

Challenges and obstacles

- Worldwide, the prevention of suicide has not been adequately addressed due to basically a lack of awareness of suicide as a major problem, the taboo in many societies to discuss the issue and uncertainty as to what to do.
- Reliability of suicide certification and reporting is an issue in great need of improvement.
- It is clear that suicide prevention requires intervention also from outside the health sector and calls for an innovative, comprehensive multi-sectoral approach, including both health and non-health sectors.

Activities

- ✓ Suicide mortality surveillance;
- ✓ Technical support to countries;
- ✓ Regional and national workshops;
- ✓ Production/dissemination of resources;
- ✓ Awareness-raising and advocacy;
- ✓ SUPRE-MISS (Multisite Intervention Study).

SUPRE

the WHO worldwide initiative
for the prevention of suicide

Documents available in several languages (also on the web site):

- Figures and facts about suicide
- Preventing Suicide: a resource series
 1. A resource for general physicians
 2. A resource for media professionals
 3. A resource for teachers and other school staff
 4. A resource for primary health care workers
 5. A resource for prison officers
 6. How to start a survivors' group

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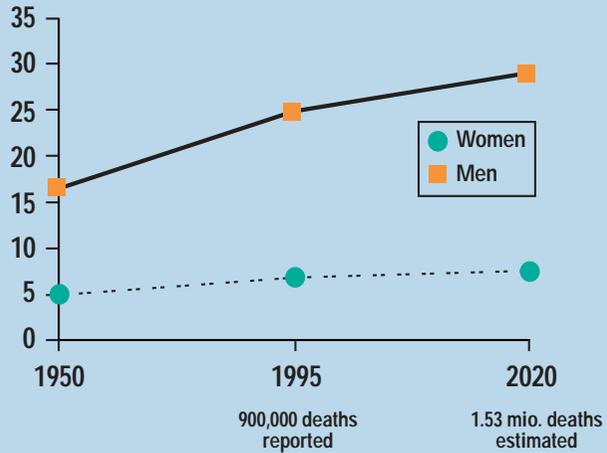
Web site:

[http:// www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/)



World Health Organization

Reported (1950-1995) and estimated (2020) suicide rates in reporting countries

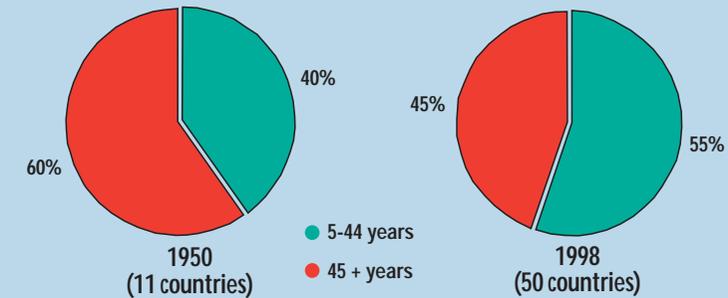


The scope of the problem

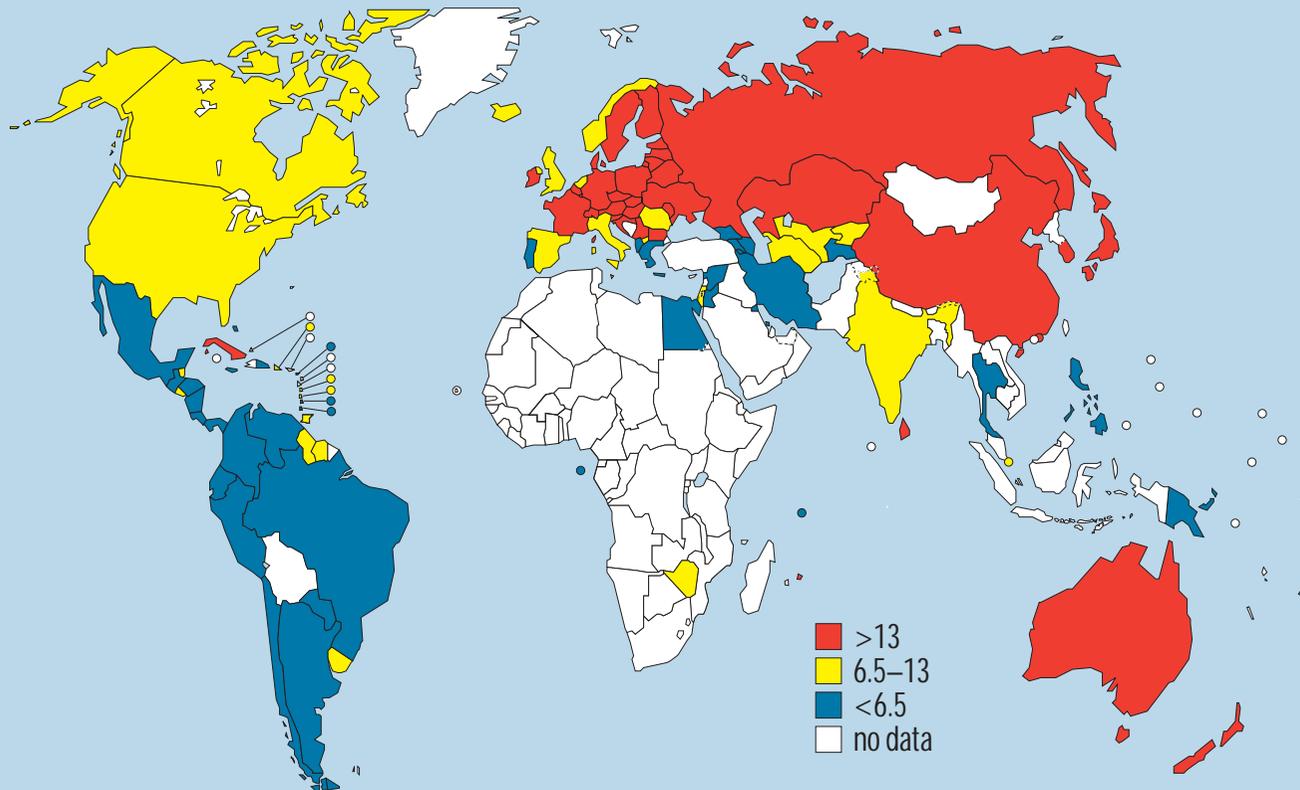
- In the last 45 years, suicide rates have increased by 60% in some countries.
- Worldwide, suicide ranks among the three leading causes of death among those aged 15-44 years.
- In the year 2000, approximately one million people died of suicide. This represents a global mortality rate of 16 per 100,000 or **one death every 40 seconds**.

- For every committed suicide there are at least 20 suicide attempts.
- Self-inflicted injuries represented 1.8% of the global burden of disease in 1998 and are expected to increase to 2.4% in 2020.

Age distribution of cases of suicide between 1950 and 1998



Map of suicide rates (per 100 000; most recent year available as of March 2002)



- Suicide rates among young people have been increasing and they are currently the group at highest risk in one third of all countries (developed and developing).
- At least 100,000 adolescents commit suicide every year.

Objectives

- To reduce mortality and morbidity due to suicidal behaviours;
- To break the taboo surrounding suicide;
- To bring together national authorities and the public to overcome challenges.