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Suicide in Greece 1992-2012: a Time Series Analysis

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Introduction

Since 2008 Greece has entered a long period of economic crisis with adverse effects on various aspects of daily life. In this frame it is quite important to examine the suicide trends in Greece during the period 1992-2012 with particular consideration given in the recent period of economic crisis [2008-2011].

Material and Methods

Population data and crude data on suicides were obtained from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.). We assessed the Age-adjusted Standardized Suicide Rates (SSR). Age-adjustment was performed by the direct standardization method, using the European Standard Population (ESP). Trends in sex SSR were analyzed using joinpoint regression, in which trend data are characterized by a number of contiguous linear segments and join points (points at which trends change).

Results

During the study period, 8025 cases of suicide occurred. Total SSR presented statistically significant annual decrease of 0.89% (95% CI -1.7, -0.1), during the period 1992-2009. After 2009 the trend in SSR increased statistically significantly (annual increase 12.48%, 95% CI 0.3% , 26.1%). SSR in males presented an initial period of modest annual decrease (-0.84%, 95% CI -1.6%, -0,1%), during the period 1992-2008. Joinpoint regression analysis revealed a change in male SSR trend during 2008, after which the average annual increase was 9.25% (95% CI 2.7% – 16,3%). No change in female SSR trend was observed during the studied period.

Conclusions

Data indicate a clear evidence of an increase of the overall suicide rates and male suicide rates in Greece during the period of the current financial crisis.