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IS THE TIME FOR SUICIDE A RANDOM CHOICE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS? AN ITALIAN STUDY

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Introduction: Every year between 100'000 and 200'000 young people die by suicide and possibly 40 times as many attempt it [1]. Several studies analyze the seasonality of suicide in the general population, but few of them investigate it among young adults.

Objectives: We look for a seasonal pattern in suicidal behaviors performed by young adults and evaluate the lethality of their behaviors.

Aims: We test the hypothesis that

(a) suicidal behaviors in young adults follow a seasonal pattern and

(b) acts performed by males have a different lethality that those carried out by females.

Methods: Analyses are based on data for 3614 cases of suicidal behaviours performed by individuals aged between 18 to 24 occurring between 2001 and 2008, provided by the Italian Institute for Statistical Analysis (ISTAT). Variables included in the analysis were gender, lethality of the act and season.

Results: ANOVA shows a significant association between months and number of suicides with a significant difference between the first and the second semester. Peaks were found in January, March and May. Males have a significantly greater regularity of the peaks than females (Mann-Whitney U- Test $p < 0,001$). Females have a rapport between completed and attempted suicides of 0.14 , while among males it is of 0.72 .

Conclusions: Clinical implications of these findings should be considered with the aim of developing more effective preventative strategies targeted to this age group.

1. WHO, Child and Adolescent Health and Development Programme. Geneva, 1998.