Time-trends in method-specific suicide rates compared with the availability of specific compounds. The Danish experience

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Abstract

Restriction of means for suicide is an important part of suicide preventive strategies in different countries. All suicides in Denmark between 1970 and 2000 were examined with regard to method used for suicide. Overall suicide mortality and method-specific suicide mortality was compared with official information about availability of medical compounds (barbiturates, benzodiazepines, analgesics, antidepressants) and carbon monoxide in vehicle exhaust and household gas. Restrictions on the availability of carbon monoxide, barbiturates and dextropropoxyphen was associated with a decline in the number of suicides by self-poisoning with these compounds. Restricted access occurred concomittantly with a 55% decrease in suicide rate.

Keywords: Acetaminophen; epidemiology; overdose; poisoning; suicide