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SUICID AMONG JAPANESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS-FROM THE RESULTS OF A 21-YEAR SURVEY

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More than 30,000 suicides a year have occurred continuously in Japan. Suicide among university students has been a top priority for those engaged in mental health in universities. In this study, I clarified the characteristics of university students' suicide and identified risk groups through the 21 years' survey. I also aimed to probe background factors to help setting up preventive measures.

The subject was undergraduate students at national universities in either 4 or 6 years programs, and the data were annually collected by means of a questionnaire from universities. The survey results of the 21 years from 1985 to 2005 were gathered, and I statistically analyzed the longitudinal changes in the suicide rate over this time period and the correlation between the suicide rates and sex, major, academic year, psychiatric disorders, the methods of suicide, etc. using the chi-square test and residual analysis. Altogether 735,496 students were surveyed, and 987 among them had committed suicide. Since 1996, the suicide rate has been the top cause of death. Holdover students, among whom we often find withdrawing students so-called "Hikikomori", were a high-risk group for suicide as well as male medical students, male arts students and male dentistry students. More than eighty percent of the students who committed suicide had not been to university health centers or diagnosed by psychiatrists. For the method of suicide, hanging and taking a death-leap were frequently seen among them.

A clue to prevent suicide among university students was found from these results.