

P-615 - HOW DOES ECONOMIC RECESSION IN ITALY AFFECT THE HEALTH OF ITALIAN PEOPLE?

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Introduction: Since December 2007 all Western countries have fallen into a severe economic recession, that caused an increase in unemployment and a lowering of income. Main consequences on health reported from previous economic crises such as the '29 Great Depression, the Post-communist Depression in early 1990s or the East Asian financial crises in late 1990s were:

- 1) increase in overall mortality,
- 2) increase in day-time alcohol drinking,
- 3) increase in male suicides and
- 4) decrease in traffic fatalities.

Aim: To review the consistency of Italian data regarding the effects on health of the current economic recession with reference to effects of previous crises.

Methods: PubMed was searched for literature. Data on mortality, alcohol abuse and self-harm behaviours were obtained from the website of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT).

Results: Overall mortality in Italy increased in years 2008 and 2009, this increase being more evident among women. Overall male suicides and attempted suicides increased in the same years as well. Male suicides potentially referred to economic reasons showed an alarming increase. Traffic fatalities decreased during the last decade. Contrary to the expectations, alcohol consumption diminished gradually after recession onset.

Conclusions: Italian data are consistent with expectations and previous findings. Other concomitant and not related events could be involved (such as decrease in traffic fatalities or steadiness in alcohol consumption, which might be related to the introduction of new laws), though it seems extremely suggestive that the socio-economic context has a deep impact on mental health of general population.