

Exploring Regional-Level Predictors of Suicide to Inform Prevention Strategies: A Longitudinal Perspective from Sweden

3. Epidemiology and surveillance

Emma Eliasson¹ , *Elisa Vigna*¹

¹ National Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (NASP), LIME, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

Abstract text

Introduction

In Sweden, four lives are lost to suicide every day. Hence, identifying relevant risk factors to inform effective prevention strategies is key. Such strategies can range from individual 'micro'-level prevention methods to broader regional or national suicide prevention policies.

Objectives

Whilst a range of studies have explored individual-level risk factors, highlighting regional, or national-level predictors can be valuable to identify broader social and contextual determinants. This study will therefore aim to go beyond proximal predictors of suicide by looking through a wider national- and regional-level lens in Sweden.

Methods

This project is conducted utilizing routinely collected and publicly available data and applying longitudinal modelling to investigate predictors of change in suicide rates across time in Sweden. More specifically, the study explores whether regional-level data on economic (e.g. proportion of state benefit recipients), socio-demographic (e.g. educational level) and healthcare related variables (e.g. trust in the healthcare system, waiting times) are associated with change in suicide rates over time.

Results

Preliminary results indicate that regional-level healthcare factors such as mental health care waiting times and trust in the health care system are associated with suicide rates across time. However, this is an ongoing project and the most up-to date results will be available and presented at the time of the conference.

Conclusion

Focusing on strengthening regional health care systems to reduce waiting times and fostering trust might be particularly important in strengthening wider suicide prevention strategies in Sweden. In general, this project highlights how utilizing publicly available data to explore predictors of suicide rates is not only cost-effective but can also add important insights to existing knowledge on individual-level risk factors to also target regional-level policy and ensuring effective suicide prevention coordination.