

Is suicide uniquely human? On the root causes of self killing

15. Other

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Abstract text

Suicide has been present for as long as we have recorded history, yet it seems not to exist among other species. For a fundamental biological phenomenon like suicide, this uniqueness is both surprising and, at first glance, seemingly at odds with evolution. This presentation examines the evidence for species uniqueness and other lines of evidence supporting the idea that a rather mature human brain is necessary for suicide to occur. Supporting evidence includes the fact that suicide among young children under the age of ten is incredibly rare and that individuals with substantial intellectual disabilities appear to have a lower risk of suicide. The data supporting these claims will be reviewed, and the implications of this uniqueness for understanding suicide will be discussed.