On the occasion of World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 more than 1,000 people gathered at the event organized at Sapienza University of Rome under the auspices of the Dean. Following the consolidated tradition, the two-day conference was the peak of a number of initiatives highlighting the mission of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP). The Medal of Republic President – Medaglia del Presidente della Repubblica, a sign of the participation of the President of Italian Republic to such symposium was delivered by myself, as IASP Vice-President. He addressed the people attending the meeting saying that this was an achievement for everybody supporting suicide prevention. With more than 30 speakers, the scientific event was well attended with free entrance and CME credit as part of a non-profit event.

Among participants were psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers, nurses, survivors and the public among many others. Viktor Staudt reported his breathtaking experience of passing through a near lethal suicide attempt to his role as a testimonial for suicide prevention. IASP Board Member Diego De Leo presented a lecture pointing to suicide and the role of psychopathology with new interesting implications. The event was extremely well attended and we hope this may continue in future events.

Everybody saved the date for the 2017 edition.

Professor Maurizio Pompili,
IASP Vice-President
World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) 2016

World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 was a huge success, made possible by the wonderful contributions from thousands of people worldwide. With over 1,000 events recorded in 69 countries we at IASP are hugely grateful for the wonderful work done by organisers and participants at each event, no matter how small. On September 10th 2016 you made a difference.

Events spanned across the globe from sunrise to sunset connecting countries as far apart as Ireland and New Zealand. Banners and postcards were provided in over 55 languages in an effort to communicate and engage with as many people and as many cultures as possible.

The breadth of activities hosted to mark WSPD was extraordinary. Events ranged from training events, information seminars, remembrance gatherings, musical ceremonies, and launches to even exhilarating and heart racing cycling, running and walking activities. Each year the array of events grow and expand and this year’s WSPD was the biggest yet!

This year was also the first year we launched the universal suicide prevention awareness ribbon. We wish for this yellow and orange ribbon to become a globally recognisable symbol of suicide awareness and prevention.

On WSPD the ribbons were used extensively throughout the world with over 100,000 being distributed in Canada alone! Keep your eye out next year for the ribbon and feel free to share this among your community and you may even want to make your own for WSPD 2017!

Those of you who took part in the Cycle Around the Globe showed us how much you cared about suicide prevention. The total number of kilometres cycled was an immense at 138,937.70km across 24 countries. This accounts for close to four times the circumference of the planet!

So a massive thank you to all for taking part and cycling for WSPD 2016. A special mention goes to Ms. Susan Vaughan of Australia for cycling 4,000km and Mr. Martin Plöderl of Austria for cycling 2,300km in support of WSPD. Your contribution to IASP and the efforts of hundreds others cyclists cannot be measured and we are hugely grateful.

IASP would also like to take this opportunity to thank Syngenta for their generous support of WSPD 2016. Each year Syngenta makes WSPD activities possible and as always we are grateful for their kind contribution to the work of IASP. Thank you also to Mr. Peter Arkle, Global Stewardship Lead at Syngenta for joining the IASP team at the recent European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour in Oviedo. We very much value the collaboration between IASP and Syngenta and would like to acknowledge their continued generosity to the work of IASP.

As a community this September 10th, we Connected, Communicated and Cared for each other and we hope that you will all join us again next year in our tireless efforts to raise awareness of suicide prevention for WSPD 2017.

Here we present just some of the activities which took place this WSPD 2016. Like all hosted events these illustrate the spirit and determination by hosts and participants to mark and celebrate this very special day. If you would like to submit your pictures to us here at IASP please do so by sending them to Caroline at Research@iasp.info.
This WSPD, Befrienders Kenya partnered with Ministry of Health - Department of Mental Health to launch the Suicide Prevention Awareness Ribbon during the World Suicide Prevention Day national event which was held on the 9th September, 2016 at Mathari Teaching and referral Hospital in Nairobi which is the largest psychiatric hospital in East Africa.

The event brought together 500 people including professionals in the field of mental health, medical students, mental health service providers, Ministry of Health personnel, primary school children as well as patients at the institution among others. The event had various activities which included: a procession to create awareness on the activity within the locality of the venue; speeches from invited guests, entertainment (skits, dances, songs, acrobatic shows); launching of the ribbon as well as real life testimonies and experiences from selected suicide survivors and; the key note address from the guest of honour.

In introducing the ribbon, Ms Mulindi of Befrienders Kenya noted that, “In uniting behind a shared universal ribbon, we hope to increase awareness of suicide prevention - the more we wear the ribbon, the more it will get known. The desire is for the suicide prevention awareness ribbon to become globally recognizable, much like other ribbons for other worthwhile causes.”

Befrienders Kenya also marked the World Suicide Prevention Day for the fifth time in the country on the 10th September, 2016 and the venue was at a school in Nairobi City Centre. This event by brought together students, teachers, community health workers and service providers. The event featured an introduction to the day and theme for 2016, a candle lighting ceremony, presentations from various professionals regarding suicide in Kenya, a motivational speaker and the sharing of some personal stories from suicide survivors and individuals bereaved by suicide. One key highlight of the forum was the sharing of the message from the IASP President Prof Ella Arensman which was presented by Ms Merab Mulindi from Befrienders Kenya.
David Njuguna of Befrienders, a suicide survivor shares his experience

Candle lightening commemoration event in remembrance of those who have died by suicide

Merab Mulindi of Befrienders Kenya reads the statement from the IASP President
Say Yes to Life held a commemorative seminar celebrating 20 years of Sumithrayo service in remote rural areas of Sri Lanka, attended by over 300 participants. The Chief guest was the Hon. Karu, Speaker of The House of Parliament. On WSPD 2016 Sumithrayo met with the President of Sri Lanka to present him with a commemorative WSPD ribbon.
International Association for Suicide Prevention

WSPD 2016

PERU
This book is created with the mission:

1. To create awareness about suicide prevention.
2. To impart the message that suicide can’t be a solution to any problem and help people in thinking for a better way out.
3. To create awareness about NGO’s working for suicide prevention across the world.

This photo-fiction book on suicide prevention helps portray an important message in a simple, visual and verbal way, that is understandable to all.

The slow descent of Amayra into depression is depicted in both words and photographs. A character named Inayat is a role model for all NGOs, counsellors and those working in health services, also for every one of us who help Amayra in coming out of the depression and start a new life. We all have a role to play in suicide prevention. This book also includes the suicide prevention helplines numbers of different countries.

IASP National Representative for India Dr Sateesh Babu provided the foreword the following of which is an excerpt:

At the outset one has to appreciate the attitude and determination of Swathi Kumari who has written this photo-story book following her mothers suicide and in the midst of bereavement. In Indian culture, usually people avoid sharing or discussing the suicide of family members due to stigma, but Swathi is brave enough to contribute for the purpose of suicide prevention.

Swathi has done a great job in bringing out the book ‘Amayra – The essence of life’ to create awareness of those working in suicide prevention across the world, spreading the message that suicide is not a solution to any problem. Few Indians know that there are Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the area of suicide prevention who can provide invaluable help to them when they are in despair.

Swathi Kumari has portrayed an important message in a simple, visual and verbal way, understandable to all. This year’s World Suicide Prevention Day theme ‘Connect, Communicate and Care’ is sincerely and effectively honoured by the author. This book has a place in all of our homes and needs to be complimented by more and more efforts towards suicide prevention in India.
This year, a record-breaking 100,000 ribbons were distributed across Canada on World Suicide Prevention Day. A massive online media campaign by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with Provincial and local suicide prevention organizations was an impressive success. They had 38,664 visits to their www.suicideprevention.ca website, with 2,738 likes on their Facebook page and 3,105 followers, as well as 392,788 impressions, 5,706 profile visits and 2,200 retweets from Twitter. A total of 135 separate events for World Suicide Prevention Day were added to the events calendar on their website. CASP developed a toolkit with 11 downloadable tools and 6 images to use for World Suicide Prevention Day based on the IASP theme Connect, Communicate and Care.

In Canada, suicide rates among native aboriginal people are much higher than the rest of the population, with several recent suicide clusters in native communities calling attention to the need for more targeted action in suicide prevention. Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national representative organization for Canada’s 60,000 Inuit, recently released the first National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (NISPS). The majority of In Inuit live in four regions of Canada’s Arctic, which encompasses 35% of Canada’s landmass and 50% of its coastline. This strategy sets out a series of actions and interventions to address the high number of deaths by suicide among Inuit, whose suicide rates are more than 10 times the Canadian national rate. The Strategy promotes a shared understanding of the context and underlying risk factors for suicide in Inuit communities and guides policy at the regional and national levels on evidence-based approaches to suicide prevention. Governments in Inuit regions, in collaboration with local communities and organizations, are collaborating to implement recommendations in the strategy.

“Suicide among Inuit is a symptom of wider social challenges in our population that have emerged in just the last several decades,” said ITK President Natan Obed. “Many of these challenges are tied to colonial policies that placed intense stress on our entire population in a context where people have faced limited access to critical resources and supports that are available in most other parts of Canada. The NISPS is a tool for assisting community service providers, policymakers, and governments in working together to reduce the rate of suicide among Inuit to a rate that is equal to or below the rate for Canada as a whole.”

This year, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Annual Conference was held in Iqaluit, Nunavut on October 26-29, with the theme of “Hope, Help, and Healing”. The conference goal aimed to enable participants to explore solutions for embracing life by developing, supporting, sustaining and encouraging positive lifestyles; considering, developing and acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes for better addressing suicide ideation; and networking with the 500 participants and presenters towards the cause of suicide reduction and life affirmation.

Brian L. Mishara, IASP National Representative for Canada

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**Practice manual for establishing and maintaining surveillance systems for suicide attempts and self-harm**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched the newly published Practice manual for establishing and maintaining surveillance systems for suicide attempts and self-harm. This manual aims to provide guidance to countries who wish to set up a public health surveillance system for suicide attempts and self-harm cases presenting to general hospitals. Improved surveillance and monitoring of suicide attempts and self-harm are core elements of suicide prevention, necessary for all countries. It is estimated that, for each suicide, there are likely to have been more than 20 suicide attempts. Having engaged in one or more acts of attempted suicide or self-harm is the single most important predictor of death by suicide. Users of the manual are encouraged to adapt the practice steps of the manual realistically in a way which is facilitated by the resources available in their specific region, in order to ensure sustainability. By improving the quality of the collection of long-term surveillance data countries can prioritise and guide interventions within their cultural context, contributing to effective suicide prevention efforts.

Mental health is an emerging profession in Pakistan and is scantly researched there. Even today there is still a general lack of recognition of common mental illness and stigma remains attached to mental health problems and mental disorders. The general population with poor literacy levels and a serious dearth of accessible quality health care attributes the cause of mental illness to cultural and quasi-religious beliefs and prefers to seek traditional spiritual healing. This spiritual type of healing can be harmful as it can cause a delay in recovery, and in some cases has even proved to be fatal. Furthermore, at times existing hospital services are very poorly utilized because of the fear of 'social stigma' related to psychiatric patients and misconceptions and misinformation about mental health problems - for example, that such problems are related to ‘possession’ and caused by supernatural or evil forces. This is understandable in an environment where there is an acute shortage of mental health professionals, a proper medical service infrastructure, and an absence of appropriate information on the identification and management of mental health illness.

One positive outcome of the albeit slow evolutionary process of de-institutionalization and de-centralization is that the focus of mental health has been moved from psychiatric hospitals to teaching hospitals and educational institutions, with the aim of better reaching those in need. Furthermore, there are educational institutions which are actively working on mental health awareness programs, organizing mental health days, and holding workshops for mental health awareness and advocacy through their active collaboration with other social institutions by fostering a culture of sensitivity to mental health issues and problems.

Dr. Uzma Irfan Siddiqui
IASP National Representative for Pakistan

Suicide and Suicide Prevention Activities in Slovenia

Nearly 20 years ago, Slovenia recorded the highest suicide rate since the official death records have been established, namely 3,382 per 100,000. Since then, the suicide rate has gradually declined and reached 2,060 in 2015. The decline is observed in both genders and all age groups, with the exception of elderly men (70+) where an increase is noticed in the last few years.

The issue of suicide prevention in Slovenia is not systematically approached since we are still lacking a National Mental Health Strategy. Nevertheless, the identified priority areas including suicide prevention are being addressed through various national and international projects.

The implemented activities target both the population and the high risk approach. Worthwhile mentioning is the collaboration with media representatives, the adaptation and dissemination of guideline for responsible reporting on suicide. The launch of guideline was followed by nationwide workshops for media professionals which has resulted in an improved way of reporting on suicide. Through the years, a good collaboration was also set up with other gatekeepers, i.e. primary health care professionals, professionals from social and education sector and members of the police, etc.

To provide timely and easy accessible psychological help, a network of counseling services was established nationally throughout Slovenia in 2015, complementing the help accessible on diverse crisis telephone lines. Furthermore, psychoeducation on diverse mental health illnesses (i.e. depression, anxiety, etc.) is on referral available in the public health care sector. Last but not least, much effort was directed towards the general public with the aim of destigmatization of mental illnesses and raising awareness on suicide, including a nationwide public awareness campaign with poster, TV and Radio advertisements etc. The results are promising and clearly point to the direction we need to follow in changing attitudes and encouraging readiness to seek psychological help in time of despair.

The decline in the suicide rate we observed in the last decade encourages us to further invest our time and energy to save lives in Slovenia.

Saška Roškar, PhD.,
Assoc. Prof.
IASP National Representative for Slovenia
saska.roskar@nijz.si
India needs A National Suicide Prevention Strategy urgently

India has largest number of suicides in the world, accounting for nearly a third of the globe total and more than twice as many as China. Unfortunately India also has the highest rate of suicide among young people aged 15-29 years.

What is driving our youth towards suicide is crucial for developing National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS). I have provided free counselling for suicide prevention through a mental health helpline organized by a NGO-Om Foundation in Kutch for six years. I have noticed that suicide prevention helplines in India in many cases may not maintain the standards necessary for a quality service which comes under a NSPS. I have provided many stress management and suicide prevention trainings in the schools and the Indian army.

I realise the need for such regular routine training in the schools, army and police under the guidance of a NSPS and without such a national strategy India’s high suicide rates will only continue to rise.

Om foundation has taken initiatives to drive activities towards NSPS formation in India over the last three years. On the occasion of World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) 2016, Om foundation sent a letter to the honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi appealing for the implementation of NSPS in India immediately. This was supported by the media, the Indian IASP National Representative Dr. Sateesh Babu and the Chairperson of the publication committee of the Indian Psychiatric Society Dr. Vinay Kumar. I have started communication with various NGOs and civil organizations to intensify activities to drive a NSPS in India. We have also decided to organise seminars on "National Suicide Prevention Strategy in India" for public awareness.

Dr. Pandit Devjyoti Sharma,
President of OM Foundation, Kutch, Gujarat, India.
e-mail: panditdevjyotisharma@gmail.com

JOIN THE IASP EARLY CAREER GROUP!

Here at IASP we recognise the unique opportunities and challenges facing early career researchers, clinicians, healthcare and related professionals working in the area of suicide prevention. We are creating an Early Career Group (ECG) in order to develop a community of such professionals who will work together on suicide prevention activities worldwide.

Development of this community group will contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of suicide prevention strategy and action in the future. By engaging with early career individuals IASP can provide a forum where group members can network and engage with international research and interventions in the area of suicide prevention. This group will offer its members many supports and opportunities including hosted webinars, regular newsletters and information on conference activities as well as insight into recruitment opportunities, and much more.

The group is being co-chaired by Dr. Olivia Kirtley, PhD; Mr. Carl-Maria Morch, M.Psy., Ph.D. Candidate, and Ms. Caroline Daly, IASP Research Officer and PhD Candidate. You will hear a lot more from these co-chairs about this group in the coming months and we will keep you updated on all activities.

If you would like to join the group or have any comments or queries do not hesitate to get in contact with the co-chairs by email at: Earlycareer@iasp.info

IAPSP

International Association for Suicide Prevention

IASP newsbulletin
On the 10th of September 2016 in Poland the campaign Look... I am disappearing, was launched. This is the first Polish social campaign focused on prevention of suicides among children and youth.

In 2015 Poland reported more than 600 suicides by children aged 5–20 years. In Poland unfortunately suicide is generally regarded as a taboo subject and knowledge of this issue is still poor.

The Look... Here I am Foundation aims to promote actions that preventing suicide in Poland. This campaign aims to promote education and positive mental health promotion in the area of mental health and suicide prevention among young people.

On WSPD 2016 the Look... I am disappearing campaign was launched with a press conference and complimentary website launch.

For more information on the campaign please visit: www.zobacznikam.pl

Marta Soczewka, Project manager foundation See... Here I am

The 16th European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour (ESSSB) was held in Oviedo, Spain from September 8th-10th 2016.

The scientific programme was well received with a wealth of high-quality symposia, presentations and poster presentations. Recognised at one of the most important international meetings in suicide and its prevention in Europe, researchers gathered to present high-level scientific work, exchange knowledge and to discuss the implications for suicide prevention.

Unique as the world’s leading researchers in suicidal behaviour gathered in Oviedo we celebrated World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 together with a plenary session hosted by IASP President Professor Ella Arensman.

Together we look forward to the 17th European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour (ESSSB17), which will be held in Ghent, Belgium from 5–8 September 2018. ESSSB17 aims at providing a high-quality, multidisciplinary scientific programme covering the most important aspects of suicidal behaviour and its prevention, and a dynamic platform for lively interactions and discussions.

For more information please visit: http://esssb17.org.
Please note that the nominations for the Executive Committee and National Representatives are underway. Ballot papers will follow in January 2017.

Members from the following countries are invited and encouraged to participate in the nomination of their National Representative in this significant and democratic event: Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, USA.

If you did not receive nomination papers, it may be due to the fact that the IASP Central Administrative Office has yet to receive payment for 2016 membership fees. If you have paid your membership fee and not received nomination papers, please contact the IASP Central Administrative Office as soon as possible, email: membership@iasp.info. A ballot paper will be sent to you immediately.
We are pleased to invite you to participate in the XXIX World Congress of the IASP which will be held from 18–22 July 2017 in Kuching, the capital of the Malaysian State of Sarawak on the island of Borneo.

The Congress will be jointly organized by the IASP and the Malaysian Psychiatric Association in partnership with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), SEGi University, the Sarawak Association of the Nursing Profession, the Sarawak State Health Department, Befrienders Malaysia, and the Sarawak Convention Bureau.

The Congress promises to share new findings on research, training and educational needs in the area of suicide prevention. It will also address current strategies for suicide prevention internationally, amongst many other relevant and exciting topics.

The Congress website is now live and has information on how to register and submit abstracts for oral presentations, symposia, workshops and posters. Please visit: http://www.iasp2017.org/.

For all inquiries, please contact any of the following: Prof Maniam (Chair, Organising Committee (tmaniam@yahoo.com) or Prof Mohd. Fadzillah Abdul Razak, Local Organising Committee Chair (mofadzdr@hotmail.com)