



Special Edition- Research Bulletin

In connection with World Suicide Prevention Day, 10th September 2011

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th September 2011

In connection with World Suicide Prevention Day, the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) has prepared a Special Edition of the Research Bulletin.

In this edition, we present new outcomes of the National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm and evidence supporting the effectiveness of training programmes increasing awareness of depression, self harm and suicide among different professional groups.

World Suicide Prevention Day, initiated by the International Association for Suicide Prevention and World Health Organisation, is an important day of the year and requires special attention. However, from the NSRF perspective, it is World Suicide Prevention Day every day!

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Outcomes of the 2010 Annual Report of the National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm (NRDSH)

On 28th July Minister Kathleen Lynch T.D. Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children and Department of Justice, launched the 2010 Annual Report of the National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm.

The 2010 Annual Report of the Registry identified an ongoing increase in deliberate self harm in Ireland. In 2010, 11,966 deliberate self harm presentations, involving 9,630 individuals, were made to hospital emergency departments. Taking the population into account, the incidence rate was 217 per 100,000. The rate of hospital-treated self harm was 4% higher in 2010 than in 2009 (209 per 100,000), and this is the fourth successive increase in the national rate of hospital treated deliberate self harm.

There were a number of notable changes in the age-specific deliberate self harm rate between 2009 and 2010 but the most striking by far was among 20-24 year-olds (*Figure 1*). The rate among men in this age group increased by 19%, from 526 to 626 per 100,000 and the rate among women increased by 30%, from 421 to 546 per 100,000. The economic recession is likely to have played a role in these changes given the very high rate of both unemployment and emigration among 20-24 year-olds in Ireland in 2010.

Alcohol was involved in 41% of all cases, and was significantly more common in male deliberate self harm episodes (44%) than in female episodes (37%). Alcohol is likely to be one of the factors underlying the pattern of presentations with deliberate self harm by time of day and day of week. Presentations peaked in the hours around midnight and almost one-third of all presentations occurred on Sundays and Mondays. In addition, the Registry identified an increased number of self harm presentations (more than 50) associated with some public holidays, such as New Year's Day, the day after St. Patrick's Day, the May and June Public Holidays.

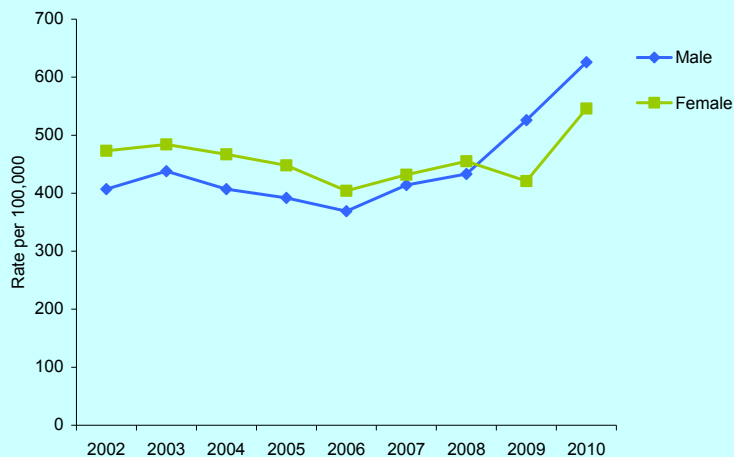


Figure 1 Trends in deliberate self harm in men and women aged 20-24 (2002-2010)

Key recommendations

1. Increased support should be provided for evidence-based suicide/self harm prevention and mental health promotion programmes in line with priorities in *Reach Out*, National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention (2005-2014) and *Vision for Change*, the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy.
 - ◆ Early identification of people at risk of self harm by implementing evidence based depression/self harm/suicide awareness and skills training for professionals working in health care and community based services,
 - ◆ Prevention of repeated self harm by implementing uniform procedures for assessment and aftercare of DSH patients presenting to general hospital,
 - ◆ In order to deal effectively with the needs of DSH patients following discharge from hospital, a wider range of evidence based treatment programmes should be made available for this high risk group.
 - ◆ Inform the general public about symptoms of depression, warning signs of suicidal behaviour and relevant help services through positive mental health promotion campaigns.

3. First steps have been taken to link the Registry data with suicide mortality data obtained through the Suicide Support and Information System (SSIS) in the Cork region. Evidence was found for an association between DSH and suicide, in particular in men. This indicates that the increasing rate of deliberate self harm in men is likely to be followed or paralleled by an increasing suicide rate among men. It is therefore recommended that deliberate self harm data be linked with suicide mortality data at national level in order to enhance insight into predictors of suicide risk.

The report is available at: <http://www.nsrfl.ie/reports/2010AnnualReportNationalRegistryOfDeliberateSelfHarmIreland.pdf>

Effectiveness of Awareness Training Programmes

Self harm awareness training programme

On July 28th, Minister Kathleen Lynch launched a second report published by the NSRF: ***The Efficacy of a Self Harm Awareness Training Programme: report of an Independent Evaluation.***

In 2009 The National Office for Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with the HSE South and West commissioned the National Suicide Research Foundation to conduct an independent evaluation to ascertain the effectiveness of the self harm training programme currently delivered throughout the HSE South and HSE West.

A quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the self-harm awareness training involving 244 participants in the HSE South and West areas was conducted in order to identify whether the training changed participants' knowledge, attitudes and confidence in relation to people who self harm and if these changes were retained at four months follow-up.

The majority of the participants (40.1%) were working in the social care sector, followed by 15% in the education sector, 13.1% in counselling, 10.5% in health services and 8.6% in community services. The remaining 12.7% were involved in a variety of work areas, such as financial advisors and business managers.

The study revealed significant positive changes pre-post training in terms of increased knowledge, enhanced positive attitudes towards and confidence in dealing with people who engage in self harm. The positive pre-post training effects in terms of attitudes towards self harm and participants' confidence in instilling help seeking behaviour were sustained four months after having received the training programme. At four months follow-up, a significant reduction was observed in knowledge of self harm. However, the knowledge and confidence levels at four months follow-up were still higher compared to baseline levels.

The overall positive effects of the independent evaluation of the self harm awareness training programme support the wider implementation of this programme.

The report is available at: www.nsrf.ie/reports/NSRFReport-EfficacyOfSelfHarmAwarenessTraining.pdf

Awareness training programme on depression and suicidal behaviour for Gardai

Since 2008, the NSRF has been working with a consortium of European researchers to develop an optimised suicide prevention programme. The evidence-based multi-level intervention, *Optimising Suicide Prevention Programmes and their Implementation in Europe* (OSPI-Europe), was implemented by the NSRF throughout Limerick between January 2010 and July 2011.

Implementation of the intervention was conducted in close collaboration with the local Suicide Resource Officer, the Limerick Multidisciplinary Mental Health Management Team and an advisory panel involving relevant health care and community based organisations.

One element of the OSPI-Europe intervention was the provision of depression and suicidal behaviour awareness gatekeeper training programmes for people working throughout Limerick who may be in a position to recognise suicide risk and to intervene.

An Garda Síochána was selected as a core target group for the OSPI-Europe Gatekeeper awareness training in Limerick. Indeed, recent findings from the Suicide Support and Information System indicated that almost 25% of people who died by suicide had contact with the Gardai in the month prior to death.

In May 2010, the NSRF conducted a Train the Trainer (TTT) with members of An Garda Síochána CPD Unit in Limerick. Over the course of the next 6 months, the Trained Trainers delivered the OSPI-Europe Gatekeeper workshop to 494 (78% of Limerick division) operational members of An Garda Síochána throughout Limerick city and county. Evaluation questionnaires were collected at each workshop in order to determine pre-post training changes among participants

Stigma towards depression significantly decreased following the training programme whilst knowledge of suicide intervention increased. Importantly, confidence in dealing with suicidal people increased significantly following the training.

The overall positive effects of the training programme with An Garda Síochána in Limerick support the feasibility and efficacy of TTT to suicide prevention gatekeeper initiatives as a cost-effective model to increase awareness.

The full report can be obtained from the NSRF in October 2011.

Conferences / Seminars

- "World Suicide Prevention Day National Conference" – Console's 5th Annual Conference, Friday 9th September 2011, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin - www.console.ie
- Mental Health Conference 2011, Wednesday 14th September 2011, The Burlington Hotel, Dublin - www.mentalhealthcare.ie
- 15th Annual Conference of the Irish Association of Suicidology, 5th & 6th October 2011, Radisson Hotel, Farnham Estate, Cavan - www.ias.ie
- *Suicide Prevention: Understanding and combating suicide among young people in Northern Ireland*, Thursday 20th October 2011, Queen's University Belfast - www.pavpub.com

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