

Good morning!

It looks like harvest may finally get underway this week. What a difficult fall for the farmers and their families! This month's newsletter has three articles on the subject of Farmer Suicide. A difficult topic but one that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. As always if you would like any of the full articles please contact me and I will send them along to you. Thank you for your good work!

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October 2019 Update from the Field: Farmer Suicide

Trends and Characteristics of Occupational Suicide and Homicide in Farmers and Agriculture Workers, 1992-2019. (2018). Ringgenberg W, Peek-Asa C, Donham K, & Ramirez M. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 34, 246-253.

Objective: We examined work-related homicides and suicides among farm operators/workers in the United States from 1992 to 2010. **Methods:** Work-related homicide and suicide cases from 1992 to 2010 were obtained from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. To calculate rates, denominator data on the US working population were also obtained from 2003 to 2010 Current Population Survey. Logistic regression was used to identify factors that were differentially associated with homicide and suicide.

Results: Over these 19 years, 171 farm operators/workers died from homicide and 230 died from suicide. When compared to rates of all workers, suicide rates were higher while homicide rates were lower among farm operators/workers. Males (OR = 6.1), whites (OR = 4.7), and 35- to 54-year-old (OR = 2.3) farm operators/workers had increased odds of suicide over homicide compared with their respective counterparts (ie, females, nonwhites, <35-year-olds). Those working in smaller farm operations with <11 employees had 1.7 times the odds of suicide over homicide. **Conclusions:** Suicide and homicide are both present in the agricultural industry, with suicide being more common than homicide. Translation of suicide prevention programs should be explored for the agricultural industry.

“The Masks We Wear”: A Qualitative Study of Suicide in Australian Farmers. (2018). Kunde L, Kolves K, Kelly B, Reddy P, & de Leo D. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 34, 254-262.

Purpose: Farmer suicide is a major public issue in Australia. Using the psychological autopsy method, this study aimed to examine the life and death circumstances of Australian male farmers who died by suicide through verbal reports from their close significant others. **Methods:** Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 relatives of male farmers who had died by suicide in Queensland or New South Wales, Australia (2006-2014). This study followed the COREQ checklist criteria for the reporting of qualitative research. **Findings:** Six interrelated themes were identified: (1) masculinity, (2) uncertainty and lack of control in farming, (3) feelings of failure in relationships and farming, (4) escalating health problems, (5) maladaptive coping, and (6) acquired capability with access to means. **Conclusions:** Effective clinical interventions, as well as suicide prevention strategies, need to consider the importance of 3 key issues in suicide among farmers: adherence to masculine norms and socialization; expectations of self in maintaining family traditions and occupation; and a male subtype of depression.

Addressing the Cultural Challenges of Firearm Restriction in Suicide Prevention: A Test of Public Health

Messaging to Protect Those at Risk. (2018). Marino E, Wolsko C, Keys S, & Wilcox H. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 22(3), 394-404.

Objectives: Reducing access to firearms as a suicide prevention strategy is limited in the US today because of divergent cultural attitudes and political contentiousness surrounding gun restrictions. This research examined the effects of culturally-specific suicide prevention messages on the likelihood of restricting firearm access during periods of suicide risk. **Methods:** Focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted with rural gun owners in order to develop a suicide prevention message that highlighted the importance of restricting access to firearms during periods of risk without threatening second amendment concerns. The effectiveness of this gun culture message, relative to standard suicide prevention messaging and a control condition, was then tested with a national sample of gun owners.

Results: Relative to all other conditions, respondents who received our culturally-specific message in conjunction with standard suicide prevention content reported the greatest likelihood of taking steps to restrict access to firearms. This tendency was enhanced for individuals who were more politically conservative, lived in more rural areas, and supported gun rights to a stronger degree.

Conclusions: Findings underscore the importance of attending to cultural factors in public health messaging. Messaging that respects the values of gun owners could hold promise in promoting firearm restriction for suicide prevention.