
SUICIDE RATES AND ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SPAIN

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Introduction: An increase of suicide rates have been associated with periods of economic crisis. Suicide rates in Spain are the first cause of non-natural death, having surpassed traffic crash rates. Aims: To study if the economic crisis affected the suicide rates and antidepressant consumption. Methods: Suicide rates were extracted from the Spanish Statistic National Institute. Data about antidepressant consumption were extracted from the web page of the Spanish Department of National Health. Mean rate of suicide and mean rate of antidepressant consumption prior (2005-2007) and during the economic crisis (2008-2010) were compared. Data on antidepressant consumption are presented as antidepressant units per 100 people/year. Suicide rates are presented as rate per 100.000 people/year. Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. Results: Unemployment mean rate was 9.2 ± 1.4 before the economic crisis, while it was 17.7 ± 20.5 during the economic crisis ($p = 0.03$). Mean rate of suicide before the economic crisis was 7.7 ± 0.19 while during the crisis was 7.2 ± 0.14 ($p = 0.15$). Antidepressant consumption increased significantly ($p = 0.02$) before the crisis (48.5 ± 11.9) compared to the crisis period (59.7 ± 16.7). Conclusions: Our data show that during the Spanish economic crisis there was not an increase in the suicide rate but the antidepressant consumption increased significantly. Our results point to the fact that the Spanish population in time of economic crisis tend to take antidepressants instead of committing suicide.