

Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Asia

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Foreword

The research and policy attention that suicide prevention has received in Asia has been relatively small in comparison with the magnitude of the problem. More than half of the suicides that occur globally every year come from the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions. Suicide is among the leading causes of death and, among young people, the leading cause of death in many Asian countries.

Suicide is a complex, yet preventable public health problem resulting from the interaction of psychological, social, biological, and environmental factors. The prevention of suicide is equally complex and, while feasible, is no easy task: it involves a whole series of activities, ranging from the environmental control of risk factors and means, through the early identification and effective treatment of people with mental and substance use disorders, to the responsible reporting of suicide in the media. Comprehensive public health action to prevent suicide addresses the population at large as well as particularly vulnerable groups, such as young people or those who attempted suicide. The involvement of various sectors (e.g., health, education, labour, agriculture) needs to be sought as well as the engagement of various partners (e.g., governments, nongovernmental organizations).

Although there are examples of excellent achievement, suicide prevention efforts have been limited in Asian countries. The present publication makes a case for enhancing the commitment to the prevention of suicide and for implementing effective strategies to reduce the burden, both in terms of mortality and morbidity related to suicidal behaviours. These overall objectives are shared by the WHO worldwide initiative for the prevention of suicide. It is hoped that Suicide Prevention International continues its work and that this publication will be widely disseminated in order to serve and strengthen suicide prevention efforts in Asian countries.

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The following websites provide further information:

<http://www.suicidepreventioninternational.org>

http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide