Election outcomes affect suicide rates
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COLLEGE STATION, Texas, Aug. 17 (UPI) -- Suicide rates can increase among people who back losers in elections unless they live in areas where lots of others also backed the loser, U.S. researchers say.

Lead author Richard A. Dunn of Texas A&M University and Timothy J. Classen of Loyola University Chicago say researchers have long thought people who are less connected to others are more likely to commit suicide. The researchers analyzed suicide rates at a state level from 1981-2005 and found suicide rates decreased when a majority of voters in a region supported the national election winner.

The study, scheduled to be published in the September issue of Social Science Quarterly, finds suicide rates decreased even more dramatically in states where the majority of voters supported the election loser -- 4.6 percent lower for males and 5.3 lower for females.

"Sure, supporting the loser stinks, but if everyone around you supported the loser, it isn't as bad because you feel connected to those around you," Dunn says in a statement. "In other words, it is more comforting to be a Democrat in Massachusetts or Rhode Island when George W. Bush, a Republican, was re-elected than to be the lonely Democrat in Idaho or Oklahoma."