonwealth, though not an independent country), Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Asia. Eight countries provided meaningful suicide mortality data from Asia: Hong Kong (not an independent country but a self-governing commonwealth), Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Africa. Data were available only for Mauritius and reporting areas of Egypt.

Oceania. Data were available for Australia and New Zealand.

During the calendar period considered (1955–1989), four different Revisions of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) were used (from the Sixth to the Ninth Revision). No major change was, however, introduced in the classification or coding of suicide deaths. Thus, classification of suicides was recoded according to the Ninth Revision of the ICD³.

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Estimates of the resident population, generally based on official censuses, were obtained from the same WHO databank. From the matrices of certified deaths and resident populations, age-standardized rates (on the World standard population) were computed. Besides overall age-adjusted rates, truncated ones at age 35–64 were chosen for presentation⁴.

Truncated rates are of interest for at least two reasons, since: i) they provide information specifically on trends in middle age and ii) death certification in the elderly is generally less reliable, and may, therefore, introduce spurious trends in rates.

In a few countries, data were missing for part of one or more calendar periods. When a single year was missing within a quinquennium, numerators and denominators were interpolated linearly from the previous and subsequent calendar year. No extrapolation was made for missing data at the beginning or the end of the calendar period considered, or when data on one or more quinquennia were not available.

Presentation of results

As in previous work¹, for each country one table and three figures are presented.

The table includes, for each five-year calendar period and sex, the absolute number of deaths and the overall age-standardized and truncated 35–64 years mortality rates. The first figure includes world-standardized rates (all ages and truncated) for each 5-year calendar period in both sexes.

Age-specific rates from 30–34 to 65–69, 70–74 or 80–84 years (according to the details available in the WHO database) were plotted against the central year of birth cohort in the second figure for males and in the third for females. The points corresponding to the

same age group were joined to provide more clearly spaced graphs. Thus, in this graph the cohort effect can be read in the ordinate.

Results

Americas

In Canada, suicide mortality increased appreciably for males (from 11.7 to 19.7/100000, all ages) between the late 1950's and the early 1980's, and levelled off to 18.9 over the last calendar quinquennium. Rates for females were lower, but more than doubled between 1955–1959 (3.3/100000) and the late 1970's (6.7/100000), and declined thereafter to 5.2/100000 in 1985–1989. The pattern of trends was similar in middle age (35–64 years), although the upward trends were proportionally smaller. The United States started from high values in the 1950's (15.1/100000 males; 4.2/100000 females), but showed more favourable trends, particularly in middle age. Thus, in the late 1980's suicide mortality was for both sexes somewhat lower than in Canada (17.5/100000 males; 4.4/100000 females). On a worldwide scale, North America had intermediate values of suicide mortality rates.

Certified mortality from suicide was generally low in Latin America ranging, in most recent calendar periods, from 4.2/100000 males and 0.7/100000 females in Mexico to 13.1/100000 males and 3.3/100000 females in Uruguay up to 15.5/100000 males and 1.9/100000 females in Puerto Rico. There was no consistent pattern of trends, and suicide mortality remained approximately stable in most Latin America countries.

Africa

With reference to the two reporting countries from Africa, certified

mortality from suicide was extremely low (i.e., well below 1/100000 in both sexes) in Egypt, although it is difficult to understand how much these rates can be influenced by underreporting. Mauritius had intermediate rates on a worldwide scale and showed appreciably upward trends to reach 15.6/100000 males and 7.0/100000 females in the late 1980's.

Asia

Among the eight reporting countries from Asia, rates were very low (i.e., around or below 1/100000 in both sexes) in Kuwait and the Philippines; relatively low in Israel (9.3/100000 males and 3.7/100000 females in the late 1980's, in the absence of clear trend over time), and Thailand (7.5/100000 males and 4.3/100000 females), with, however, steady upward trends at least until the mid 1980's. Hong Kong and Singapore had elevated values in the 1950's, which, however, tended to decline in Hong Kong (11.7/100000 males; 8.5/100000 females in the late 1980's), but not in Singapore (15.3/100000 males; 10.6/100000 females). Japan started from very high values (30.9/100000 males; 19.4/100000 females in the late 1950's), i.e. the highest values on a worldwide scale at that time. Steady declines, however, were observed in both sexes, to reach 20.3/100000 males and 9.9/100000 females in the late 1980's. However, from the late 1960's onwards, a reversal of trends was observed in middle age males, whose rates (36.7/100000) were higher in the late 1980's as compared to three decades before.

A steady and substantial increase in suicide mortality was registered in Sri Lanka, to reach values of 49.6/100000 males and 19.0/100000 females in the late 1980's, i.e. the highest certified suicide rates on a worldwide scale together with Hungary.

SUICIDES

CANADA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59	4816	11.71	22.74	1318	3.27	6.93
60-64	5507	12.21	23.03	1562	3.50	6.78
65-69	7032	14.16	25.36	2551	5.12	10.44
70-74	9586	17.27	28.71	3718	6.68	12.69
75-79	11727	18.85	28.01	4185	6.67	12.12
80-84	13376	19.65	28.29	4103	5.93	11.03
85-89	13640	18.89	26.48	3885	5.17	9.13

SUICIDES

UNITES STATES OF AMERICA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59	67687	15.05	28.27	19584	4.17	8.25
60-64	74429	15.64	28.85	25231	5.04	10.00
65-69	77329	15.54	27.43	30520	5.77	11.41
70-74	87960	16.51	26.37	35417	6.25	11.96
75-79	100668	17.14	24.97	36408	5.87	10.84
80-84	107414	16.77	23.69	32874	4.89	8.75
85-89	119823	17.45	23.69	31969	4.43	7.61

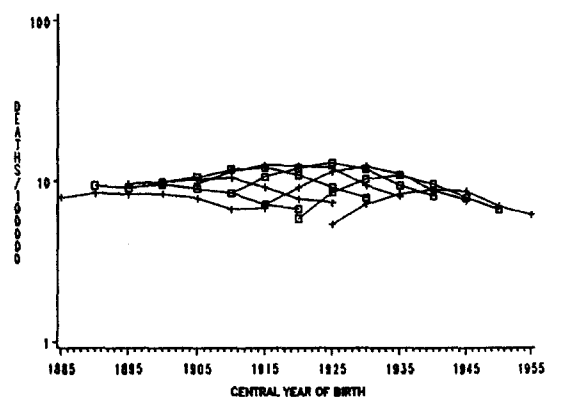
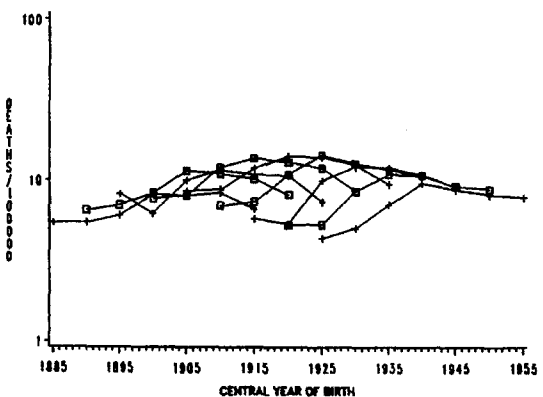
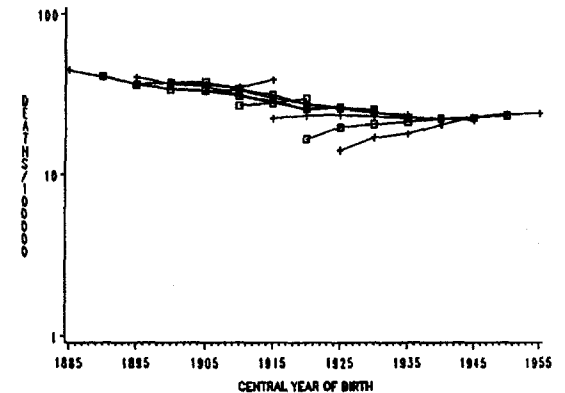
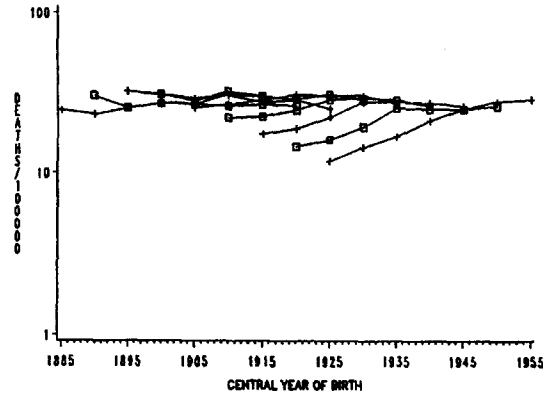
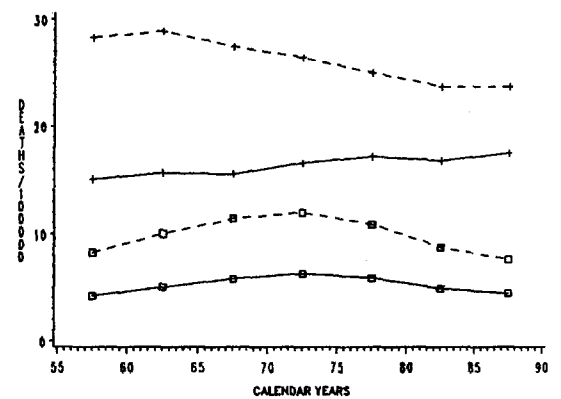
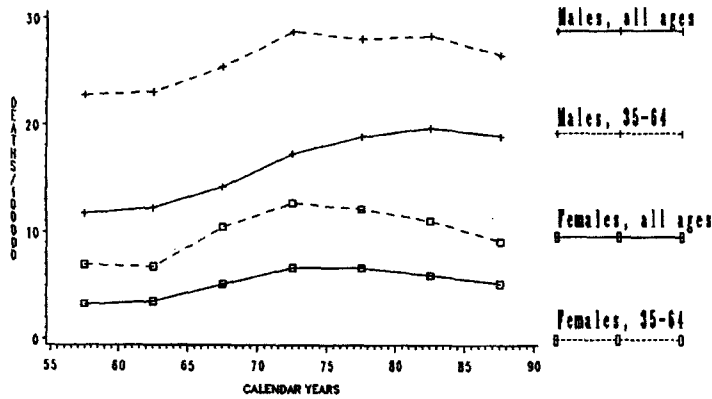


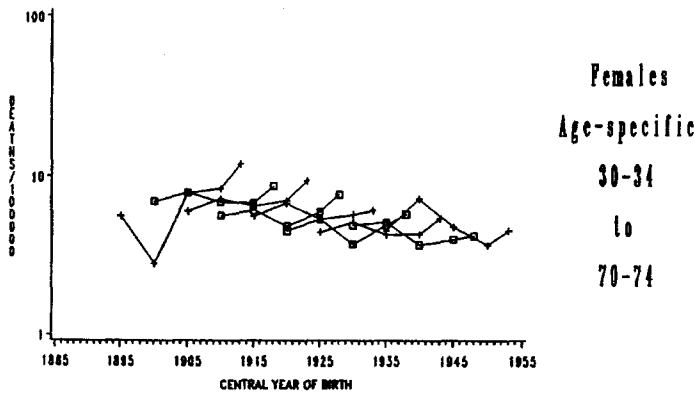
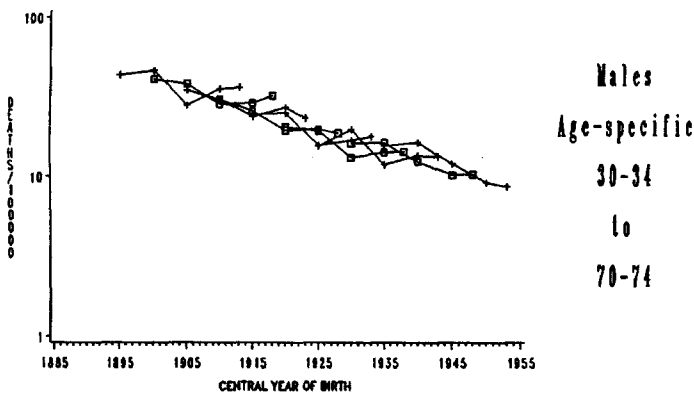
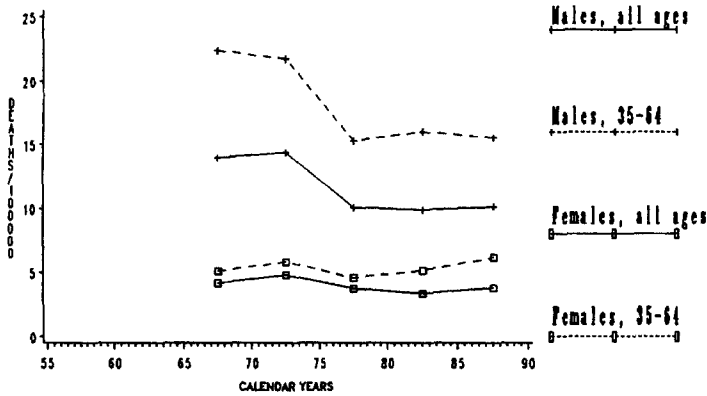
Figure 1. Trends in age-standardized (world standard) and age-specific death certification rates from suicide in selected countries from America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, 1955-1989.

SUICIDES

ARGENTINA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64						
65-69*	6497	13.93	22.38	1954	4.16	5.09
70-74*	1714	14.36	21.75	593	4.79	5.82
75-79*	4329	10.06	15.30	1629	3.75	4.58
80-84	7406	9.87	16.03	2589	3.33	5.15
85-89*	4748	10.13	15.54	1882	3.80	6.16

* Information is missing for one or more years



SUICIDES

CHILE

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59	1876	12.52	18.20	435	2.49	2.51
60-64	1785	10.72	16.31	467	2.39	2.62
65-69	1836	10.13	15.75	520	2.47	2.74
70-74	2227	11.02	15.74	521	2.19	2.28
75-79	2569	11.05	18.25	541	2.04	2.65
80-84	2751	10.38	16.44	484	1.62	1.96
85-89*	1673	9.77	14.87	358	1.92	2.93

* Information is missing for one or more years

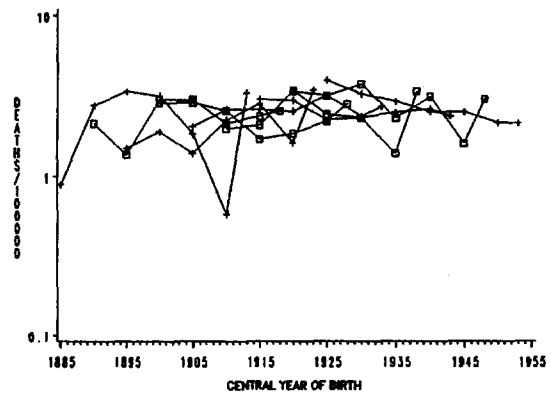
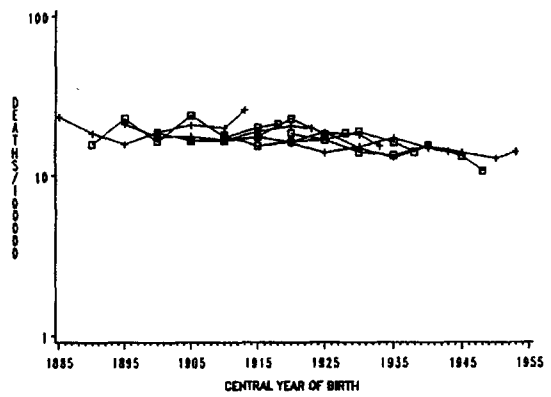
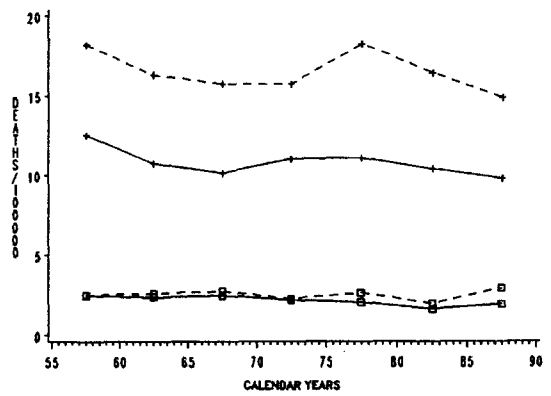


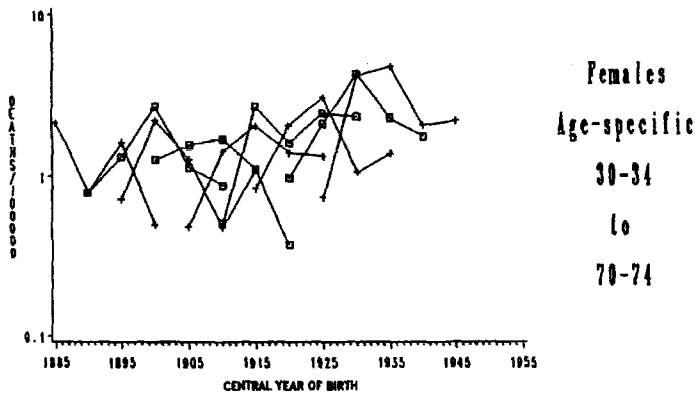
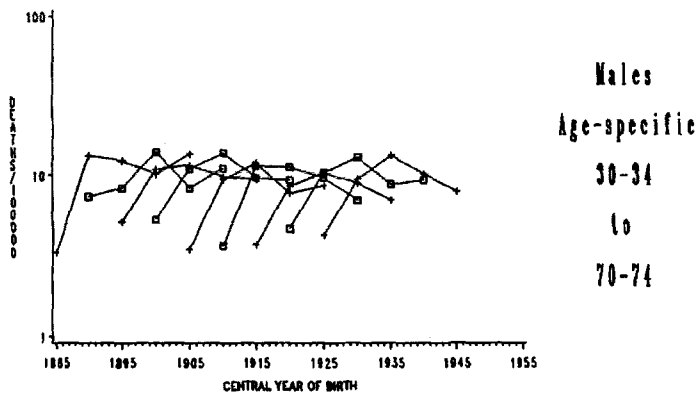
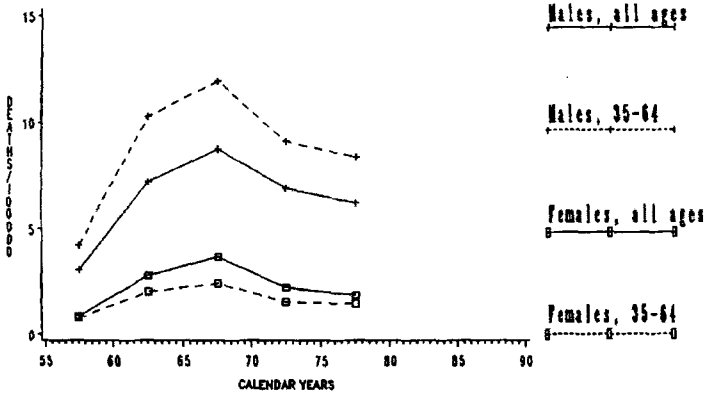
Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

COLOMBIA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59	621	3.08	4.22	274	0.86	0.78
60-64	2186	7.16	10.28	1115	2.79	2.02
65-69	3097	8.73	11.94	1734	3.68	2.42
70-74*	1185	6.87	9.08	514	2.22	1.54
75-79*	1726	6.17	8.33	699	1.84	1.45
80-84						
85-89						

* Information is missing for one or more years



SUICIDES

COSTA RICA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64*	131	6.59	11.04	23	0.95	1.13
65-69	204	7.22	12.75	21	0.57	0.49
70-74	236	6.71	8.34	49	1.21	0.65
75-79	356	8.43	13.16	92	1.90	2.19
80-84	452	8.92	12.77	102	1.71	2.04
85-89*	453	9.54	16.54	70	1.20	1.20

* Information is missing for one or more years

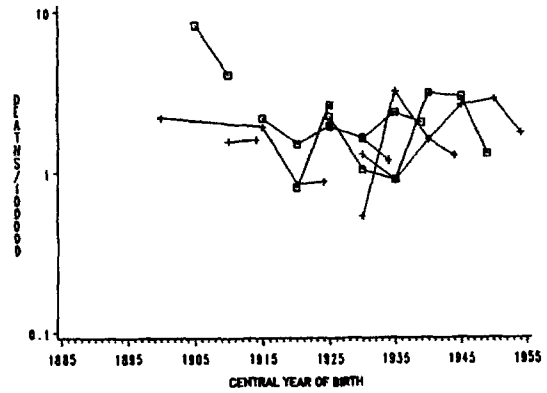
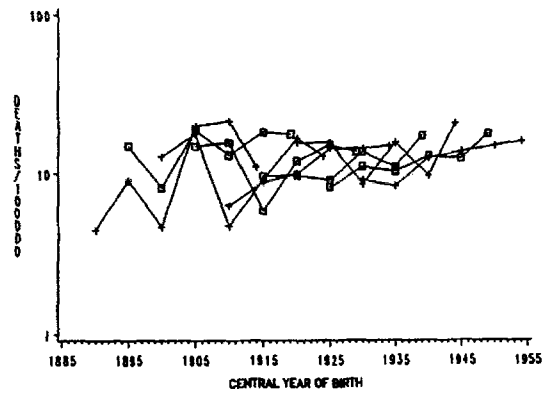
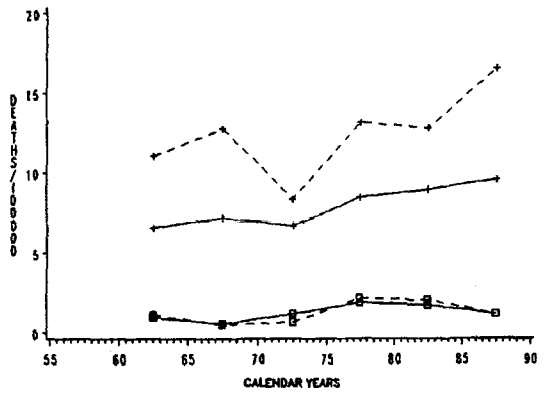


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

CUBA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64*	544	16.97	24.29	299	8.63	8.70
65-69*	1165	16.41	22.72	812	10.65	10.25
70-74	3955	19.59	32.74	2538	12.68	14.24
75-79	2866	12.88	22.30	2104	9.44	10.38
80-84						
85-89'						

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64						
65-69	288	4.16	6.07	146	1.63	1.26
70-74	333	4.53	7.60	248	2.44	2.38
75-79	402	4.35	5.90	208	1.84	2.01
80-84	506	5.00	7.26	164	1.41	1.90
85-89*	91	3.78	4.50	42	1.64	1.38

* Information is missing for one or more years

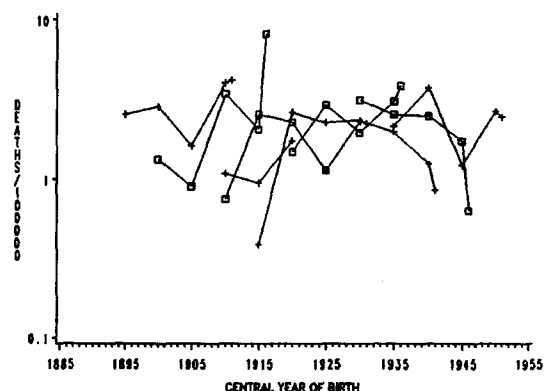
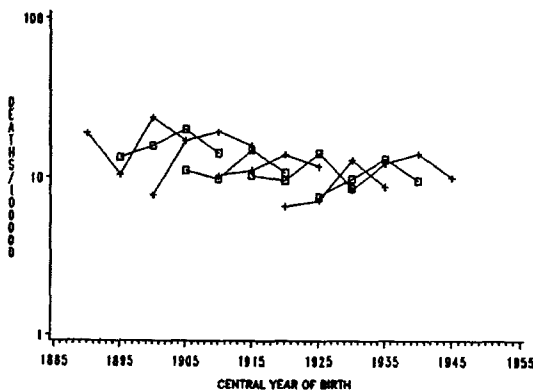
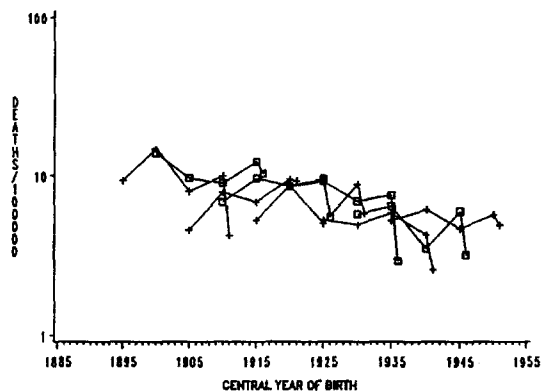
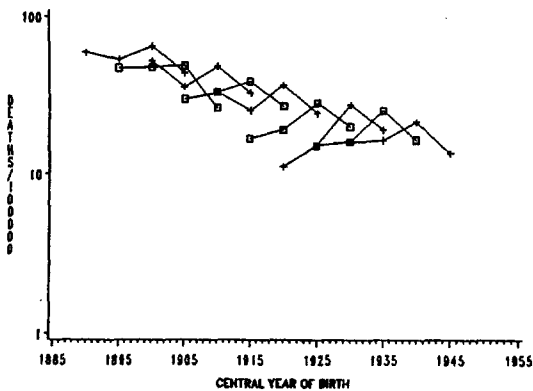
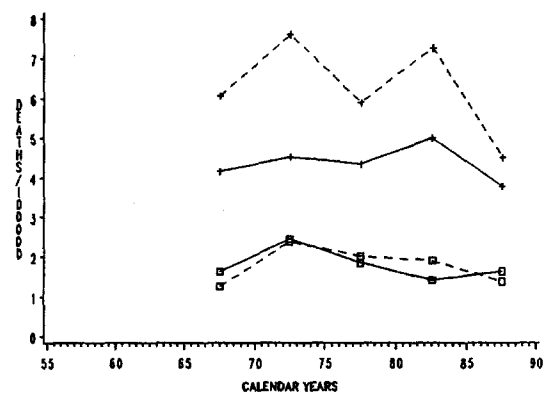
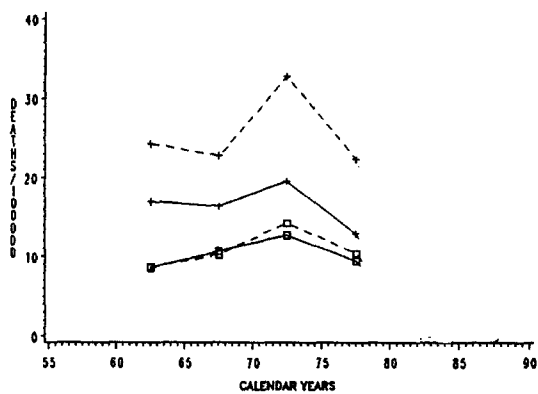


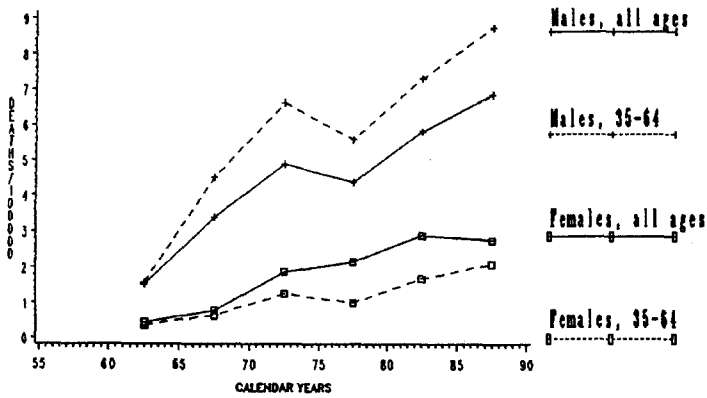
Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

ECUADOR

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64*	84	1.52	1.57	27	0.44	0.36
65-69	351	3.38	4.51	94	0.78	0.64
70-74	604	4.88	6.62	284	1.86	1.25
75-79*	557	4.37	5.58	327	2.14	1.00
80-84*	625	5.81	7.31	378	2.88	1.67
85-89*	1114	6.86	8.73	519	2.75	2.08

* Information is missing for one or more years



SUICIDES

MEXICO

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59*	916	3.58	5.65	320	1.05	1.28
60-64	2549	3.73	5.55	818	1.01	1.07
65-69	2552	3.19	4.72	862	0.90	0.92
70-74	2319	2.35	3.34	563	0.49	0.50
75-79*	2548	3.54	5.12	629	0.76	0.87
80-84*	2882	3.11	4.26	732	0.76	0.87
85-89*	2754	4.22	5.86	540	0.70	0.80

* Information is missing for one or more years

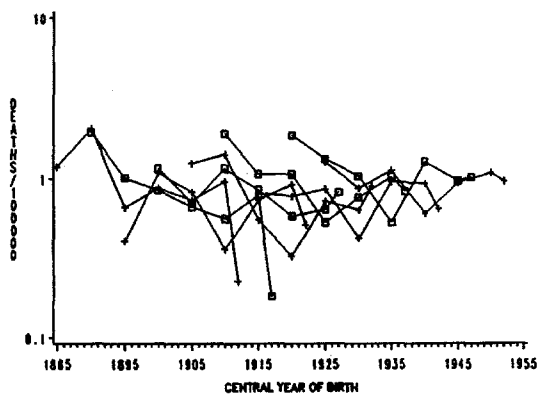
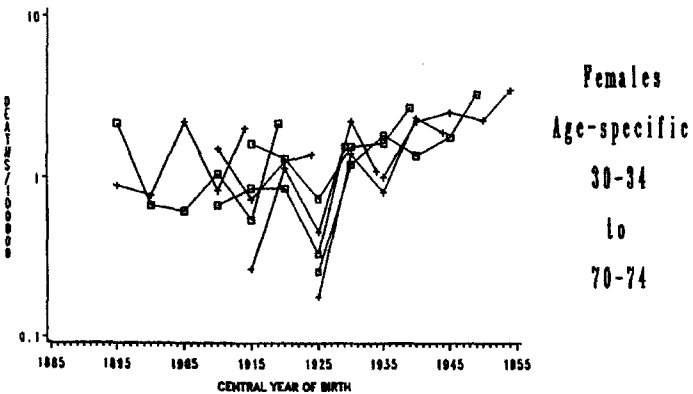
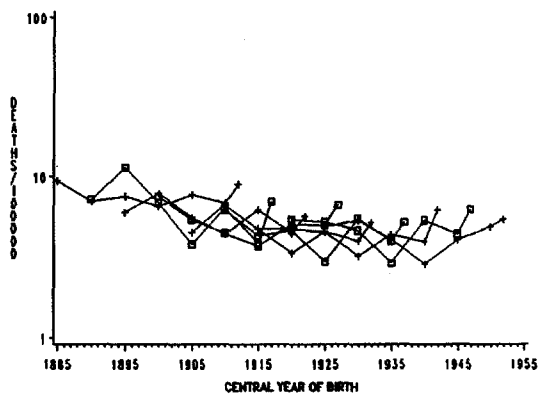
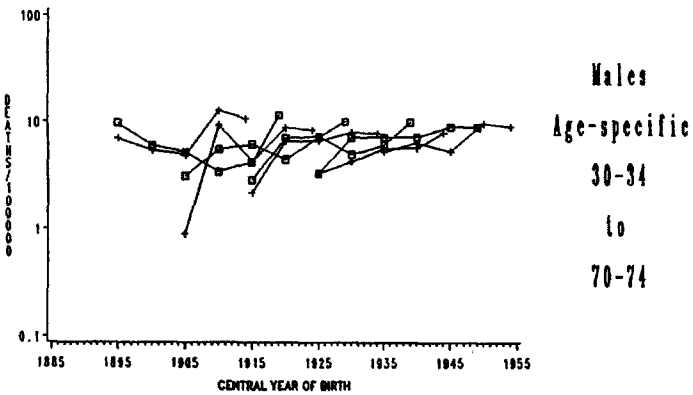
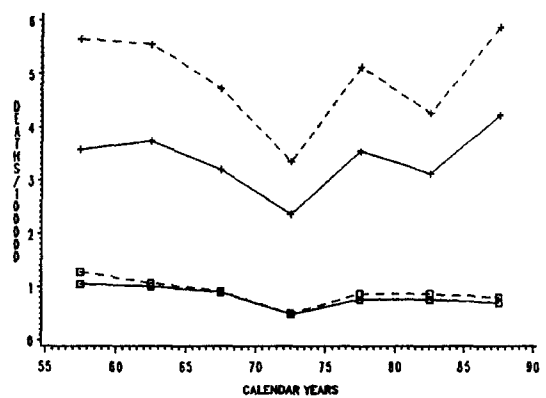


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

PANAMA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59	118	8.03	9.15	30	1.28	1.53
60-64	215	9.21	14.06	92	3.18	2.27
65-69	235	8.44	10.72	98	3.30	3.89
70-74	166	4.98	6.54	37	1.10	1.55
75-79	139	3.87	4.98	21	0.50	0.47
80-84	151	3.45	4.92	28	0.56	0.53
85-89*	177	5.86	8.12	48	1.50	1.35

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

PARAGUAY(REPORTING)

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64						
65-69						
70-74	129	6.00	9.85	75	2.48	2.39
75-79	151	5.48	7.60	86	2.32	1.45
80-84*	115	4.55	8.81	50	1.68	2.39
85-89*	70	3.96	4.84	51	2.33	3.04

* Information is missing for one or more years

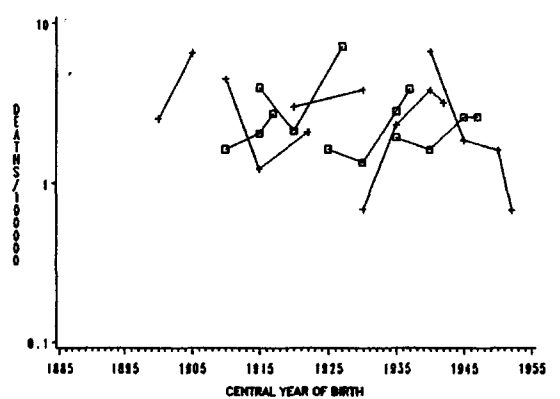
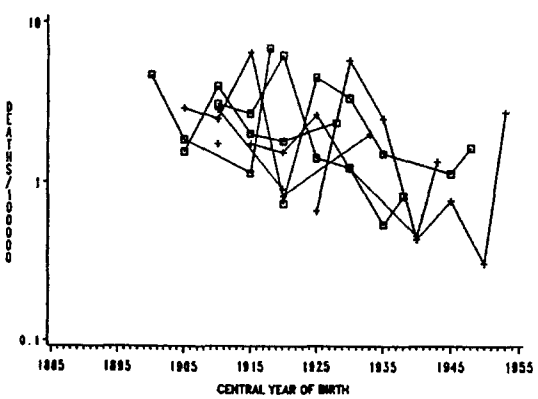
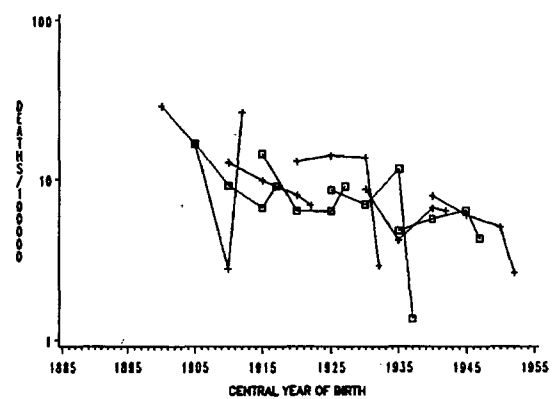
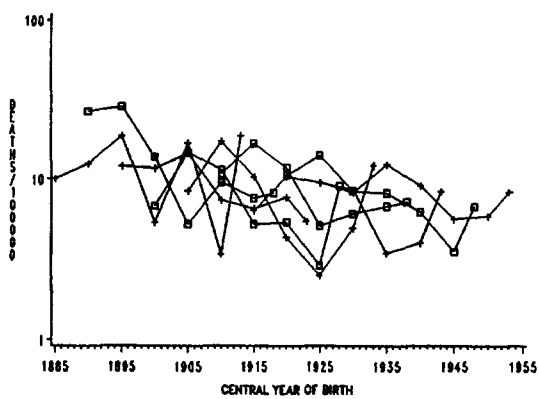
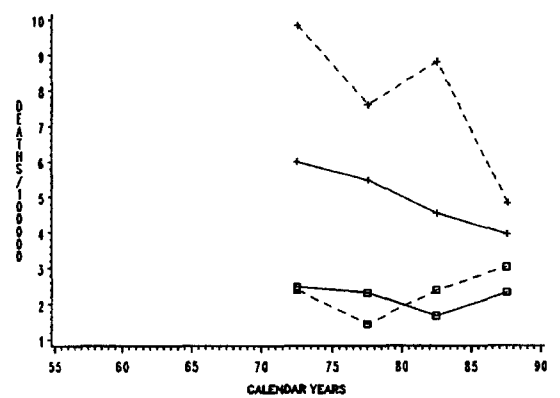
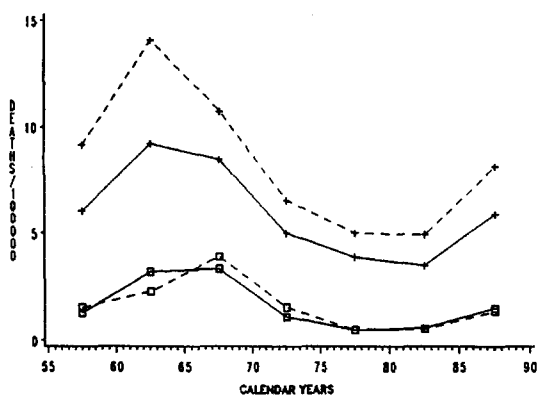


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

PERU

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64						
65-69*	622	3.28	4.97	197	0.85	0.85
70-74*	774	3.53	5.39	306	1.11	0.78
75-79*	308	2.21	3.23	146	0.89	0.91
80-84						
85-89						

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

PUERTO RICO

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64*	675	17.51	33.36	210	4.54	5.56
65-69*	420	19.53	36.51	138	5.69	9.35
70-74	1024	16.84	29.39	290	4.37	7.44
75-79*	938	17.55	28.70	174	3.05	5.08
80-84	1325	17.40	30.62	197	2.41	4.76
85-89	1316	15.52	26.26	176	1.91	3.76

* Information is missing for one or more years

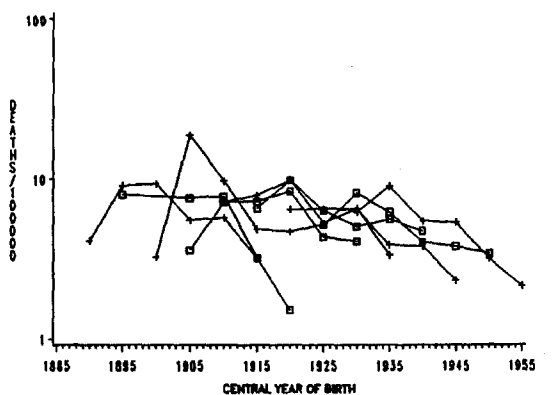
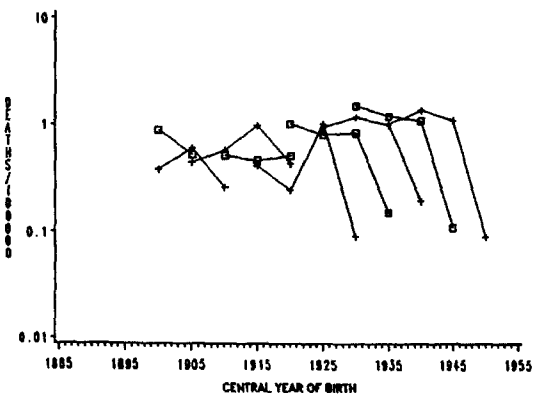
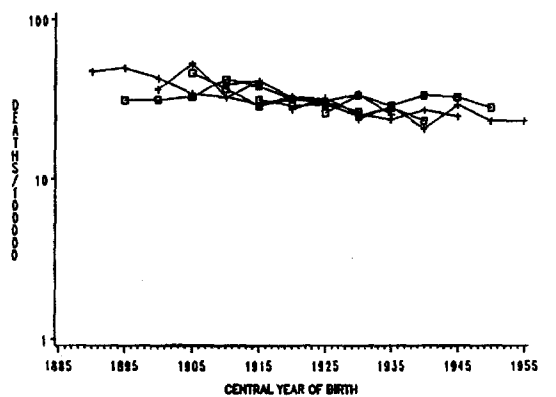
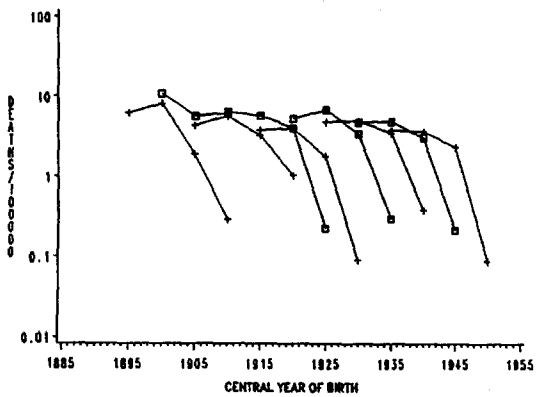
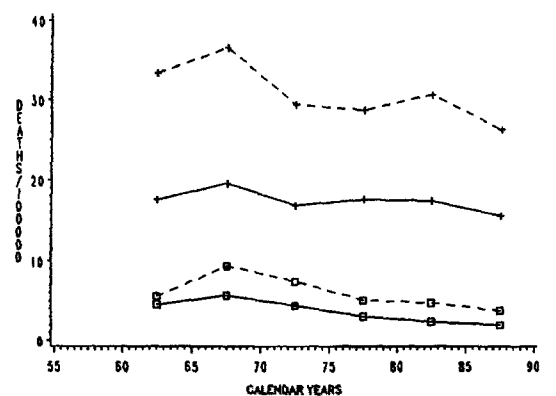
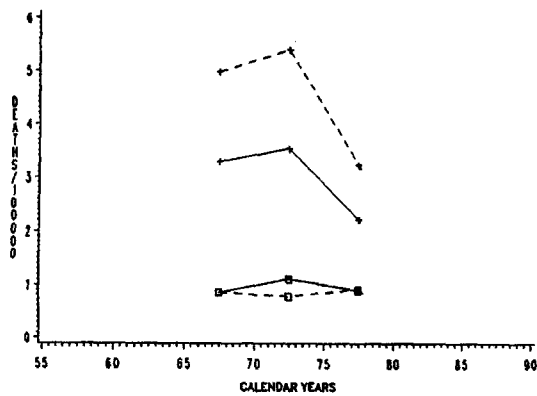


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

URUGUAY

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59	1094	17.09	26.73	424	6.80	6.36
60-64*	625	15.34	21.93	202	4.96	5.43
65-69	1113	15.37	23.51	368	5.04	7.38
70-74	1213	15.93	24.40	361	4.60	7.24
75-79*	948	15.45	24.46	276	4.23	6.21
80-84	1256	15.44	26.15	289	3.02	4.86
85-89	1126	13.14	20.29	301	3.34	5.10

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

VENEZUELA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59	1290	10.61	16.48	458	3.22	3.71
60-64	1502	10.64	16.10	654	3.94	4.52
65-69	2130	12.52	19.03	871	4.27	4.48
70-74	2290	11.74	18.23	893	3.61	4.04
75-79	2282	9.27	13.11	655	2.27	2.87
80-84*	2279	9.30	13.66	586	2.08	2.85
85-89*	1903	8.94	13.21	445	1.88	2.56

* Information is missing for one or more years

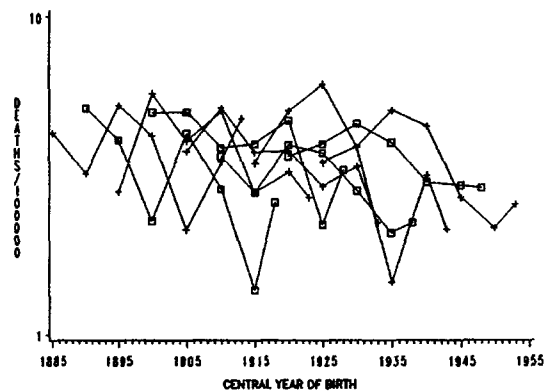
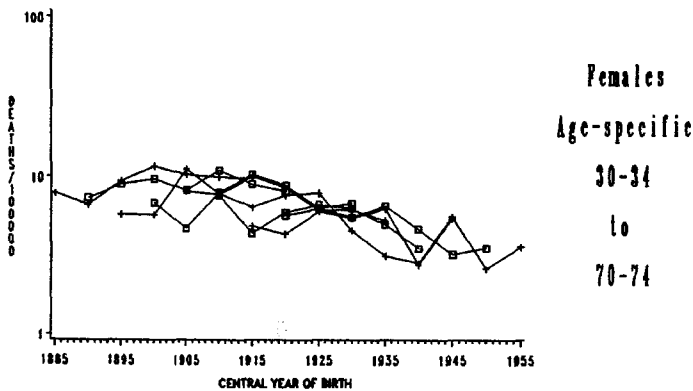
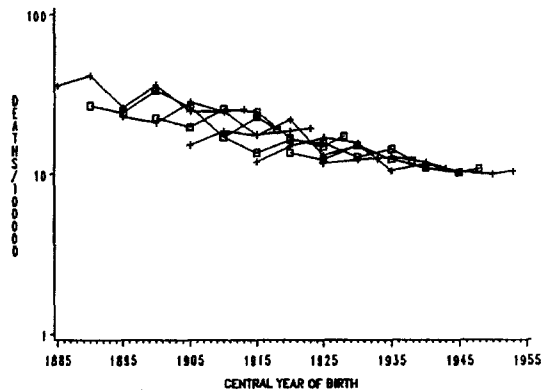
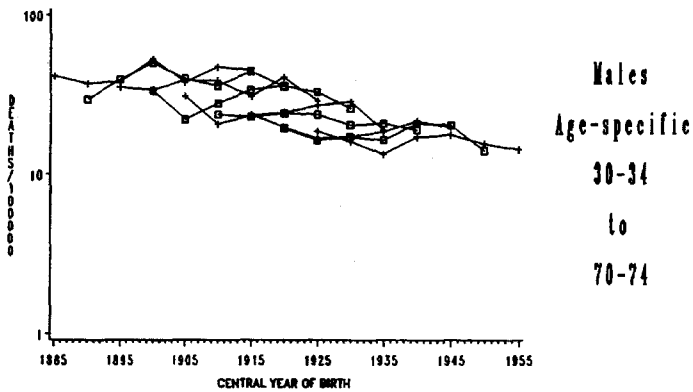
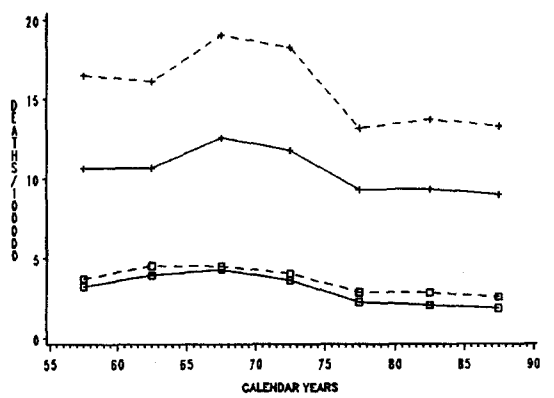
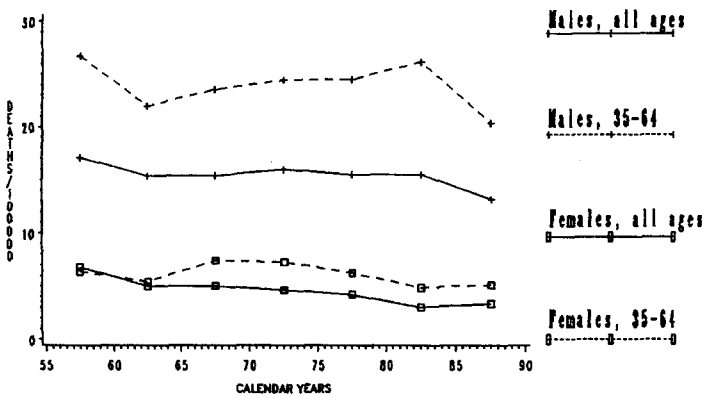


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

EGYPT

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59	47	0.22	0.28	24	0.12	0.10
60-64	44	0.15	0.12	28	0.10	0.08
65-69*	21	0.05	0.07	11	0.05	0.05
70-74	31	0.04	0.04	20	0.03	0.02
75-79	224	0.26	0.43	100	0.12	0.12
80-84*	10	0.06	0.08	5	0.02	0.03
85-89*	14	0.08	0.15	8	0.04	0.07

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

MAURITIUS

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64*	64	6.25	10.63	12	0.96	0.56
65-69	78	5.67	10.96	24	1.37	1.76
70-74	110	6.94	11.25	46	2.10	1.12
75-79	213	10.49	14.75	100	4.10	3.94
80-84	117	5.44	8.70	74	2.68	1.91
85-89	393	15.64	25.72	190	6.96	5.51

* Information is missing for one or more years

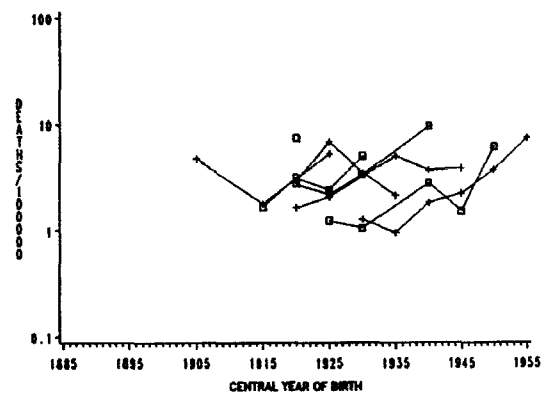
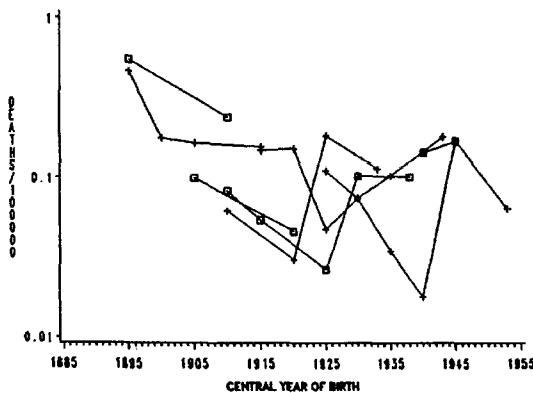
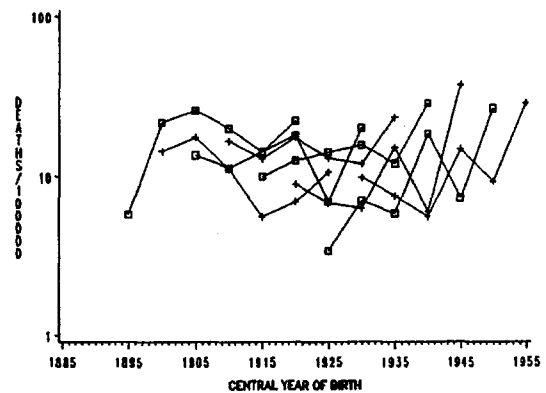
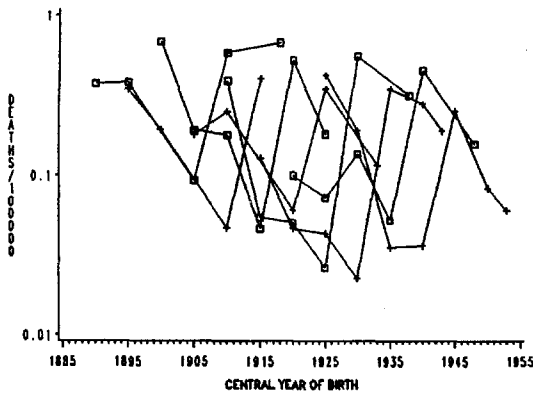
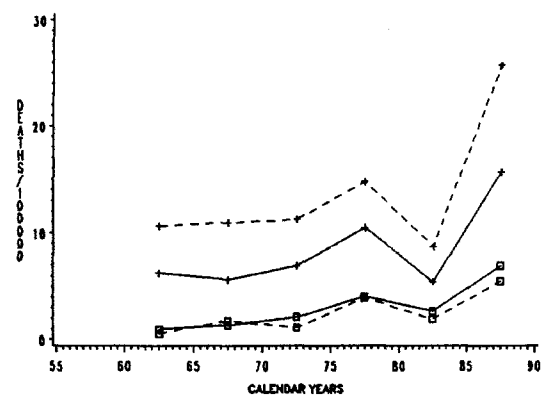
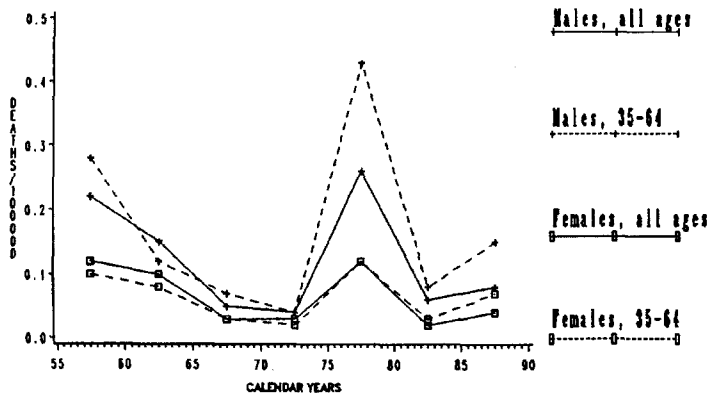


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

HONG KONG

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64	1056	16.14	27.74	716	10.55	14.24
65-69	1047	14.49	24.85	778	9.85	13.76
70-74	1379	16.08	26.25	998	10.73	15.11
75-79	1611	15.59	24.45	1198	10.52	14.03
80-84	1536	11.06	18.27	1072	7.62	10.46
85-89	1812	11.66	17.18	1379	8.49	12.69

SUICIDES

ISRAEL

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59						
60-64						
65-69						
70-74						
75-79	741	8.62	14.50	469	5.12	8.21
80-84	732	7.39	10.52	388	3.67	5.26
85-89	996	9.33	14.56	443	3.74	5.71

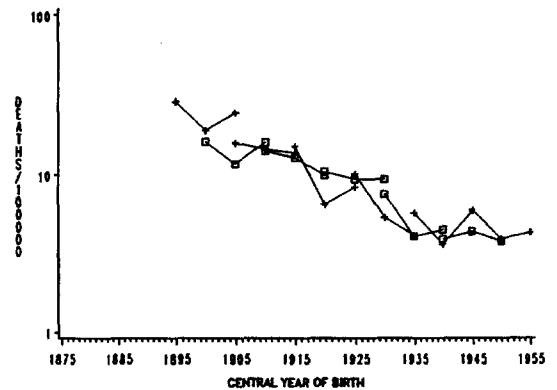
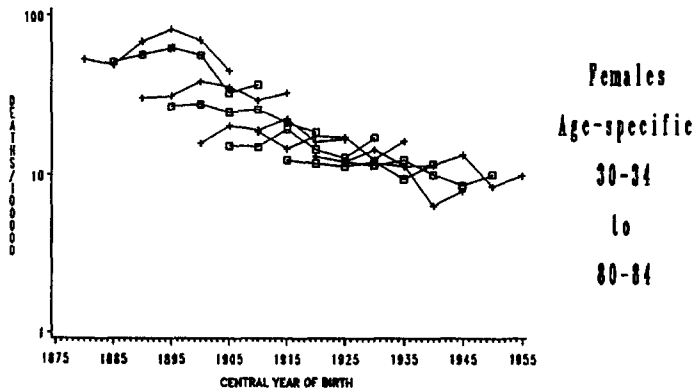
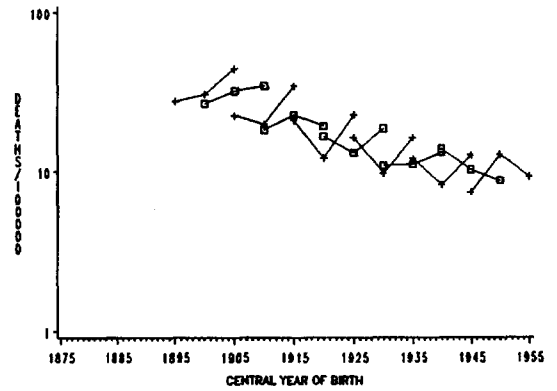
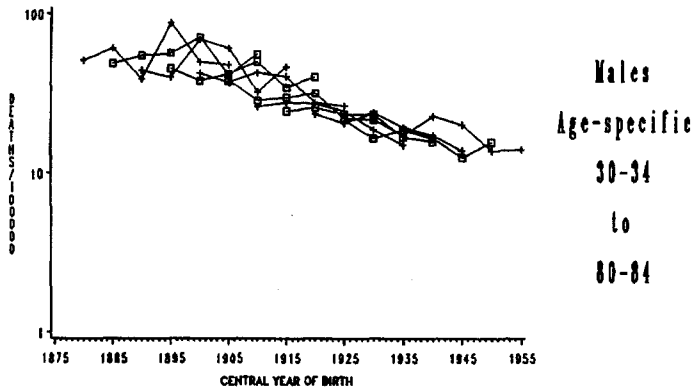
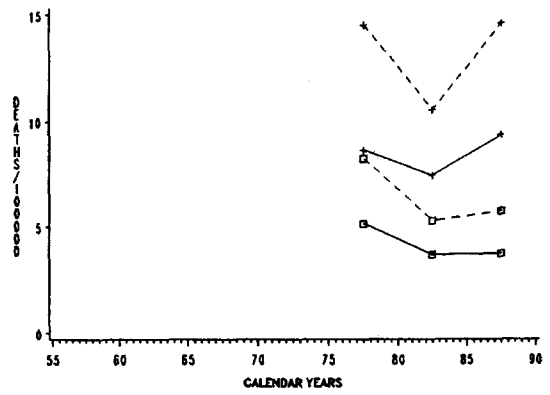
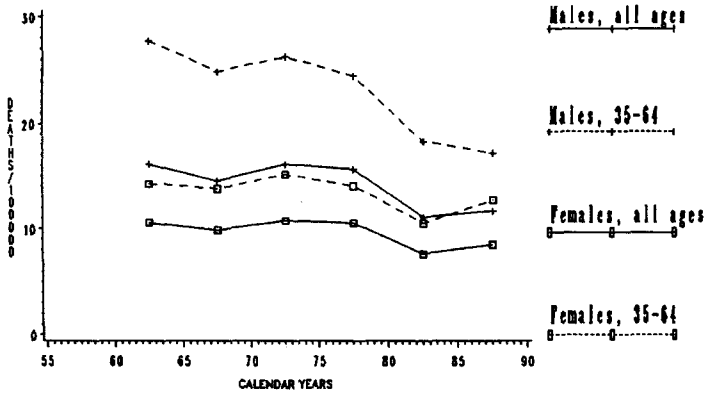


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

KUWAIT

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64						
65-69						
70-74						
75-79	21	0.70	1.01	4	0.21	0.34
80-84	29	0.62	1.11	14	0.51	0.93
85-89*	37	1.10	1.71	12	0.64	1.28

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

PHILIPPINES

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64*	279	1.26	2.15	175	0.67	0.84
65-69	1010	1.65	2.46	525	0.74	0.82
70-74	1039	1.32	1.90	722	0.76	0.70
75-79*	625	1.14	1.37	510	0.79	0.66
80-84*	136	0.70	1.02	100	0.45	0.42
85-89						

* Information is missing for one or more years

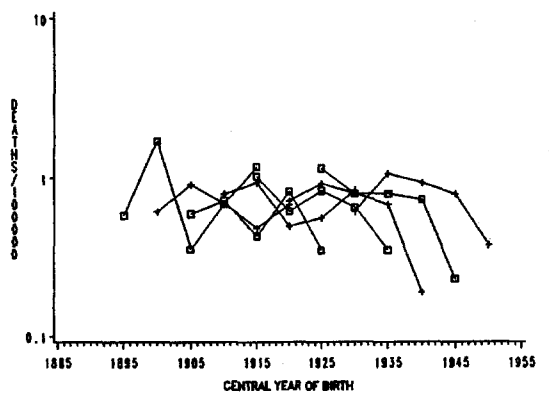
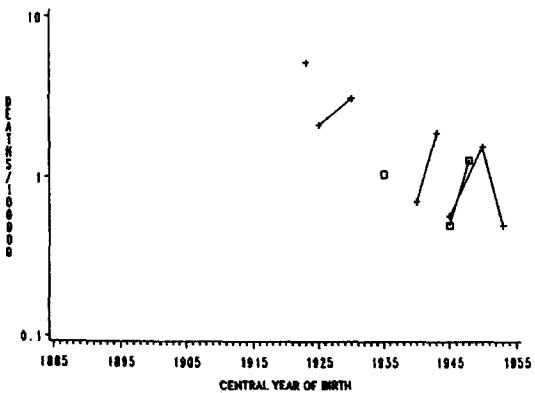
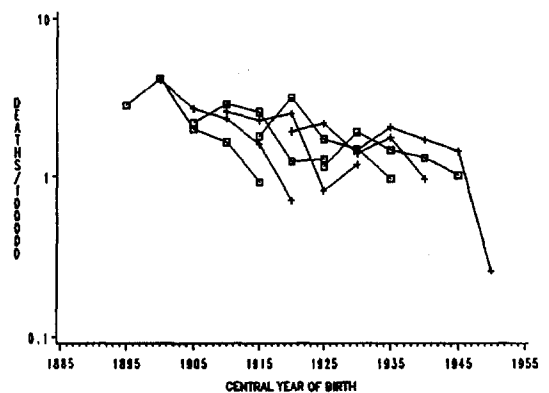
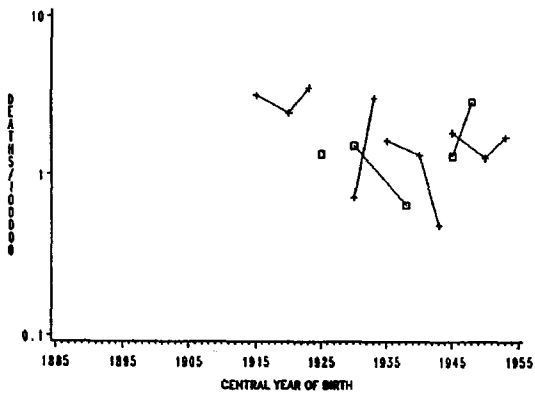
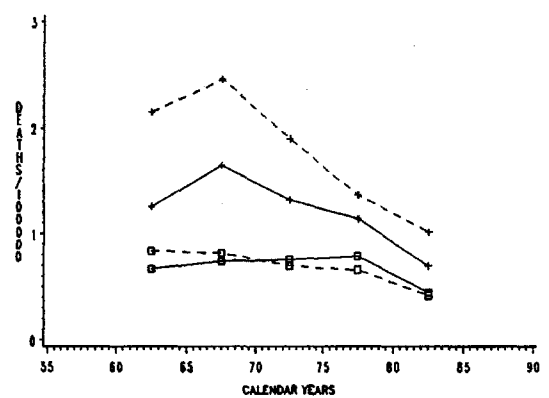
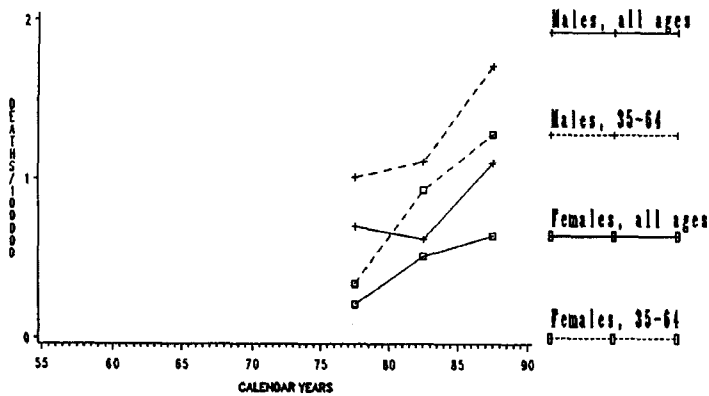


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

JAPAN

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59	66409	30.90	33.08	45043	19.37	19.38
60-64	48639	21.21	24.70	36871	14.59	15.43
65-69	41135	18.55	22.06	31925	11.54	13.68
70-74	49602	17.83	24.33	38344	12.36	15.49
75-79	61047	19.82	29.18	40005	11.64	15.43
80-84	71807	21.31	37.07	38828	10.12	14.96
85-89	74365	20.25	36.69	42436	9.93	15.37

SUICIDES

SINGAPORE

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-64
55-59						
60-64*	223	21.43	29.92	79	6.78	9.36
65-69	582	19.00	26.81	354	10.18	14.76
70-74	671	17.46	22.84	446	10.17	10.90
75-79	713	15.75	18.54	535	10.38	12.04
80-84	671	11.56	15.19	508	8.33	8.66
85-89	988	15.30	19.16	722	10.58	12.20

* Information is missing for one or more years

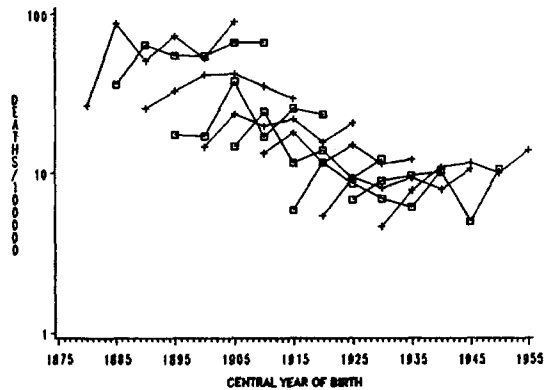
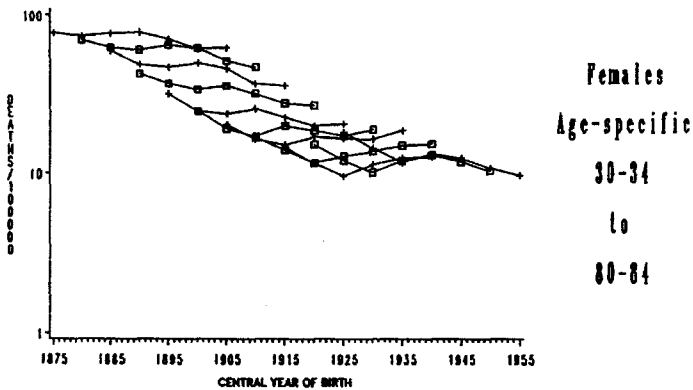
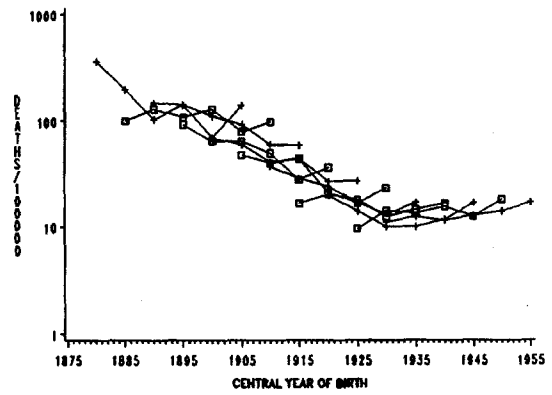
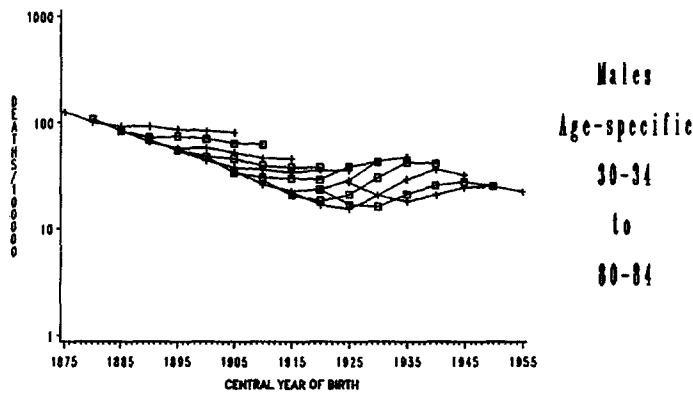
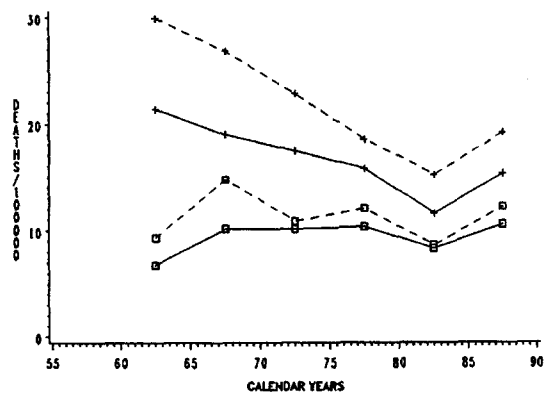
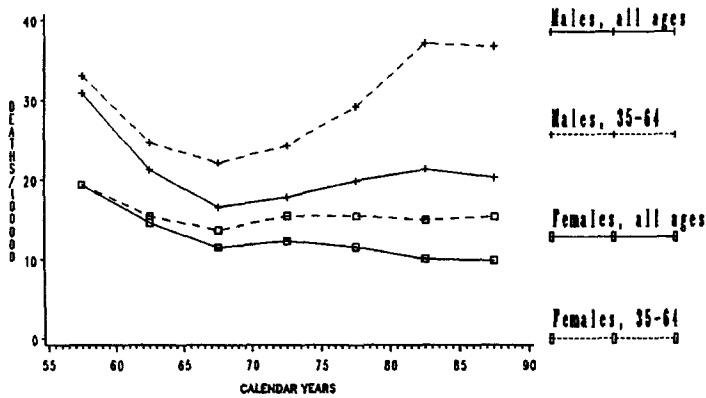


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

SRI LANKA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59	2593	13.19	16.71	1018	5.30	4.84
60-64	4354	19.08	23.08	1717	7.69	7.82
65-69*	5102	25.32	28.18	2036	9.95	9.17
70-74						
75-79*	1793	27.51	31.18	995	13.94	7.83
80-84*	12972	43.96	46.45	6369	20.21	12.87
85-89*	7794	49.62	56.51	3222	18.99	12.90

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

THAILAND

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84	Deaths Number	World Stand	Trunc 35-84
55-59*	1301	4.42	6.90	766	2.21	2.48
60-64	3112	5.50	8.54	1765	2.63	2.32
65-69	3314	5.09	7.94	2515	3.14	2.75
70-74	4349	5.31	8.07	3504	3.57	3.30
75-79*	4562	6.23	9.25	4094	4.77	4.33
80-84	8727	8.16	11.76	7691	6.01	5.50
85-89*	5476	7.49	10.77	3497	4.27	4.65

* Information is missing for one or more years

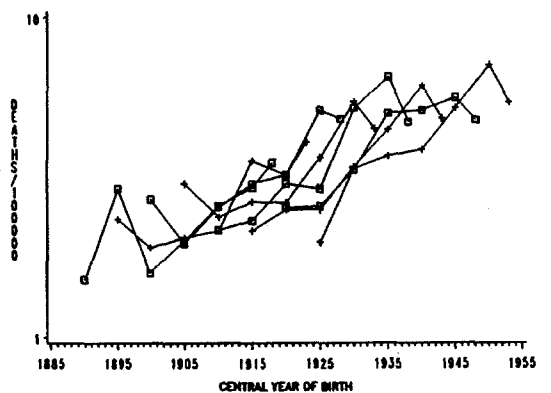
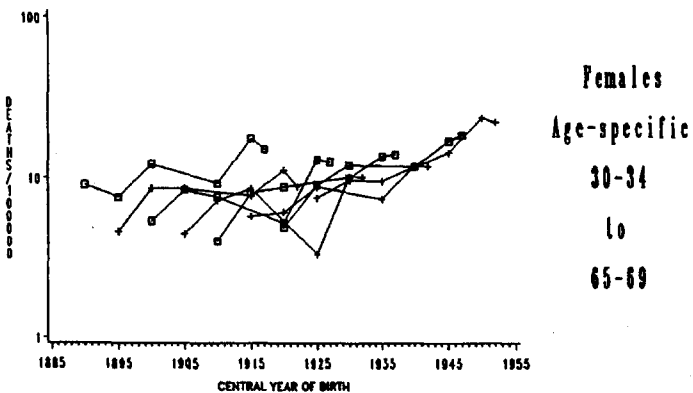
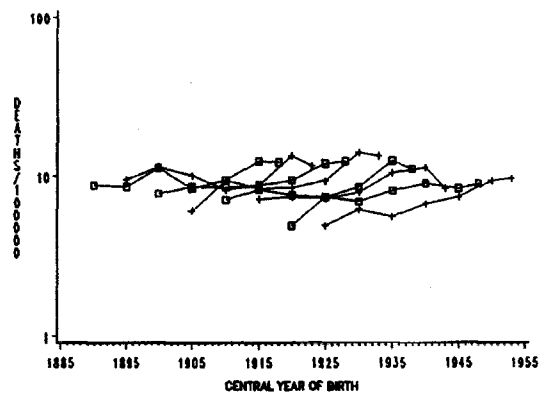
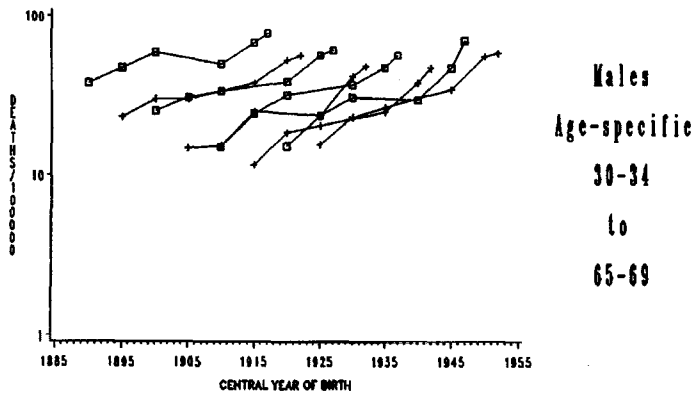
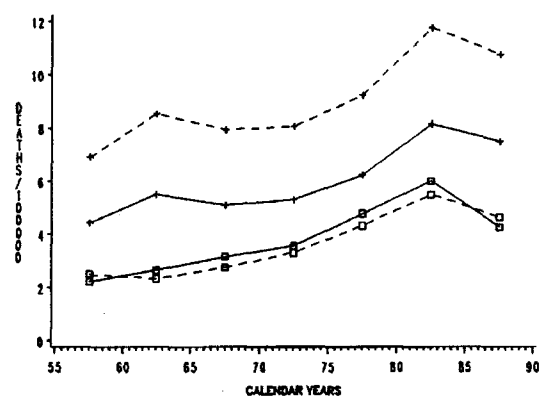
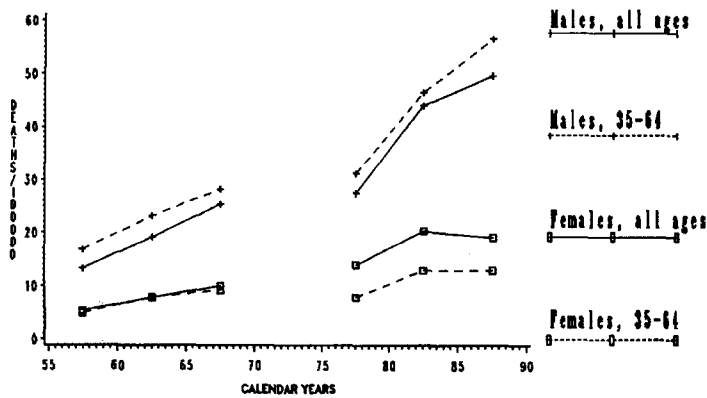


Figure 1 (continued)

SUICIDES

AUSTRALIA

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths	World	Trunc	Deaths	World	Trunc
	Number	Stand	35-84	Number	Stand	35-84
55-59	4033	15.66	28.35	1426	5.52	11.54
60-64	4904	17.52	32.75	2244	7.97	16.58
65-69	5264	17.19	31.10	2852	9.32	18.60
70-74	5420	16.16	28.09	2589	7.68	14.97
75-79	5600	15.05	23.94	2270	6.07	11.90
80-84	6393	15.47	22.55	2101	5.03	9.29
85-89*	6512	18.06	25.06	1817	4.96	8.26

* Information is missing for one or more years

SUICIDES

NEW ZEALAND

Years of Death	MALES			FEMALES		
	Deaths	World	Trunc	Deaths	World	Trunc
	Number	Stand	35-84	Number	Stand	35-84
55-59	742	12.93	23.85	283	4.86	10.47
60-64	746	12.12	23.22	347	5.47	11.77
65-69	868	12.98	24.92	437	6.31	12.66
70-74	868	11.99	21.18	436	5.80	10.86
75-79	1070	13.57	21.84	503	6.19	11.90
80-84	1270	14.88	20.68	492	5.56	9.54
85-89*	1300	18.13	24.44	399	5.34	7.36

* Information is missing for one or more years

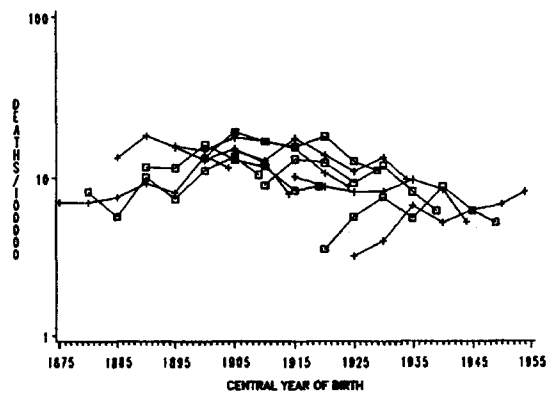
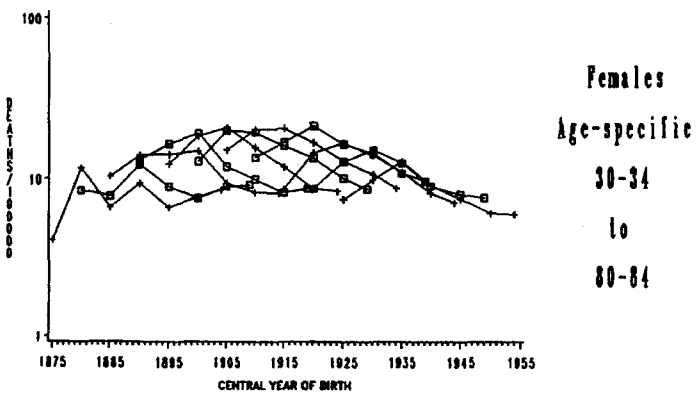
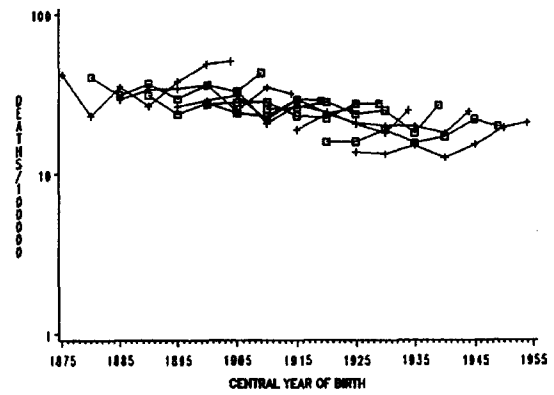
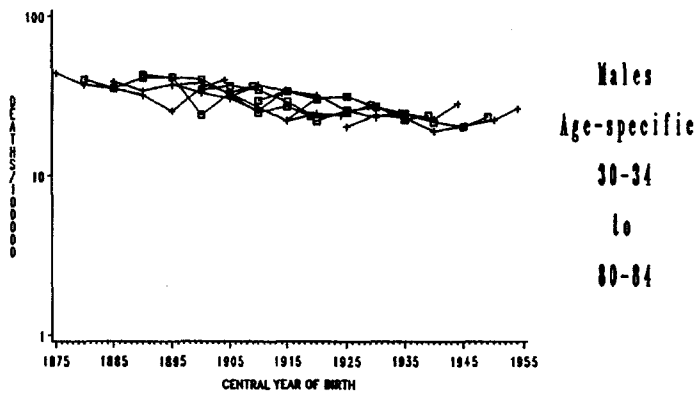
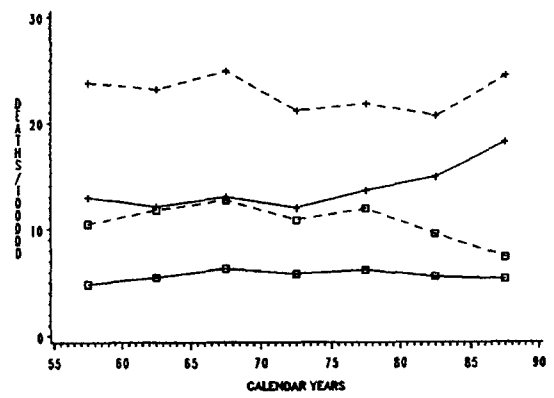
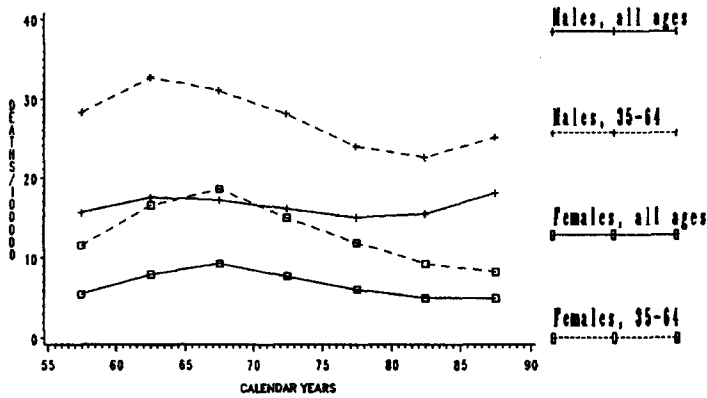


Figure 1 (continued)

Oceania

The pattern of suicide trends from Australia and New Zealand was similar to that described for North America, with intermediate values on a worldwide scale (18.1/100000 in both countries for males; 5.0/100000 females in Australia and 5.3 in New Zealand), with some moderate increase, particularly for elderly males, but some downward trends for young and middle age females.

Discussion

The pattern and trends in suicide mortality documented and described for various areas of the world are almost certainly largely influenced by differences in suicide ascertainment and certification. In fact, a variable proportion of suicide deaths can be attributed to other (violent) causes of death in various countries and calendar periods⁵⁻⁷. This can only partly explain, however, such large differences as those observed between Kuwait and Sri Lanka, or between the United States and Japan. Suicide certification accuracy may also have influenced, though to a smaller extent, trends over time within each country⁵⁻⁷.

Still, the major determinants of the substantial variation in suicide rates across various areas of the world should be searched in socio-cultural factors and characteristics of various populations and perhaps, to a lower degree, in the availability of instruments and methods for suicide^{7,8}.

Most suicide trends in less developed areas of the world, including Latin America and several countries from Asia, were relatively favourable, since rates were comparatively low and there was no generalized evidence of significant rises. The only major exception was Sri Lanka, which over the last three decades reached suicide rates among the highest in the world.

Of some concern are, in contrast, the upward trends, particularly for elderly males, in several developed countries, including Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the substantial rises, over most recent decades, of suicide rate in young Japanese cohorts of males, particularly since overall suicide rates have been traditionally high in Japan. These trends are often in contrast with more favourable patterns in females, and may find some correlates in socio-economic aspects or psychiatric care^{9,10}, but are in any case consistent with the absence of an important and generalized favourable impact of the introduction (in the late 1950's) of newer psychotropic drugs on overall suicide mortality.

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