Suicide in prisons: update of activities of the IASP Task Force

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Marc Daigle is the leader for this task and he has already collected information at the international conference. Responsible for collecting contributions of all the members in order to have a good final document will reflect the up to date expertise of the international group. Most members of the task force provided him with contributions and suggestions. The International Association for Suicide Prevention bulletin news in future years.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

World Mental Health Day 2006: Building Awareness, Reducing Risks: Mental Illness and Suicide

This year, on the 10th of October 2006, the 16th Annual World Mental Health Day, organized by the World Federation for Mental Health had as its theme “Building Awareness – Reducing Risks: Mental Illness and Suicide.” The event was launched at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in Washington, DC, and this year IASP is collaborating with WFMH in the launch and activities throughout the year. Unlike World Suicide Prevention Day, in which activities are usually held around the world on or close to World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10th), World Mental Health Day marks the beginning of a theme that will be the focus of the activities of WFMH members around the world throughout the following year. This is an interesting approach and one that IASP may wish to follow with World Suicide Prevention Day activities now and in future years.

The focus upon mental illness and suicide is a natural one since there are estimates that up to 90% of people completing suicide, at least in Western countries, have a mental illness or problems with drugs and alcohol abuse. World Mental Health Day activities call for greater understanding and actions regarding suicide and mental illness. This year, in the context of collaboration between IASP and WFMH, IASP member organizations received information packages on the World Mental Health Day. Material can also be downloaded from the WFMH web site (www.wfmh.com) and are available in English, French and Spanish. Plans are also under way to make the material available in Russian, Chinese, Japanese and German. This is the first collaboration between WFMH and IASP in the launch and activities concerning World Mental Health Day and World Suicide Prevention Day and I look forward to further collaboration in the future. I encourage IASP members and member organizations to contact local mental health organizations and participate in these activities during the coming year.

Google Trends in Suicide and Mental Health

I have been playing around lately exploring patterns of searches on the Internet for topics such as “suicide prevention”, “suicide methods,” and “mental health.” If you look at the normalized data, which compensates for the total number of internet searches in each country, you find that it is the Australians who most often seek information using Google on “suicide prevention” followed by the Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. The 7th nation in terms of the proportion of Google searches on suicide prevention is India, followed by Belgium, France and Germany. When I looked at “suicide methods” searches, which are searches one might assume come from people who are suicidal and are at least curious about how one may end one’s life, South Africans are the most frequent searchers for suicide methods followed by New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Ireland, India, Finland and Sweden. There does not appear to be any relationships between searches on the topic of “suicide prevention” and “suicide methods” nor with “suicide bombers.” However, it is curious that there is an almost complete parallel between searches over time for “suicide” and “depression,” and this trend is unrelated to searches on “suicide bombers.” Below is graph showing searches from 2004 to September 2006 for the topics of suicide and depression. Fascinating. But what does this all mean? As with all correlational data, one needs to be cautious in interpretations. Nevertheless, it is interesting that when more people are looking up the topic of suicide, more people are also looking up the topic of depression. Is this another confirmation of the link between suicide and depression? Perhaps. At the very least, these analyses could start a new trend of their own: analysing internet search behaviour to understand relationships between temporal patterns of seeking information over the Internet indifferent content areas, such as suicide and depression. If you do get hooked on analyzing and interpreting Google trends, please remember that you saw it first in Brian’s column in the IASP Newsbulletin.

Brian L. Mishara, Ph.D., President, IASP, Director, Centre for Research and Intervention on Suicide and Euthanasia, University of Quebec at Montreal mishara.brian@uqam.ca

Suicide in prisons: update of activities of the IASP Task Force

1. Updating the WHO guide. Norbert Konrad is in charge of this task and, up to now, most members of the task force provided him with contributions and suggestions. The final document will reflect the up to date expertise of the international group.

2. Preparing a symposium for the next IASP Conference in Ireland. AE Daniel is responsible for collecting contributions of all the members in order to have a good representation at the international conference.

3. Writing a paper on: International comparisons in suicide prevention services in correctional facilities. Marc Daigle is the leader for this task and he has already collected much of the needed information about the correctional organizations of the 10 leading countries in the field.

The nine members of the task force have regular meetings on the WEB to exchange documents and provide each other with feedback.

Marc Daigle (chair; Canada), A. E. Daniel (USA), Greg Dear (Australia), Patrick Frottier (Austria), Lindsay M. Hayes (USA), Ad Kerkhof (The Netherlands,) Norbert Konrad (Germany), Alison Liebling (United Kingdom), Marco Sarchiapone (Italy).

Contact for information:

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In official relations with the World Health Organization

IASP

In official relations with the World Health Organization

IASP
The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) provides awards for those who have contributed in a significant way to the furthering of the aims of the Association. Awards are presented at the IASP biennial conference.

**The Stengel Research Award**

This award has been provided since 1977 and is named in honour of the late Professor Erwin Stengel, one of the founders of the IASP. This award is for outstanding research in the field of suicidology, and nominations can be made by any member of IASP.

**THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION ARE:**

- Outstanding and active researcher with at least 10 years of scientific activity in the field, as evidenced by a number of publications in internationally acknowledged journals.
- National leadership in the area.
- Suicidology is main (local) area of interest/work.
- Reasonable expectation (outline to be submitted) of further research activity in the field.

**Previous recipients**

- 1977 M. Bolt (Canada)
- 1979 R. Diekstra (The Netherlands)
- 1981 J-P. Scoubier (France)
- 1983 J. Lonnqvist (Finland)
- 1985 G. Sonneck (Austria & J. Beskow (Sweden)
- 1987 R. Goldney (Australia) & C. Preller (USA)
- 1991 P. Cosyns (Belgium) & J. Wilmotte (Belgium)
- 1991 D. De Leo (Italy) & J. D. Wasserman (Switzerland)
- 1995 K. Hawton (United Kingdom)
- 1997 A. Schmidtke (Germany)
- 1999 A. Roy (United Kingdom)
- 2001 A. Leenaars (Canada)
- 2003 Israel Orbach (Israel)
- 2005 Kees van Heeringen (Belgium)

**The Ringel Service Award**

This award was instituted in 1995 and honours the late Professor Erwin Ringel, the founding President of the Association. This award is for distinguished service in the field of suicidology, and nominations can be made by National Representatives of IASP.

**THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION ARE:**

- Actively involved in the practice of suicide prevention and crisis intervention and its dissemination.
- Acknowledged as a national initiator or leader in the field.
- Suicide prevention and/or crisis intervention should be the main portion of his/her work.

**Previous recipients**

- 1995 Zhai Shu Tao (P.R. of China)
- 1997 Yukio Saito (Japan)
- 1999 Vanda Scott (France)
- 2001 Lars Melhorn (Norway)
- 2003 Jay Nagdixon (USA)

**The Farberow Award**

This award was introduced in 1997 in recognition of Professor Norman Farberow, a founding member and driving force behind the IASP. This award is for a person who has contributed significantly in the field of work with survivors of suicide, and nominations can be made by any member of IASP.

**THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION ARE:**

- Has been actively involved in the establishment and operation of bereaved through suicide/survivor programs.
- Has demonstrated national leadership in the area.
- Has contributed to the research and evaluation of such programs.
- Will continue to involve themselves in this important area of work.

**Previous recipient**

- 1997 Onja Grad (Slovenia)
- 1999 Karen Dunne Maxim & E.A. Dunne (USA)
- 2001 Sheila Clarke (Australia)
- 2003 Gerald and Elise Wyrauch (USA)
- 2005 Karl Andriessen (Belgium)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please send your nomination directly to the Chairperson of the appropriate Committee. Attach a brief summary of why you feel nominee is deserving.

**DEADLINE:** 30 April 2007