



## Overview of national publications on suicide: an integrative review

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### Introduction

Suicide spreads throughout History along with humanity. There are reports since prehistory, where it gained different connotations according to the period and cultures [1]. Suicide is currently considered a global public health problem. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are 703,000 deaths from suicide per annum. It was the cause of 1.3% of deaths in 2019, and the continents with the highest suicide mortality rates (per 100,000 people) were Africa, followed by Europe, Southeast Asia, and America [2].

It is a multi-causal event, and most people who try it have one or more psychiatric disorders that are not always correctly diagnosed or treated. Therefore, prevention must be a priority [3]. Given this priority, it is necessary to strengthen protective factors and train health professionals qualified to detect and intervene in situations of risk of suicide, as well as knowledge on the subject, with awareness of the seriousness of the problem and empathy with everyone involved, that is, people with suicidal behavior, family and friends [1].

The main risk factors for suicide are mental illnesses (Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Mental Disorder related to the use of alcohol and other substances, Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia); Social aspects (male gender, age from 15 to 30 years or adults aged 65 and over, no children, living in an urban area, being unemployed or retired, being in social isolation, being single, separated or widowed, belonging to a particular population); Psychological aspects (recent losses, having little resilience, having an impulsive personality, aggressive or stable mood, having suffered abuse in childhood, hopelessness, despair, and helplessness) and

limiting health conditions (disabling organic disease, chronic pain, neurological disease, spinal trauma, malignant tumors, and AIDS). There are still some situations that generate susceptibility, such as having attempted suicide beforehand, having suicidal ideas or plans, or having someone in the family who attempted or committed suicide [3].

Therefore, this study analyzed the evidence in the national literature about suicide.

### Methods

Integrative literature review, using Lilacs (Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences), BDNF (Nursing Database), and Minerva's databases with the descriptors "Suicide" and "Prevention" combined by the Boolean AND operator. The search resulted in 56 articles. Our inclusion criteria were national (Brazilian) articles, complete and published in scientific journals that somehow addressed suicide written in Portuguese, English, or Spanish. The final sample consisted of eight articles. To assess the level of articles' evidence, we have used the hierarchical scientific system. We have considered the levels of the most significant evidence in the decreasing order of systematic reviews with or without meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials and guidelines based on a systematic review of randomized clinical trials; at least one randomized clinical trial; clinical trials without randomization; case-control, and cohort studies; systematic reviews of descriptive or qualitative studies; a single quantitative or qualitative study, and an authoritative opinion or expert committee [4].

## Results and Discussion

Eight complete national articles were part of the sample of this study. Of these, 50% were published in the year 2020 [5-8]. There was a variation between 1974 [9] to 2020 [5-8]. Regarding the level of evidence of the articles, there was a predominance of level 6 (a single quantitative or qualitative study), represented by 50% of the sample [7-8,10-11], ranging from level 4 [6] (studies with case-control and cohort) to 7 [12] (authority opinion or expert committee). We could identify where some of the studies were carried out. Among the studies, 25% were from the Southeast region of Brazil [7,8], 12.5% from the South [10], and 12.5% from the Midwest [6]. Regarding the central theme "suicide," articles pinpointed several approaches. Of these, 25% focused on the issue of training professionals concerning the topic [6,8], 12.5% characterized volunteers who worked with suicide prevention [10], and 12, 5% described suicide attempt notification forms [7], 12.5% addressed technology for suicide prevention [5], 12.5% reported Rorschach syndrome [12], 12.5% analyzed rational discrimination and suicide [11] and 12.5% dealt with different approaches to suicide [9].

In the 70s, a national study addressing the "Anatomy of Suicide" [9] states that in that decade, despite all the known epidemiology of this problem, suicide was still taboo. Well, there was no scientific discussion about it and little relevant research to explain it. Reporting this reflection to the present, almost fifty years after the publication as mentioned above, although there is already more research on suicide, as observed in the present study, which presented eight articles as a result, and most of them published after 2019, the theme continues being a taboo for health professionals and society.

The education and dissemination of materials for prevention is a strong ally in this regard, and it emphasizes the importance of preventing suicide in September, known as "yellow September," especially on the 10th, known as the "World Day of Prevention of suicide." On the official website of this campaign promoted by the Federal Council of Medicine, Brazilian Psychiatric Association, and Latin American Psychiatric Association, there are guidelines related to places to seek help, various educational materials about prevention/advice available free of charge to the population [13]. Thus, the contribution of this study is considered necessary concerning the analysis of publications related to the theme of suicide published nationwide.

## Conclusion

Suicide is still a little-explored topic in the national literature, and most studies that address it have low levels of scientific evidence. Its relevance has gained prominence over the years, considering that most of the studies that comprised this review sample are from the year 2020. We need to treat prevention and guidance regarding suicide should as a priority. As it is a multifaceted reality, there are several forms of prevention, as seen in the diversity of the topic addressed. Some ways are the education of professionals, recognizing the profile and characteristics of individuals, discussions in society, and technology.

**Keywords:** Suicide. Disease Prevention. Mental Health.

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## Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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