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FROM CLUES TO PROFILES: AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEY ON CASES OF COMPLETED AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES IN ITALY (2001-2008)

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Objectives: Suicide is a complex phenomenon accounting for 1 million deaths per year. This study aims to assess the profiles of those individuals at a higher risk for suicide, which may be of help to clinicians while evaluating patients.

Methods: A sample of 30.000 suicides belonging to two age-bands, i.e. 18 to 24 and over-45s, was analysed and compared with respect to the gender, fatality of the act, season, the reason for it, the time and methods employed. Data were provided by ISTAT records and concern completed and attempted suicides in Italy from 2001-2008.

Results: Males are at a higher risk with a higher lethality of the acts in both age bands. The younger age band is at higher risk from March to June and in January especially in the evening, whereas the older age-band from March to June especially in the morning with a higher fatality rate. Unknown reasons are the most common cause for suicide followed by mental illnesses in both age-bands. Hanging is the most common method, followed by jumping from high places in both age-bands. Charcoal - intoxication is more common in the young age-band, whereas fire-arms and drowning in the over-45 age-band.

Conclusions: Although the two identified profiles are quite general, they can be an adequate basis for public health officials and mental health professionals to early identify those individuals at a higher risk for suicide. Further studies are needed for a better definition of the profiles.