

The Ten-year Trend in Suicide Methods: Evidence from an Asian Population (accepted)

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Despite the wealth of studies investigating methods of committing suicide, very few studies have been undertaken in which the focus has been placed on the long-term trend in suicide methods. The aim of this study is therefore to examine the changes in suicide methods in Taiwan. **METHODS:** Our study uses 1995-2004 'cause of death' data, obtained from the Department of Health in Taiwan, to explore the trend in suicide methods among different age and gender groups. The autoregressive integrated moving average model is applied to examine the change in suicide methods among 25,062 suicide deaths during the ten-year study period. **RESULTS:** Dramatic rises were identified in the proportions of suicides committed by poisoning by means of gases and vapors (both $p < 0.001$) in the <34 and 35-64 years age groups between 1995 and 2004, as compared to steady declines in the proportions of suicides committed by hanging, strangulation or suffocation, and poisoning by solid or liquid substances (all $p < 0.001$). However, for the >64 years age group, the proportions remained steady throughout the study period for all suicide methods, with the one exception of jumping from heights. **CONCLUSIONS:** Poisoning by gases and vapors is identified as being an increasingly popular method of committing suicide in Taiwan among both genders under the age of 65 years.