

O-45 - SUICIDE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: A LONGITUDINAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMPARISON WITH OTHER CAUSES OF DEATH

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Objective: To evaluate temporal trends, gender effects and methods of completed suicide among children and adolescent (aged 10-17) compared with temporal trends of deaths from other causes.

Method: Data were extracted from the Italian Mortality Database, which is collected by the Italian National Census Bureau (ISTAT) and processed by the Statistics Unit of National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion (CNESPS) at the National Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità).

Results: A total of 1,871 children and adolescents, age 10-17 years, committed suicide in Italy from 1971 to 2003 and 109 died by suicide during the last 3-year period of observation (2006-2008). The average suicide rate over the entire period of observation was 0.91 per 100,000; the rate was 1.21 for males and 0.59 for females. During the study period the general mortality of children and adolescents, age 10-17 years, decreased dramatically. The decrease was observed, for both genders, for all causes of deaths except suicide.

Conclusions: This study highlights that over the course of several decades suicide is a far less preventable cause of death compared to other causes of death among children and adolescents. Our study demonstrated that suicide rates in adolescents is not a stable phenomenon over the 40 years period of study. It suggested that rates for males and females differed and varied in different ways during specific time periods of this study. National suicide prevention actions should parallel prevention measures implemented to reduce other causes of death.