

Mental health during the life course

Suicide is a major public health issue. Suicide rates in Europe vary substantially, from about 3 (Greece) to 28 (Lithuania) per 100,000 inhabitants. Discussion is ongoing about how to explain these differences. Besides individual bio-psychological factors, often socio-economic factors are identified as most important risk factors for such behaviour. However, not all observations can be explained satisfactorily by these factors, and some researchers are pleading for a broader view, including politics-related emotional status of populations. With regard to effective suicide prevention, there is controversy about which determinants are to be addressed with priority and by whom. Specialized healthcare services do not seem to be as effective as desired and a broad primary care involvement can possibly have more public health impact.

Slovenia is among the countries with high suicide rates, i.e. 19 per 100,000 inhabitants. In one of the conference workshopsⁱ, Dr Saska Roškar, will point to the importance of suicide-oriented public healthcare initiatives. In another workshopⁱⁱ, best practices from public mental health in Slovenia will be presented, as well as plans for the future of mental health system and finally a systematic review of effectiveness of intervention.

Promotion of good mental health and prevention of mental disorders is important in all periods of life, but even more so in childhood and adolescence. Child and adolescent mental health is a predictor of mental health in adulthood. Depression and anxiety caused by stressful life events are the most frequent disorders in the adult population. Stressful life events are work or health related, loss of family, or relationship-related events. Greater awareness of these determinants may facilitate effective intervention programmes.

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The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organisation for public health associations in Europe. Its network of national associations of public health represents around 20,000 public health professionals. EUPHA's mission is to facilitate and activate a strong voice of the public health network by enhancing visibility of the evidence and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals.

EUPHA - European Public Health Association

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ⁱ Workshop 2.M. Suicide (attempts): determinants, prevention and aftercare: further insights? Thursday 29 November, 14:10 – 15:10, Room M1

ⁱⁱ Workshop 8.M. Building the future on strong foundations – mental health in Slovenia and beyond. Saturday 1 December, 8:30 - 9:30, Room M1