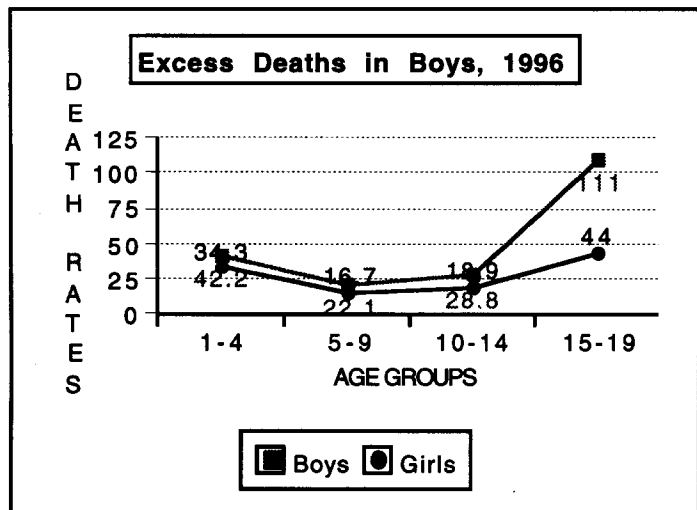


# The Health of Boys

In recent years, we have become more attuned to gender-specific health needs. So how are boys faring?

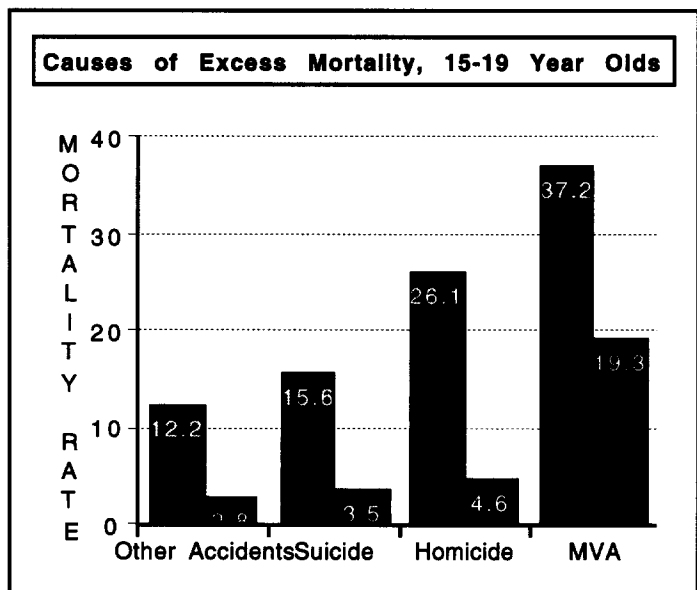
Boys of all ages have a greater chance of dying than girls. Among adolescents, the gap widens dramatically:



Source: NCHS: Death rates for 72 selected causes, by 5-year age groups, 1996. Table 291.

## Reasons for Excess Deaths

The leading causes of death of children and youth are other accidents, suicide, homicide, and motor vehicle accidents (MVA) (first bar boys, second bar girls):



Source: NCHS: Death rates for 72 selected causes, by 5-year age groups, 1996. Table 291.

## Minority Boys at Risk

By any comparison, the mortality figures for Black adolescent males are staggering:

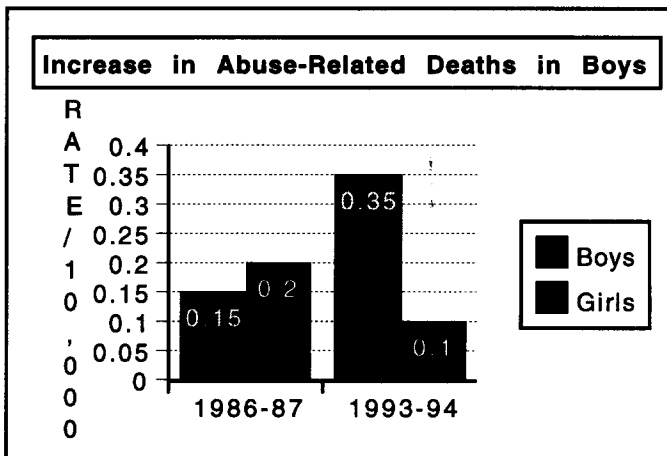
Black males:	185.0
White males:	98.4
Black females:	53.3
White females:	42.8

15-19 year-olds, per 100,000 population.

Source: NCHS: Death rates for 72 selected causes, 1996. Table 291.

## Victims of Child Abuse

Boys are at risk of being abused and neglected. Compared to girls, boys are more likely to be victims of physical abuse, neglect, and medical neglect. Of greatest concern is the tripling in abuse-related death rates among boys:



Source: DHHS. *Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect*, Figure 4-2, 1996.

## "Boy Code" Gone too Far?

In his acclaimed 1998 book, *Real Boys*, William Pollack, PhD writes of the "boy code," the expectation that boys should tough it out and ignore their physical and emotional needs. The boy code is not just a creation of boys themselves; it is also imposed on boys by their parents and by society at large.

A healthy childhood is the foundation of success in later life. Most boys will eventually become husbands and fathers. If boys aren't taught to care for themselves, how can we expect them to care for their wives and their children?