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(Editors)

Suicide and Suicide Prevention From a Global Perspective

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Ella Arensman, Diego De Leo, & Jane Pirkis (Eds.)



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Contents

Acknowledgments	V
Foreword	
Murad Moosa Khan	S1
Suicide and Suicide Prevention From a Global Perspective	
Ella Arensman, Vanda Scott, Diego De Leo, and Jane Pirkis	S3
Suicide Prevention in the European Region	
Maurizio Pompili, Rory C. O'Connor, and Kees van Heeringen	S8
Suicide Prevention in the Southeast Asia Region	
Lakshmi Vijayakumar, Caroline Daly, Yasir Arafat, and Ella Arensman	S21
Suicide Prevention in the Americas	
Morton M. Silverman, Loraine Barnaby, Brian L. Mishara, and Daniel J. Reidenberg	S30
Suicide Prevention in the African Region	
Joseph Osafo, Kwaku Oppong Asante, and Charity Sylvia Akotia	S53
Suicide Prevention in the Eastern Mediterranean Region	
Mohsen Rezaeian and Murad Moosa Khan	S72
Suicide Prevention in the Western Pacific Region	
Jane Pirkis, Stephane Amadeo, Annette Beautrais, Michael Phillips, and Paul S.F. Yip	S80
Suicide Prevention Programs: Evidence Base and Best Practice	
Stephen Platt and Thomas Niederkrotenthaler	S99
Future Directions	
Ella Arensman, Diego De Leo, and Jane Pirkis	S125

Foreword

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Suicide is one of the most personal yet one of the most complex acts anyone can perform. It continues to be a major global public health problem with an estimated 800,000 deaths annually. This is despite the fact that there have been significant advancements in the fields of science and technology, of material wealth and living conditions as well as in the early diagnosis and effective treatment of many mental disorders, including mood disorders. Hence, the continuing need to develop effective suicide prevention programs cannot be overemphasized.

This monograph is timely as the global priority of suicide prevention is highlighted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, with a target of reducing premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases by one-third, with suicide mortality identified as an indicator for this target. The monograph is also highly relevant as it not only traces the major milestones and achievements in suicide prevention so far but also identifies key priority areas for the future. It takes a global perspective of suicide and suicide prevention, covering all the regions of the world. The authors are all based in their respective regions. Suicide may be a global problem, but solutions always have to be local.

Clearly, suicide prevention will continue to pose as big a challenge for the foreseeable future as it did 50 years ago. This is particularly

so for those countries where lack of resources, poorly established primary and mental health services, and weak political processes make prevention efforts doubly difficult. However, as recent figures from the United States and Scotland show, even high-income countries, with well-established health systems and national suicide prevention programs, are not immune from increases in suicide rates.

In suicide prevention there is no room for complacency. Suicide prevention poses a unique and formidable challenge. Public and mental health professionals, government and nongovernmental organizations, and civil society across the globe need to work together to take up this challenge.

It is hoped that this work will serve as a useful resource for all of us.

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