

Suicide Prone Occupations

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Abstract

Suicide the word in itself brings with it flooding emotions of despair, grief, sadness and depression. Many researchers have conducted studies on this topic, few have also provided with recommendations to combat it, yet there is no strong visible change towards low suicide rates. With India being the rapidly increasing super power, it's the prime task of all mental health professionals to provide quality services to individuals working in various occupations, who are not able to deal with the rapidly rising demands of the working industry, nor the stresses that accompany the consequences of failure, and very sadly we are losing our very essential jewels to this, such as our care takers "doctors", our protectors "police officers" and our food providers "the farmers".. Through this review article, the author intends to cover these aspects and look for ways and create awareness regarding this grave issue.

Keywords: Mental health, Suicide, Occupations and Mental illness.

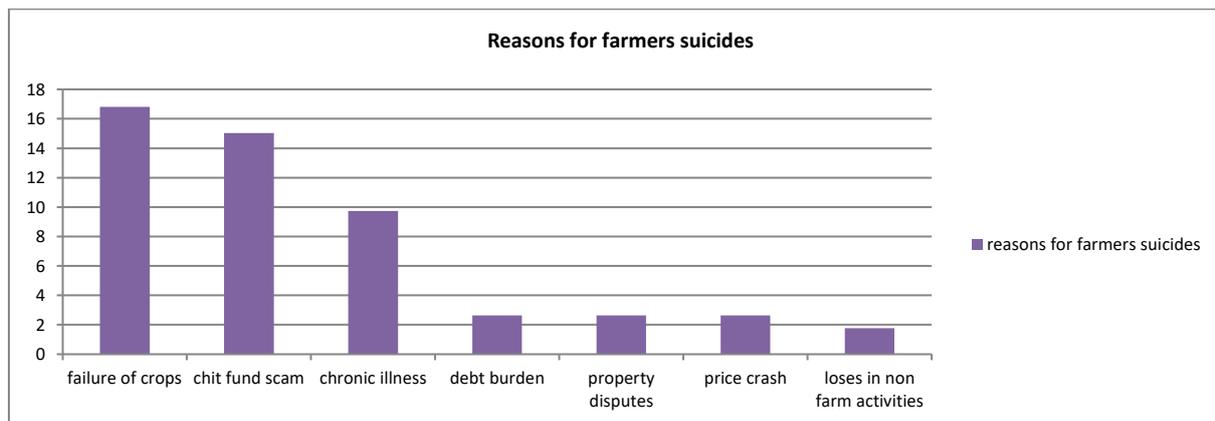
Introduction

There has been increasing emphasis on the term suicide prone occupations, what exactly are these suicide prone occupations? And what causes people in these occupations to end their lives? Are there any measures taken to combat suicide in these people? With all these questions in mind, literature was reviewed. Though so far there are many occupations for which the data on suicide rates isn't available, yet it has been seen that professionals who are doctors, such as physicians specifically, police personnel's and farmers are at increased risk of committing suicide in their working tenure (Platt, 2010; Dongre, 2012 & Violanti, 2010). There have been various researches in support of increased rates of suicide in health care professionals (Charlton, 1995). Though there are mixed statistical information for various occupations, there has been agreement on few factors related to suicide such as, it is determined and influenced by the demographic characteristics such as age, gender etc.

It has been noticed men are more likely to commit suicide as they age, while women are most prone to suicides around 50 years of age (Stack, 2000). Another crucial factor which contributes to stress is the internal working environment, which is characterized by infrequent role sets, stress due to reduced favorable outcomes, social isolation. In this regard it has been seen that female doctors or female police personnel's are more likely to end their lives due to the frequent role shifts (Stack, 1995). In another study it was reported that

for police personnel alcoholism or divorce rates are other contributing factors (Loo, 2003). Another important factor is the availability of options and means to commit suicide, such as for doctors, there vast knowledge of lethal doses of medications (Peipins, Burnett, and Alterman, 1997, Hong, 2011 & Hawton, 2004). And the last factor which is crucial while assessing the risk for suicide is the prior mental health of an individual, there are individuals who have been predisposed to mental disorders and as soon as a slight trigger occurs, they turn towards harming themselves through any means. Not only this, it has been studied over time that one's personality types and traits also has a very huge role on committing suicides, such as those who brood over little things, high on self criticism or those individuals who possess low problem solving abilities, are highly impulsive and ruminate a lot are more prone to ending their lives.

All these research studies so far emphasized on the presence of suicides in police officers or doctors, the other very important yet neglected occupation that is suicide prone is that of the farmers, specifically in India, where the benefits given to them are a handful, bit the loses and the stress that they have to face every year either because of the weather, or the lack of government subsidies etc are in abundance. According to the statistics of 2002, the graph below indicates the reasons, which have led to suicides in farmers (Panagariya, 2008). Not only these in another news report lately on May 17, 2016 in the Indian express, it was reported that the toll for farmer suicides have increased fourfold from that of 2015.



Within four months since the beginning of 2016, one thousand five hundred and forty eight farmers have committed suicide and shockingly these are the statistics only of the Marathwada region (The Indian Express, 2016, May 17). These statistics are shocking and thus demand an increasing need of mental health services as well as proper effective government policies. And according to the report of DNA e-paper 216 police personnel committed suicide within 2006-2013 only in the state of Tamil Nadu, which comes at the second position after Maharashtra. And nor is this very favorable outcome (DNA, September, 21, 2015).

Implications and recommendations

With the help of the data provided and the literature supporting the same, the prime aim should be to provide interventions that can help curb increasing rates of suicides.

Organizations such as hospitals and police department should regularly screen employees for stress and other mental health issues and where they feel a need, proper treatment with the help of mental health professionals should be planned.

It should be emphasized by the policy makers and the government that every such institute or occupation which is so taxing and tiring for employees should have a counseling cell, so that employees can freely avail this necessary service and give their best at the work place and be mentally fit.

Keeping the specific needs of the rural and uneducated lot “the farmers” of our country, who need our help urgently and the most, it is essential that community outreach programs be conducted for them in their villages or towns so that, the stigma can be uplifted and they can avail the services provided by mental health professionals through proper awareness.

Conclusion

Looking at the research work on this topic. We can clearly conclude that suicide prone occupations create a very high risk for our country and if strict measures are not taken to control and prevent, increasing levels of suicide,

we will lose skilled manpower, and thus it is recommended that policy makers should formulate effective policies for the welfare of these people. And in the meantime, the mental health workers should provide and create awareness regarding the importance of mental health, and should work towards removing the stigma linked with assessing mental health services, so that more and more people can be treated and can freely assess the services provided, so that they are not overpowered by stress and look for effective solutions to the problems.

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