

# Surveillance for Suicidal Behavior: Assessing the Utility of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health—United States, 2008-2014

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# **Burden of Nonfatal Suicidal Behaviors among Adults in the U.S.**

- **Difficult to measure**
- **One ongoing national survey measuring these behaviors among adults in the U.S.**
  - **National Survey on Drug Use and Health**
  - **No existing assessment of trends**

## **National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)**

- **SAMHSA's annual household survey of noninstitutionalized U.S. civilians aged 12 and older**
  - 70,000 interviews/year, weighted to represent larger population
- **National, state, sub-state estimates of substance use and mental health issues**

# NSDUH Suicidal Behavior Measurement

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## Mental Health Module\*

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### In the past 12 months, did you...

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- think seriously about trying to kill yourself?
  - make any plans to kill yourself?
  - try to kill yourself?
  - get medical attention as a result of an attempt to kill yourself?
  - stay in a hospital overnight or longer because you tried to kill yourself?
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## Adult Depression Module\*

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### During your worst/most recent depressive episode, did you...

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- often think a lot about death, either your own, someone else's, or death in general?
- ever think that it would be better if you were dead?
- think about committing suicide?
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## Methods

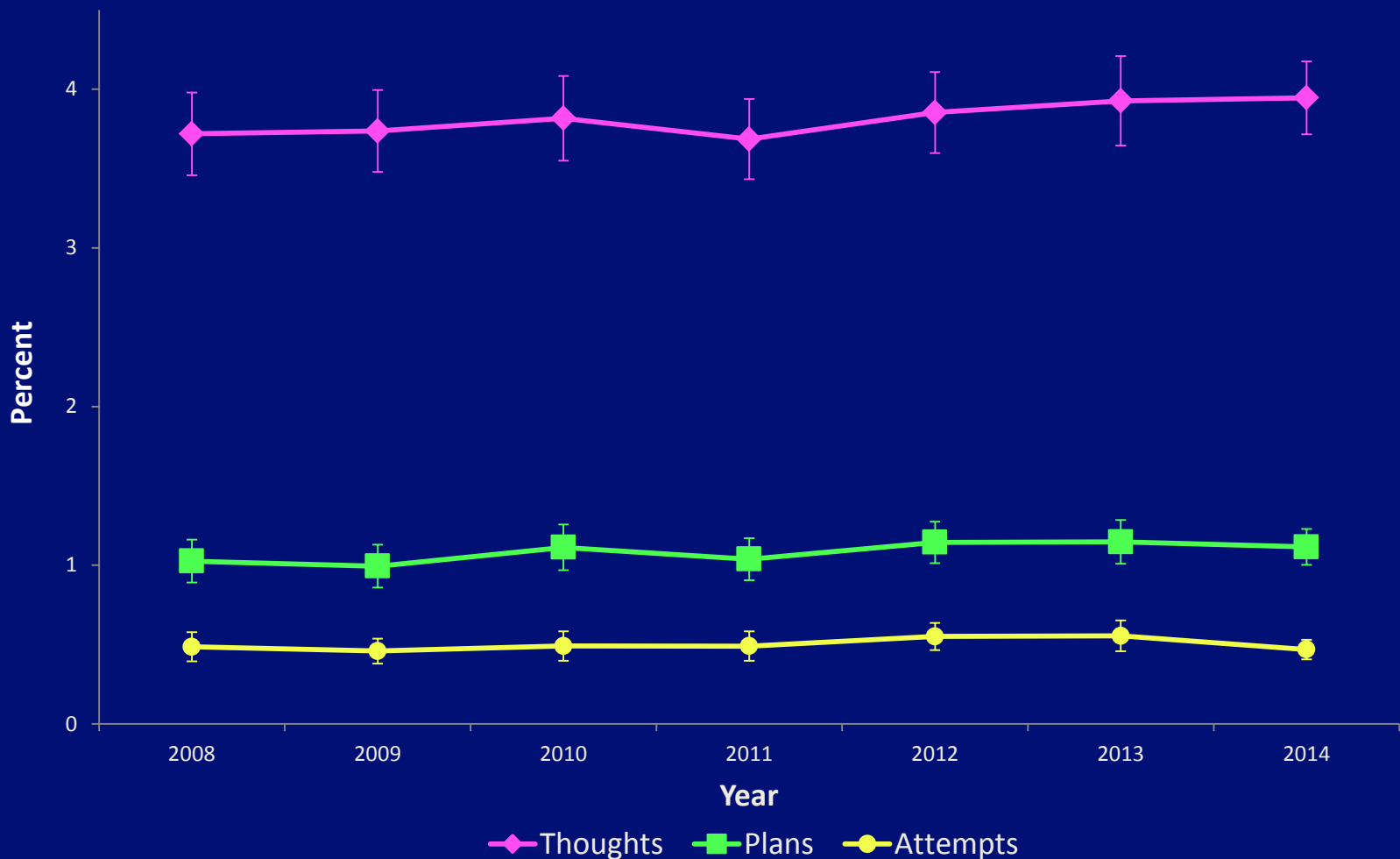
- **Focused on Mental Health section data**
  - Analyzed 7 years of available data (2008–2014)
- **Percent of adults reporting each behavior each year**
  - **Suicide thoughts**
  - **Suicide plans**
  - **Suicide attempts**
- **Stratified by sex, age group**

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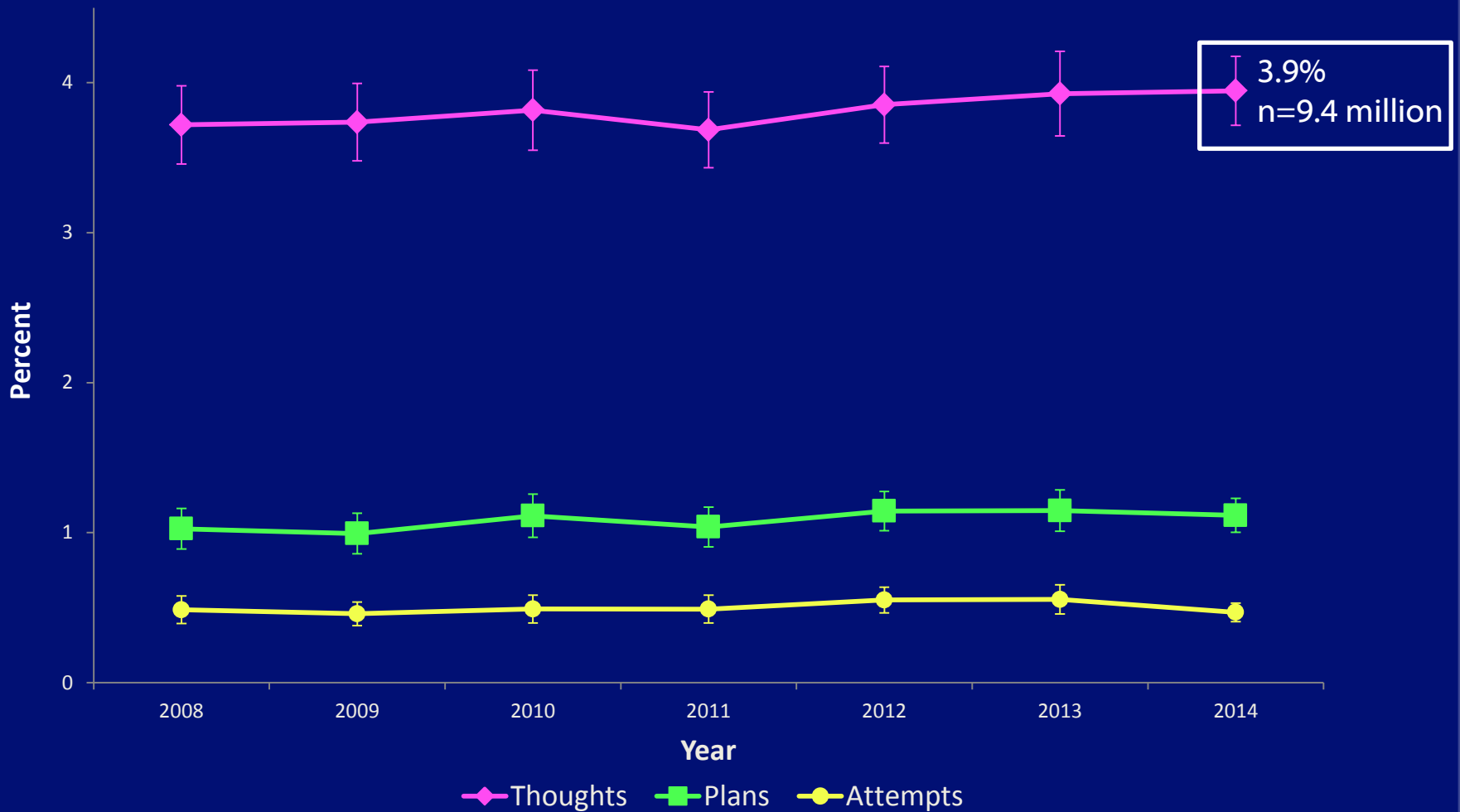
- **Pairwise t-tests for 2-estimate comparisons**
  - **Year-to-year**
  - **Across demographics**
- **Compared responses on questions across survey modules**
  - **Adult Mental Health module**
  - **Adult Depression module**



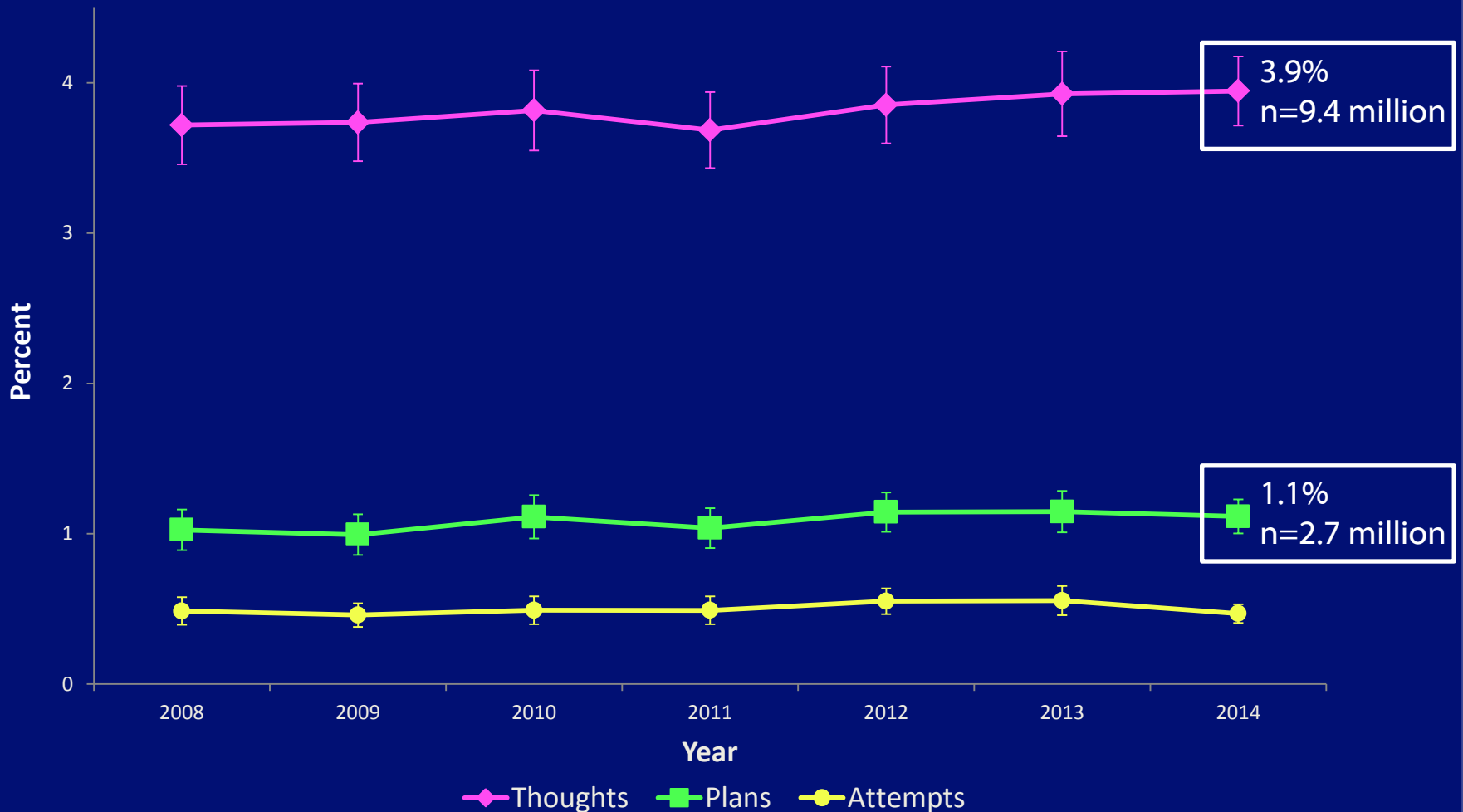
## Percent of U.S. Adults Aged $\geq 18$ Years Reporting Suicide Thoughts, Plans, and Attempts in Past Year, 2008–2014



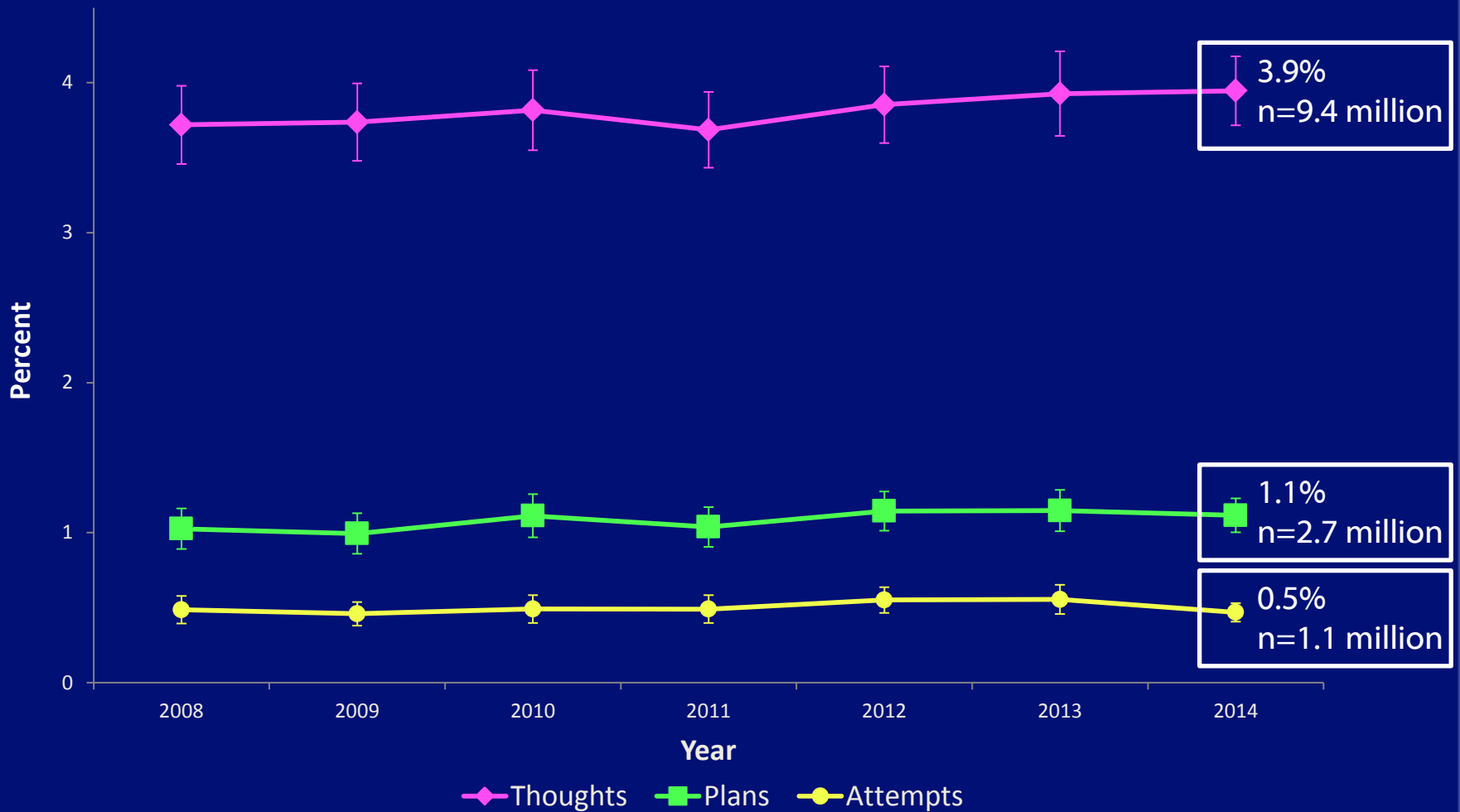
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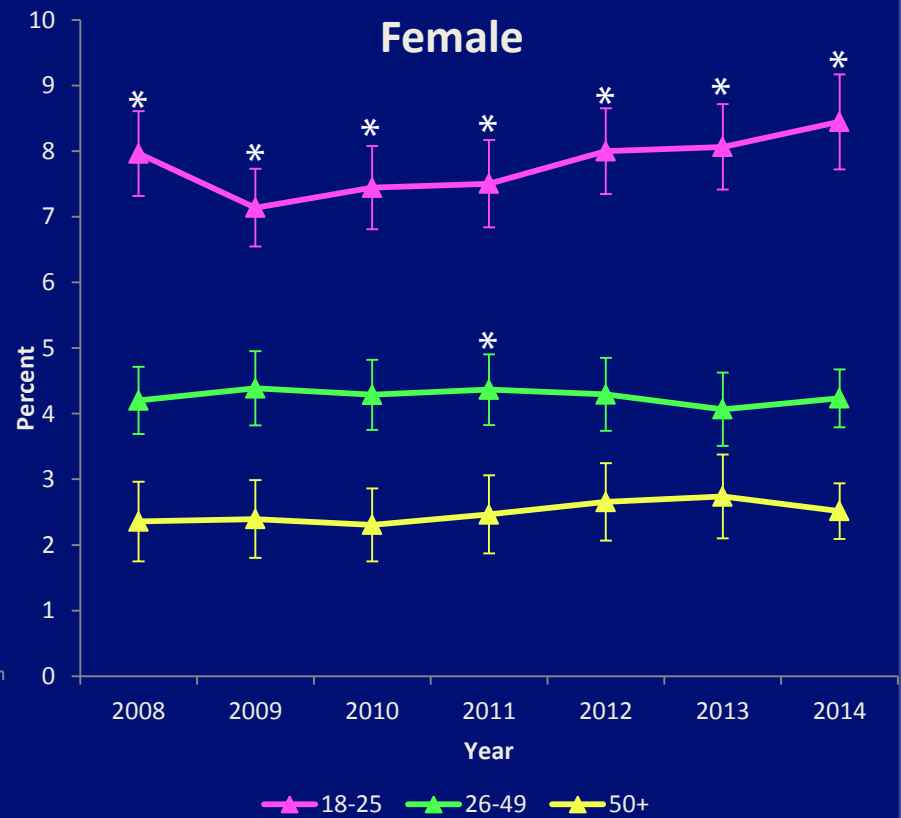
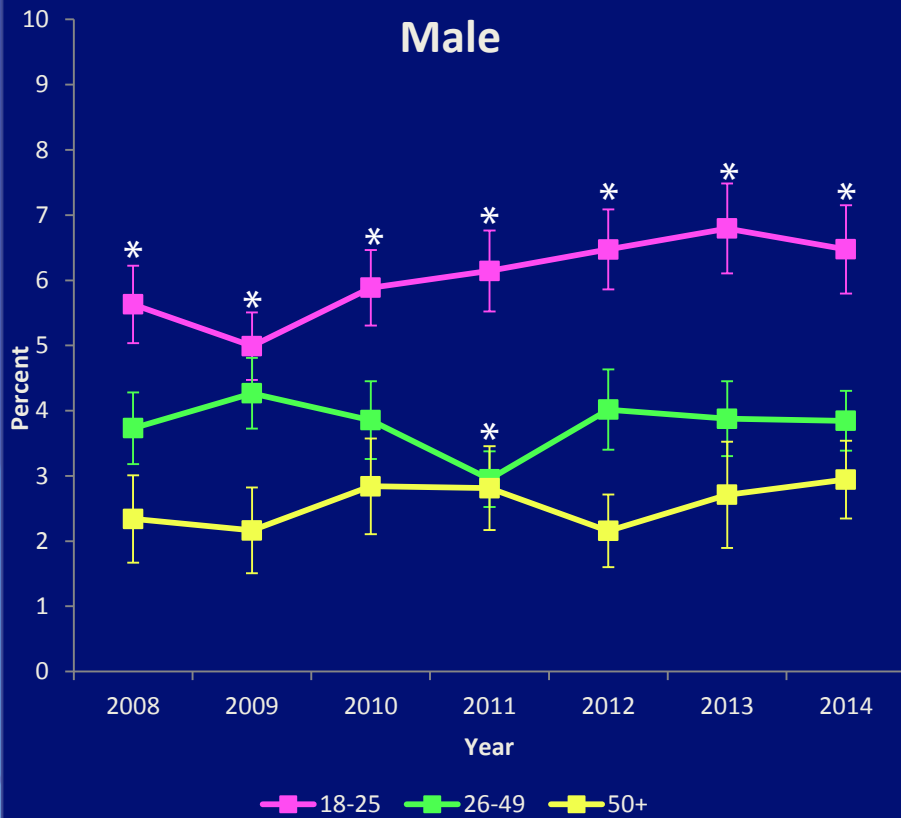
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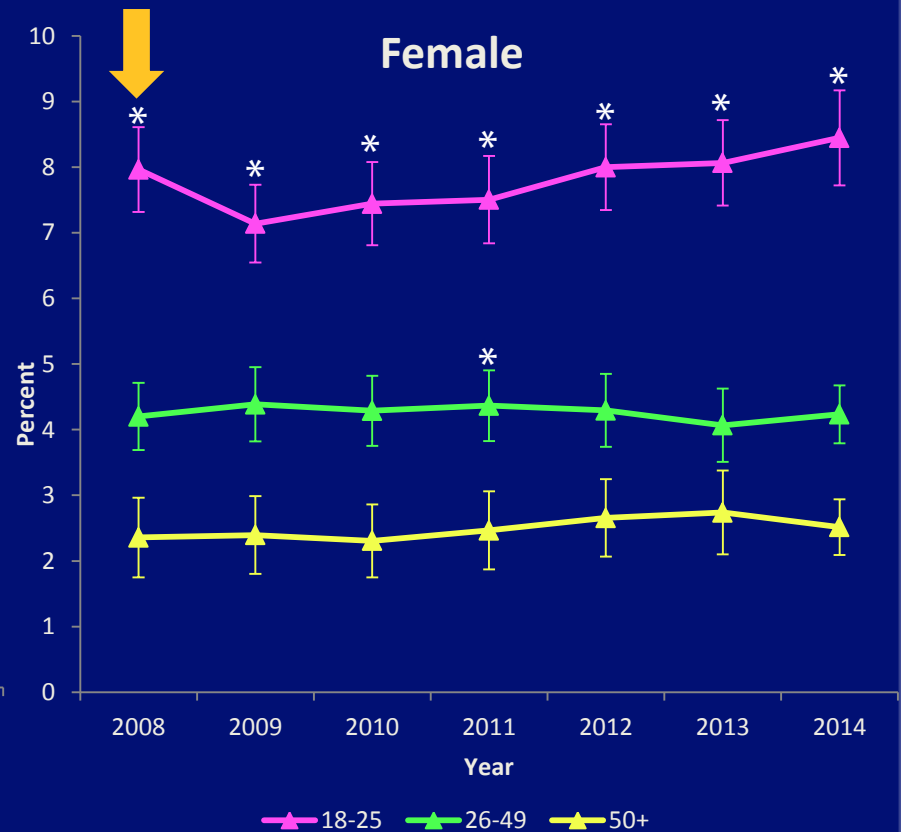
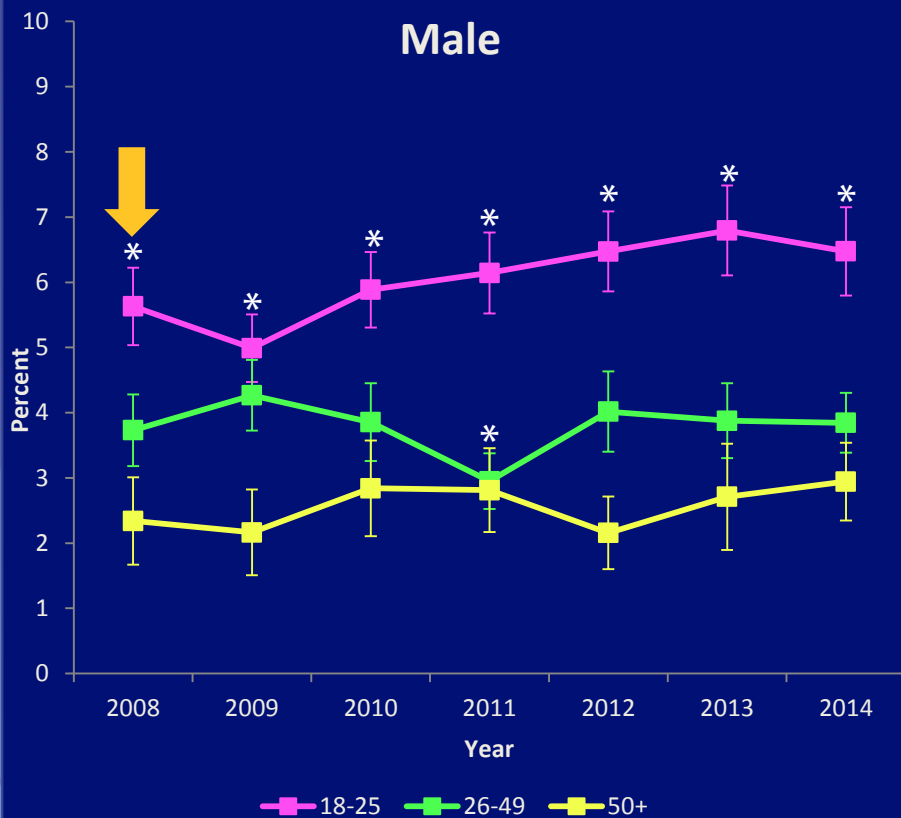


# Percent of U.S. Adults Aged ≥18 Years Reporting Suicide Thoughts in Past Year by Sex and Age, 2008–2014



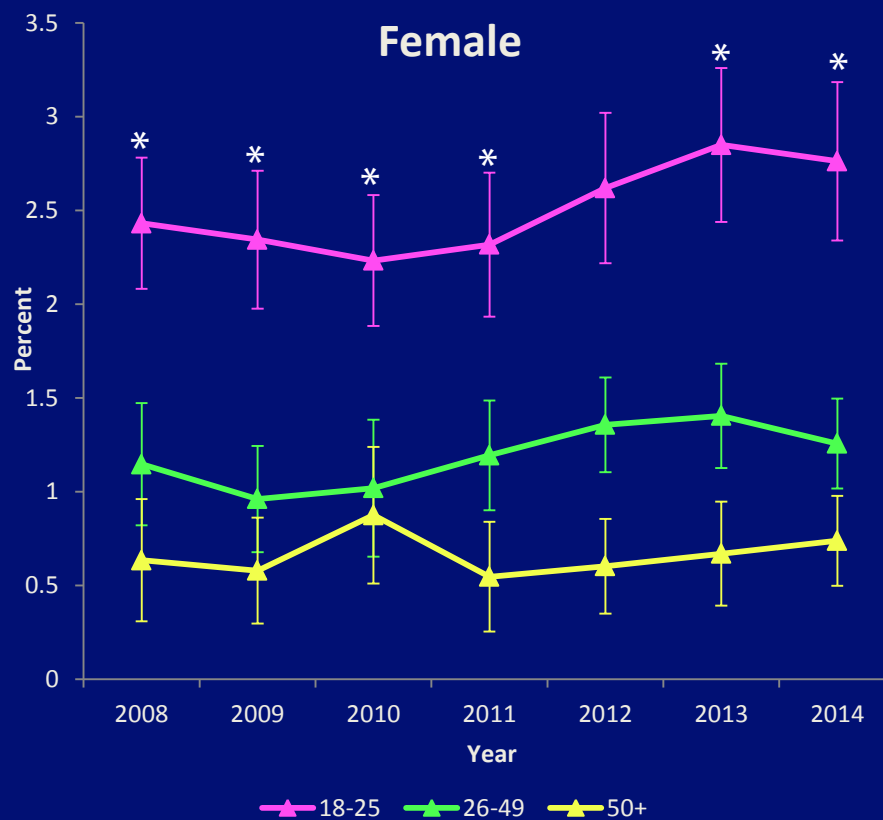
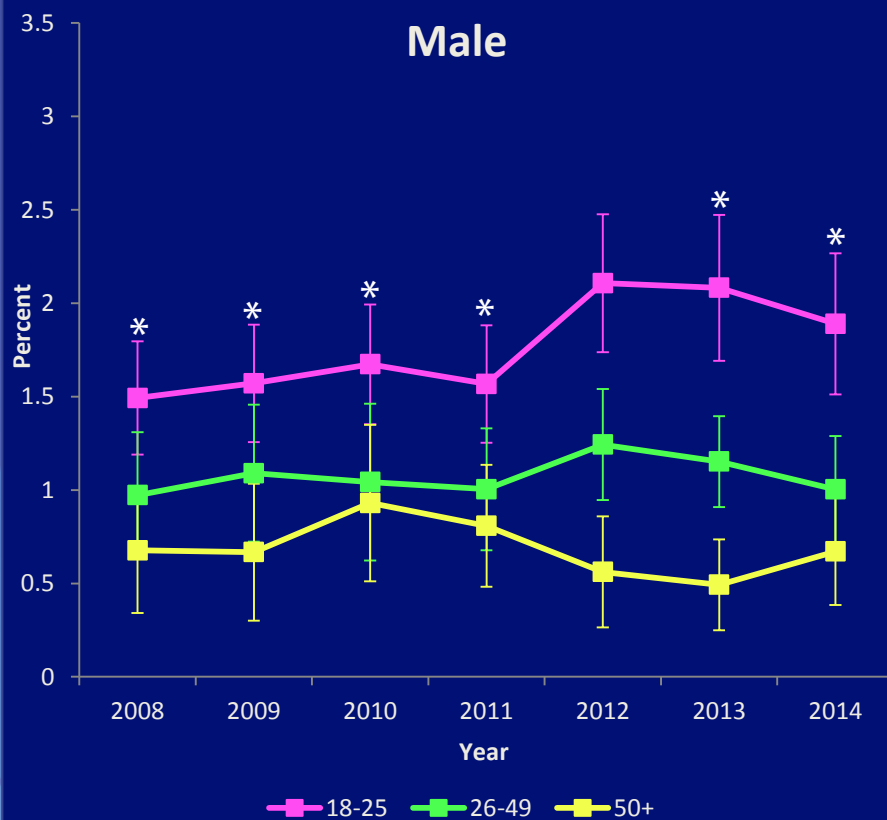
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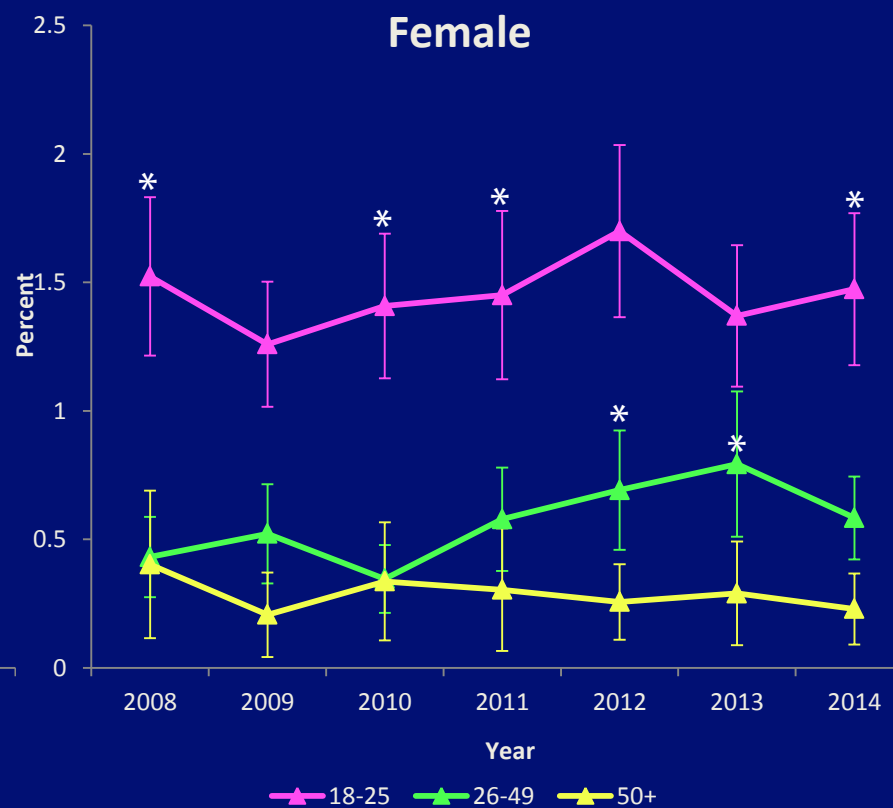
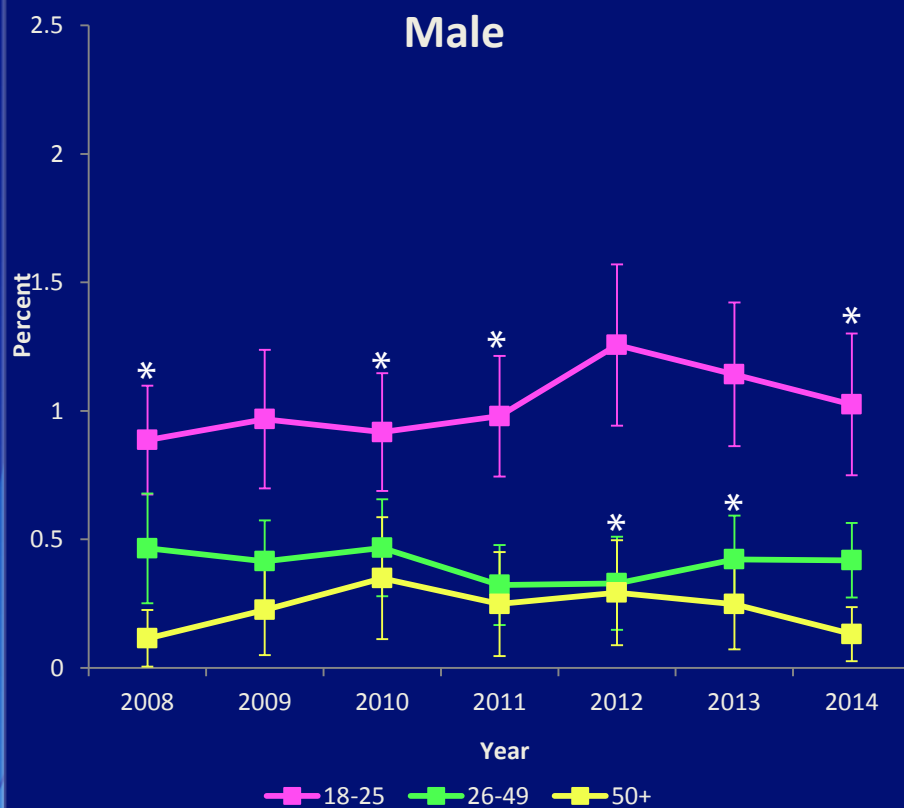
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# Comparison Across Survey Modules

## Mental Health Module\*

## Adult Depression Module\*

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## **Main Findings**

- **Little change in overall national estimates over time**
- **Among 18–25 year-olds only, estimates of nonfatal suicidal behaviors higher among females than males each year**
  - **Younger adult females: targeted interventions**
- **High internal consistency of responses to suicidal behaviors questions**

## Conclusions

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- **High-quality, internally consistent data**
- **Ability to stratify by multiple demographics and drill down to state- and sub-state levels**

## Conclusions

- NSDUH was not designed for conducting suicidal behavior surveillance
- Stable survey with 7 years of data and growing
- High-quality, internally consistent data
- Ability to stratify by multiple demographics and drill down to state- and sub-state levels
- Continue thinking about ways in which to utilize NSDUH data in a surveillance capacity

## Acknowledgements

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  - Alejandro Azofeifa
  - Rob Lyerla
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  - Jonaki Bose
  - Rebecca Ahrnsbrak

# Thank you!

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.