

SUICIDE: MAJOR CHALLENGE

“Suicide doesn’t kill people, Sadness kill them”

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Around 80000 people die due to suicide per year, which indicates one person in every 40 seconds. Suicide is most common phenomenon and occurs throughout the lifespan.¹ As per data suicide rate increased from 79.9 to 10.3 per one lakh in India within 5 years. Among all the states, Tamil Nadu and Kerala had the highest suicide rates per 1 lakh people in 2015. The ratio of male to female suicide has been about 2:1.² Estimates for number of suicides in India vary.³

According to WHO suicide rate in India is 16.4 per 1 lakh for women and 25.8 for men.⁴ Recent year due to covid-19 pandemic, the disruption in the medical health system may be preventing people with chronic mental health diseases from getting medication and therapies as per their need. Increase unemployment rates and mental stress increase suicidal rates.⁵

Who is at risk ?

Suicide does not discriminate in any age group. People from any age and gender can be at risk for suicide. Risk factor may affect very as per certain personal attributes of the person. The risk factor may be as follows:

- Criminal history
- Disturbed emotional health
- Consistent stressful incidents
- Being exposed to suicidal behavior (family members, peers, or media figures)

- Family history of a mental disorder or substance abuse, Suicide
- Family violence (physical or sexual abuse)⁶

Many people may have these risk factors but do not attempt suicide. Suicide is not a normal response to stress. However it's a sign of chronic level of distress, not just act done for the attention.

How it can be prevented?

Effective suicide prevention is based on quality research. Programs that work for the risk factors and promote interventions that are appropriate to specific groups of people. Research has shown that the main factor for suicide is mental and substance abuse disorders. Government runs many programs focus on treating these disorders in addition to addressing risk of suicide specifically.⁷

As a part of new treatment talk therapy can effectively reduce suicide risk. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can help people to learn new ways of come out from the stressful experiences by training them when they have thought of suicide.⁸ Another type of psychotherapy called dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) has been shown to reduce the rate of suicide among people with borderline personality disorder.⁹ Psychotropic medications and psychosocial treatments are also helpful for suicidal people and still these therapies are being tested.¹⁰

Warning Signs of Suicide:

- Social isolation
- Often writing or talking about death or suicide
- Doing comments on helpless, hopeless and worthless.
- Increased substance use
- Talking related to having no reason for living
- Reckless behavior
- Mood changes
- Talking about being a burden to others¹¹

Few steps to help someone during emotional pain:



Being a health professional, Make aware people about the Lifeline which provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress.¹²

Ask them: It's not an easy question but its necessary to ask that "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" Studies show that asking to risk individuals does not increase suicidal thoughts.

Listening: Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce suicidal act.

- **Encourage to connect:** National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is there when you need it. Also encourage to make connection with a trusted individual.
- **Keep safe:** Reduce access to highly lethal items or places are an important step of suicide prevention.
- **Stay connected:** Studies shown that the number of suicide deaths decreases when someone is connected with that person.¹³

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