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## BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION IN SUICIDE VICTIMS

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**Background:** Suicide is one of the leading external causes of death worldwide. The alarming increase in the occurrence of suicide in Belarus in recent years has resulted in the country having one of the highest suicide rates in the world. It is well recognized that both acute and chronic alcohol use are among the major behaviorally modifiable factors that are associated with suicidal behavior. Several studies have reported relatively high proportion of suicide cases positive for blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

**Aims:** The present study was designed to collect data on BAC-positive suicides in Belarus.

**Method:** This study was based on the official autopsy reports of the Bureau of Forensic Medicine. The sample consisted of 1135 male subjects (76.3%) and 356 female subjects (23.7%).

**Results:** In the present study 61% of males and 30.6% of females were BAC-positive at the time of death. It should be noted that the proportion of BAC-positive suicide in Belarus is among the highest in the world. Positive blood alcohol cases were found more frequently in men age 30-59 (66%) and women age 19-39 (48%). The average BAC was  $2.2 \pm 0.004$  g/dL for males and  $2.1 \pm 0.005$  for females.

**Conclusions:** In this study, substantial percentages of suicide victims tested positive for alcohol. These results are consistent with previous studies suggesting that acute alcohol intoxication may function as an important effect modifier to the act of suicide. The outcome of this study also suggests that alcohol-related suicide is mainly a male phenomenon.