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Suicide in Addis Ababa: A Mixed Method Study of Incidence and Societal Views

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Suicide is a global public health and social problem affecting the most productive age group, and the elderly. In Addis Ababa, despite high suicide rates there is no proper registration and certification that is meant for public health purpose. This study is conducted to look into the incidence and explore societal views towards suicide in Addis Ababa.

Methods: Secondary data was collected from registers of Forensic Pathology Department at Menilik II Hospital and Homicide Crimes Investigation Unit at Addis Ababa Police Commission. Qualitative data was also collected from experts having experience in helping suicide victims.

Results: Between January 01 and December 31st 2015, 267 residents of Addis Ababa, majority of who are males, died due to suicide. Hanging being the most frequently used means, social isolation, mental illness, family conflict, economic problems and lack of religious commitment are perceived causes of suicide. Unavailability helping institutions and individual preference as to the method of suicide and individual nature of suicide are conditions that get the attention. While respect for social and religious values is considered as protective factors, the act of suicide is religiously criminal act. The victims of suicide include family and community members.

Conclusion: There is a need to consider policy and programmatic actions directed towards suicide prevention and control. In addition to conducting community wide research in suicide, it is important to preserve social and cultural values; institutionalize traditional family conflict resolution practices and strengthen mental health institutions.

Key words: Addis Ababa, incidence, mixed method, suicide