Imbalance Between Suicide Prevention Strategies and Risk

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Objective:

To compare Montana's Strategic Suicide Prevention Plan (SPP)† with suicide occurrence by age group.

Methods:

The suicide trajectory model (STM), identified by Stillion and McDowell‡, describes biological, psychosocial, cognitive, and environmental vectors along with warning signs, sentinel events and behavior patterns as risk characteristics for various age groups. The STM was used to determine the number of SPP strategies for each age group which were then compared to the 10-year mortality rate for the groups.

Results:

Table 1

The SPP contained 13 strategies potentially targeting children (age 5-14) and 12 for adolescents (age 15-24). The SPP contained fewer strategies pertinent to young adults (age 25-34), middle adults (35-64) and the elderly (≥ 65) at 4, 6, and 5 respectively. Table 1 (left) summarizes the distribution.

Correspondingly, the death rate per 100,000 for each age group was 10.4, 15.0, 21.9, 22 and 27.3 respectively. Figure 1 (right) illustrates the divergence between strategy and mortality risk. Pearson correlation coefficient confirms an inverse relationship between strategies and age groups. ($r = 0.91$, $p - .02$).

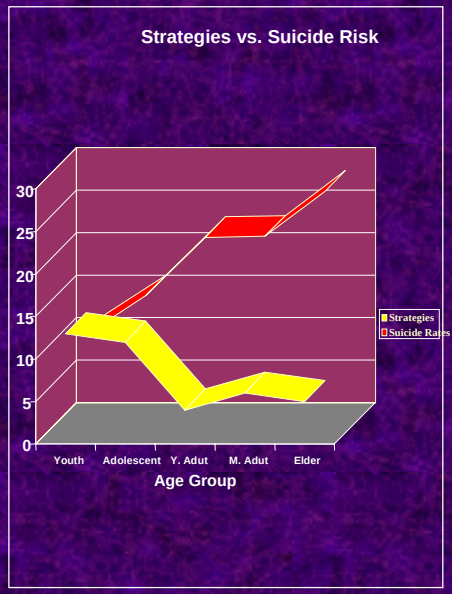
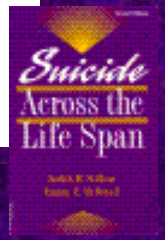


Figure 1

Conclusion:

There is an imbalance between age group strategies contained within the Montana SPP and age adjusted mortality rates for suicide in the state. During the development and revision of future plans, additional consideration should be given to the relative risks by age groups and other factors.



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References
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‡Stillion, J.M., & McDowell, E.E. (1996) Suicide across the life Span: Premature exists (2nd ed.) Washington DC: Taylor and Francis.

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