

P-1421 - THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF SUICIDE IN PORTUGAL: 1980-2009

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Introduction: In Portugal, drastic changes in suicide rates have been claimed in the last 10-year period. Portugal is frequently presented as an example of masked suicides within the registered undetermined deaths. References on suicide and undetermined death rates and trends in Portugal are outdated.

Aim: To ascertain the actual numbers of suicide in Portugal providing the scientific community with an updated, methodologically correct, source of reference.

Methods: Raw data of suicide deaths was obtained per year, by age, sex, geographic region and lethal causes, and specific rates per 100,000 habitants and age-adjusted rates were calculated.

Results: From 1980 to 2009, rates of suicide mortality have remained stable, but this trend does not occur in all age groups, decreasing with respect to young people and increasing in higher age group. Mortality is much higher in males than in females, and in the south. Hanging is the main method. Mortality from suicide and undetermined causes correlate inversely and undetermined death and suicide rates ratio are close to 1:1.

Conclusions: Suicide prevention should focus on males older than 55 years. A substantial proportion of deaths of undetermined causes seem to correspond to misclassified suicides. However, it is unlikely that not counting these masked suicides modifies the trends of suicide rates in the period under study. These are realistic trends for the Portuguese population.