

SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BEFORE AND DURING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS IN GREECE

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Objective: Periods of financial crises have been associated with impairment of mental health and increased suicidality. The purpose of this research is to study the potential impact of the consequences of the financial crisis, such as unemployment, job insecurity, debts, poverty, social exclusion on the suicidality in the Greek population.

Method: The records of patients who were hospitalized in the Internal Medicine Clinics of a general hospital after attempting suicide in the years 2007 and 2011, before and during the financial crisis respectively, were studied. Demographic data, methods of suicide attempt, psychiatric history and severity of psychopathology at the time of suicide attempt, were recorded for each patient.

Results: The statistical analysis showed that during the financial crisis there is an increase in the number of suicide attempts. Most affected are those who are unemployed, married, who are reaching the age of retirement or are already retired and have no history of psychiatric disorder or suicide attempt. Furthermore, there was evidence suggesting that a decreased threshold of psychopathology was adequate for individuals to exhibit suicidal behavior.

Conclusions: It seems that the economic crisis in Greece has a negative impact on the mental health of its population and causes an increase in suicidal behavior. Consequently, mental health promotion and suicidality prevention programs are essential for the accurate and timely identification and the immediate and effective management of high risk individuals.