PATTERN OF MEDIA REPORTING OF SUICIDE

Ogbolu RE[1], Buhari OIN[2*], Egegbara IC[3], Ojeahere M[4], Uteh BEA[5], Tade T[1] and Olayimika C[6]

[1]*Suicide Research and Prevention Initiative SURPIN, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Surulere, Lagos State, Nigeria*
[2]*Department of Behavioural Science, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria*
[3]*Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos State, Nigeria*
[4]*Department of Psychiatry, Jos University Teaching Hospital, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*
[5]*Department of Internal Medicine, University of Medical Sciences, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria*
[6]*Synapse Services Magnolia Unit, Lagos State, Nigeria*

Abstract: Suicide remains a global public health concern with over 800,000 deaths reported annually. The media play an important role in influencing the attitude of the populace to suicide. It has been widely demonstrated that the way suicides are reported/portrayed may increase or reduce the rate and pattern of suicide in a locality. As such guidelines have been put in place to regulate media reporting. The study aimed at analysing the pattern of online media reportage of Suicides in Nigeria based on established guidelines for responsible reporting. This was a retrospective study involving content analysis of 30 randomly selected online newspapers reporting suicide deaths over the past three years (2018-2021) in Nigeria. A total of 147 suicide reports were identified. Majority of the news media used inappropriate language in reporting the suicide. Majority (89.1%) of suicides were portrayed as criminal acts, 87.1% of the suicides were given undue prominence, 10.2% suicides were sensationalized and about half (49%) of the suicides report were explicitly described. Graphic details of methods used occurred in 28.6% of the suicide reports. Only 14.3% of suicides had a published suicide note. Majority of the news media did not provide correct information about mental ill health and only 4.1% of the reported suicide had additional information on help seeking information. We concluded that much still needs to be done to improve suicide reporting. Relevant stakeholders need to continually collaborate with media outfits to provide trainings in order to increase mental health and suicide literacy, as well as to jointly develop locally applicable and culturally relevant guidelines on reportage.

Keywords: Suicide, Analysis, Media Report, Media Guidelines, Pattern, Nigeria

Introduction

Suicide remains a public mental health concern with about 800,000 deaths reported every year (WHO, 2019). Mental illnesses, in particular depression, contribute to suicide (Adewuya *et al*, 2016, Nock *et al*, 2009, Ogbolu *et al*, 2020). It is said that each death by suicide affects up to six people, and there will have been about 20 attempts (WHO, 2019). There is a lot of stigma and misconception surrounding mental illnesses and suicide (Arimiyau, 2015, Cvinar, 2005).These can be corrected through public education, and the media can play a significant role in this (Torok *et al*, 2017, Till *et al*, 2017, Robinson *et al*, 2016, Sisack and Varnik, 2012), and as such the World Health Organisation recognises the role the media play in suicide prevention and as a result it has identified media practitioners as critical stakeholders in suicide prevention in community (WHO, 2017). The reporting of suicide in media, electronic or print, may have an impact even negatively as the Werther effect, or

*Corresponding Authors' Email: nimat.buhari@gmail.com

positively (the Papageno effect) (Niederkrothethaler *et al*, 2010). The Wether effect was based on reported rise in the rates of suicide in young males occurred in Europe and Germany following the publication of book titled 'The sorrow of young Werther' by Goethe in 1774 (Phillips, 1974). Many of the suicides were found dressed like the protagonist in the story or had the book within the vicinity where deceased was found. The 'Papageno effect' describes the use of media to address contagion, enlighten populace and prevent suicide. Taking its name from Mozart's 'the magic flute' which describes how a character in the story overcame suicidal ideation with support from his friends (Phillips, 1974). From our study, most of the suicides reported in mainstream online sensationalize the suicide, gave undue prominence to the story, and used in appropriate terms including criminalizing the suicide. This was similar to findings in previous studies in same clime (Olibamoyo *et al*, 2021, Shoib and Yasir- Arafat, 2021).

It is believed that unnecessary details describing the actual act of suicide attempts may make vulnerable individuals more likely to attempt suicide (Niederkrotenthaler *et al*, 2010, Stack, 2008, Gould *et al*, 2014). So also, is the glamourizing of suicide in the media found to be unhelpful? For this reason, educating the media practitioners is a veritable tool in suicide prevention. Responsible media reporting can also promote mental health education among members of the community (Till *et al*, 2017). However, without adequate education or training it would be unrealistic to expect proper reporting of suicide, especially in the digital non-traditional media world where several people report on non-traditional platforms including blogs and social media platforms (Robinson *et al*, 2016). These make it imperative to train and analyse the current pattern of media reporting of suicide in the community. Therefore, this study takes the first of these steps by analysing the pattern and various ways that suicide has been reported in electronic traditional media. There are a number of guidelines that have been put forward to guide the reporting of suicide in the media (WHO, 2017, Wasserman, 1984, Campion-Smith, 2015, www.nuj.org.uk).

Media portrayal can influence suicide as reported in earlier studies (Niederkrotenthaler *et al*, 2010, Olibamoyo *et al*, 2021, Gould *et al*, 2014). It has been reported that suicides especially report of celebrity suicides may increase risks (for up to 24 weeks), and the reasons are that such suicides are usually highly publicized, and repetition may expose already vulnerable people to possible methods to use or make them identify with the victim; seeing suicide as a solution to their own problems (Wasserman, 1984).

It is noted that many of the guidelines available predates explosion of social media, there is therefore an urgent need for these guidelines to be updated so as to reflect new reality of social/digital media. As said by Picard in Campion-Smith, 2015, "If the information is already available on online social media what difference would it make if mainstream media are regulated. Let's face it, with technological advances and shifting mores, privacy is not what is used to be. Neither is suicide". Hence the need for researched-informed guidelines.

The aim this study was to analyse the pattern of reporting of suicide in online media in Nigeria based on established guidelines for responsible reporting.

The hope is that this will provide documented and scientific evidence with which trainings and workshops can be based for training media practitioners.

Methodology

It is a retrospective study involving content analysis of 100 online newspaper reporting on deaths by suicide over the past three years. A list of all the major online newspapers record in Nigeria was obtained from Nigerian newspapers online website which lists available major newspapers alphabetically (newspapers.ng). A total of 30 online newspapers were randomly sampled to generate the most recent reporting of suicide deaths within the last three years. Once a newspaper was selected using the table of random numbers, its most recent online suicide reportage was examined using a designed checklist of 10 items generated from the established guidelines on responsible reporting (Tatum *et al*, 2010, WHO, 2015, www.nuj.org.uk, www.samaritans.org). These items were categorized into positive and negative aspects of reporting (see Table 1).

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Health Research Committee of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTHHREC) in February 2021. The statistical package for social Sciences SPSS version 22 was used for data analysis.

Results

Table 1 shows the frequency of suicide reportage in the last 3 years in the online media that were randomly selected. A total of 147 suicides reportage identified in the selected media outfits. Cable Ng reported the most suicides with a frequency of 17.7%, this was followed by premium times and the nation news with 17% and 9% respectively.

Table 2 shows the negative aspects of the online suicide reportage and the frequency with which inappropriate language was used in the reportage of the suicide. Of the 147 reports, 131(89.1%) suicides were portrayed as criminal acts. Only 15 (10.2%) of the suicides were sensationalized by the use of the term 'epidemic' by the media. However, majority, 128 (87.1%) of the suicides reported were given undue prominence. About half, 72 (49%) of the suicides were explicitly described while graphic details depicting methods used occurred in 42 (28.6%) of the suicides. Detailed information about the location of suicide was described in 28 (19%) of all the suicides.

Table 3 shows the positives aspects of online suicide reportage. Suicide notes were published in only 21 (14.3%) of the suicides. Consideration for privacy of the bereaved occurred in only 53(36.1%) of the reported suicides. As regards enlightenment and providing correct information about mental ill health as a risk for suicide, this was rare, occurring in only 10(6.8%) of the suicides. Only 6(4.1%) of the reported suicides had additional information about providing help seeking information or other useful resources.

Table 1: Media Organizations

Media Station	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Authority	4	2.7
Blueprint	3	2.0
Business Day	1	0.7
Business Hallmark	2	1.4
Cable Ng	26	17.7

Complete Sports	1	0.7
Daily Post	10	6.8
Guardian	7	4.8
Independent	2	1.4
Leadership	4	2.7
National Mirror	2	1.4
New Telegraph	6	4.1
Nigerian Observer	4	2.7
Osun Defender	8	5.4
PM News	6	4.1
Premium Times	25	17.0
Punch	2	1.4
Sahara Reporters	3	2.0
The Nation	14	9.5
Tide	1	0.7
Tribune	6	4.1
Vanguard	10	6.8

Table 2: NEGATIVE ASPECTS

Use of inappropriate language	F	%
Portraying criminalization or as desirable– 'committed/commit', 'unsuccessful'		
Yes	131	89.1
No	16	10.9
Total	147	100.0
Sensationalisation - 'epidemic'		
Yes	15	10.2
No	132	89.8
Total	147	100.0

Undue prominence	F	%
Front page; top of inside page, use of word 'suicide' in headlines		
Yes	128	87.1
No	12	8.2
Not applicable	7	4.8
Total	147	100.0

Explicit Description	F	%
Step-by-step method description		
Yes	72	49.0
No	75	51.0

Total	147	100.0
Graphic image or videos depicting method		
Yes	42	28.6
No	105	71.4
Total	147	100.0
Detailed information about site including number of incidents at location		
Yes	28	19.0
No	119	81.0
Total	147	100.0

Table 3: POSITIVE ASPECTS

Consideration of bereaved	F	%
Publishing of suicide notes		
Yes	21	14.3
No	107	72.8
Not applicable	19	12.9
Total	147	100.0
Respect privacy of bereaved		
Yes	53	36.1
No	93	63.3
Not applicable	1	.7
Total	147	100.0

Public Education	F	%
Educating or correct information about mental illness and suicide		
Yes	10	6.8
No	137	93.2
Total	147	100.0
Providing help seeking information or resources		
Yes	6	4.1
No	141	95.9
Total	147	100.0

Discussion

Research shows that the media plays an important role in influencing the attitude of the populace towards suicide. It has been demonstrated that the way suicides are reported or portrayed may reduce or increase the rate and pattern of suicide in a locality. This has been supported by the Werther effect

21

and Papageno effect (Till et l, 2017, Niederkrotenthaler *et al*, 2010). This study assessed the quality of online newspaper reporting based on recommended guidelines for responsible reporting.

Majority of the news outlets used inappropriate language – 'unsuccessful' or 'commit'. 'Unsuccessful', inadvertently portrays dying by suicide as the expected outcome of an attempt, while 'commit' implies criminality. The latter may be influenced by the fact that suicide is still criminalized in Nigeria (Ogbolu *et al*, 2020). The WHO has enjoined countries still criminalising suicide to decriminalise it. It is believed that doing so may help address under-reporting and reduce stigma. Having a recent Mental Health Act in Nigeria, at federal level, will also help.

While it is encouraging that majority in our study did not sensationalise the suicide (89.8%), nor provide detailed information on suicide locations or sites (71.4%), nor provide graphic images or videos (81.0%), it was of concern that about half (49%) described the act step-by-step, and majority (87.1%) also gave undue prominence to the reports. Some of these factors, such as locations, have been shown to influence suicides. Following the creation of a subway in 1978 in Austria, it became an ally for suicides and suicide attempts, and suicide increased significantly between 1984 and 1987 (Sonneck *et al*, 1994). It was noticed that this was highly publicized in the media subsequently leading to suicide contagion. In response to this, the Austrian Association for Suicide Prevention embarked on a campaign to alert journalist to this and to seek about ways to address responsible reporting. Guidelines were put in place and subsequently suicide and its attempt drastically dropped by about 84% (Sonneck *et al*, 1994). The finding thus supports the hypothesis that putting media guidelines in place may influence the suicidal behaviour of populace in a positive way.

A number of mental health and suicide prevention organizations worldwide, including the world health organization in recognition of the Werther effect, have developed guidelines which are now being used as national and/or regional suicide prevention strategies. These guidelines give suggestions as to how media can reduce the likelihood of causing harm by avoiding glorification of suicide, describing the methods that was used while recommending the inclusion of information to improve mental health and suicide literacy (WHO, 2017, www.nuj.org.uk).

On the positive attributes of the reporting, we found that with regards to consideration for the bereaved, minority published suicide notes (14.3%), however majority (63.3%) did not respect the privacy of the bereaved; those affected by the suicide. This can result in social stigma of the bereaved or survivors, as has been studied by some researchers.6 the youth may particularly be affected by this, hence the need for sensible reporting. While it is noted that, the epidemiological extent of this contagion phenomenon in current social scientific research may appear conflicting, some studies still find that the way suicides are reported may be positively associated with increase suicide rates in some subgroups within the general population. An example is increase rates in youth populations. (Niederkrotenthaler *et al*, 2007).

Proper guideline implementation has been successful in mitigating imitative suicides and is believed to be the best intervention to reduce harmful effect of media reports. However, some mainstream media seem to be resistant to this. Several reasons have been given ranging from them querying the relevance of continued use of these guidelines in the current era and the advent of new technologies such as the social media. (Robinson *et al*, 2016). While addressing responsible reporting by mainstream media, the new technologies and social media add a serious challenge to control of

suicide information made available to the public. This is because it still remains mostly unchecked. Some mainstream media have argued the essence of following guidelines restricting how suicides stories that may already be available in the social space. This poses a threat to mainstream media who have to compete with the fast-paced social media to remain relevant to those they serve as such they may jettison editorial standards and guidelines in a hast to publish (Robinson *et al*, 2016).

Some journalists do not believe there is a link between suicide and media coverage, but rather believe the guidelines gags discussions about suicide, and view the guidelines that were mostly provided by mental health specialists as an infringement on their professional responsibilities and editorial independence. An example is found in the Toronto Star journalist Rosie Dimanno who found media guidelines ridiculous and felt it discourages conversations about suicide, further driving despair into the closet as quoted in Campion- Smith, 2015, as such much work is still needed to be done convincing them. Some others felt guidelines produced by mental health practitioners, though well intentioned, are prudish and counterproductive as some elements of the guidelines are at odds with journalistic practice (Gunn *et al*, 2012, Sinyor *et al*, 2017, Gandy & Terrion, 2015).

So how do we strike a balance in regulating mainstream media's reportage of suicide stories already in circulation in social media? In answering this, Gould, 2014 maintains that since mainstream media is still a predominant and valid source of news, they can put events in perspective and point readers to community help as well as correct misinformation which social media perpetuates. Mainstream media can do more by educating about mental illness, suicide, appropriate health seeking behaviour and guidance as to readily available supportive resources in the community. They can help to dispel myths and to help people identify warning signs.

Majority of those in our study did not provide educating or correct mental health information. The outlets did not sensitize the public about risk factors as well as preventive strategies for suicide as found in previous studies. It may be that the awareness level has dropped, or that less outlets understand their role in prevention. Countries that provide adequate media guidance on responsible suicide reporting and who promote awareness of the protective role of media in providing education to the public, show a decline in suicide rates, especially copycat suicide afterwards.31 In forming guidelines journalists are essential so they do not resist what they perceive as external influence or restriction on fundamentals of good journalism (Liu, 2020).

Almost all (95.9%) of those we studied also did not provide help-seeking information or resources. They were also less attuned to suicide postventions, and few were bothered about the bereaved. Perhaps this may suggest a lack of seeking expert opinions before publication, or a lack of seeking research findings or information about suicide prevention programs. These are important, identified ways of to obtain information about suicide, and available resources to for suicide prevention. Not doing so amounts to a missed opportunity for suicide prevention. There can be no argument about the value of providing such information. It should be seen as a duty and responsibility. This role is important to mainstream and social media, which can be a very powerful tool to provide help to vulnerable people.

Limitation

The study focused on news outlets with online presence. Outlets without online presence may also have considerable readership. It is noted that social media reporting was not the focus of this study, however, their influence cannot be underestimated, as mentioned in the discussion. However, the strength lies in the fact we studied a wide range of news outlets. This allowed a reasonable spread in terms of different types of tabloids.

Conclusions

There are some good aspects in the reporting of suicide among the outlets we studied, however, a number of aspects require attention. Guidelines for responsible reporting should not only be made but should be widely promoted. There is also a need for regular refresher training to take care of newsrooms turnover, and newly hired or early-career journalists, who may lack experience, and yet, are eager to churn out news, and may therefore be likely to not show the sensitivity required in suicide reportage (Bohanna *et al* 2012). Duncan and Luce, 2020, produced a Responsible Suicide Reporting (RSR) model, which we recommend as a useful checklist for journalists who report suicide. Our study shows that there is still that needs to be done to improve suicide reporting, and as such relevant stakeholders should continually collaborate with media outfits, and provide trainings, in order to increase mental health and suicide literacy, as well as to jointly develop locally applicable and culturally relevant guidelines on reportage. A repeat of the study after widespread training and awareness should be the aimed as assessing the influence on behavioural change amongst journalist and the populace.

Contributors

OINB, REO, EIC, OM, UBEA, TT and OC all conceptualized the research. REO, OIN and EIC did the literature search and review, OM, TT, UBEA and OC gathered and analysed data. All authors contributed to the initial and final drafts of the manuscript.

Acknowledgement: None declared

Declaration of interest: None declared.

References

Adewuya, A. O., Ola, B. A., Coker, O. A., Atilola, O., Zachariah, M. P., Olugbile, O., Fasawe, A., & Idris, O. (2016). Prevalence and associated factors for suicidal ideation in the Lagos State Mental Health Survey, *Nigeria. BJPsych open,* 2(6), 385–389. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjpo.bp.116.004333

Armiyau A. Y. (2015) A Review of Stigma and Mental Illness in Nigeria. J Clin Case Rep 5:488. doi:10.4172/2165-7920.1000488. https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/a-review-of-stigma-and-mental-illness-in-nigeria-2165-7920.1000488.php?aid=40679

Bohanna, I., Wang, X. (2012). Media guidelines for the responsible reporting of suicide: a review of effectiveness. *Crisis,* 33(4), 190-8. doi: 10.1027/0227-5910/a000137. PMID: 22713977.

Campion-Smith B. (2015). Suicide, social media and newsroom taboos: How new media are changing the way suicides are reported. Ottawa (ON): Carleton University School of Journalism and Communication. https://curve.carleton.ca/9fb74fc7-8c8f-4447-9ee2-18a4c75a649d

Cvinar J. G. (2005). Do suicide survivors suffer social stigma: a review of the literature. *Perspectives in psychiatric care,* 41(1), 14–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0031-5990.2005.00004.x

Duncan, S., Luce, A. (2020). Using the Responsible Suicide Reporting Model to increase adherence to global media reporting guidelines. *Journalism.* doi:10.1177/1464884920952685

Gandy, J.J., & Terrion, J.L. (2015). Journalism and suicide reporting guidelines in Canada: perspectives, partnerships and processes. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion,* 17, 249 - 260. doi: 10.1080/14623730.2015.1077613

Gould M., Kleinman MH, Lake AM, Forman J, & Basset Midle J. (2014). Newspaper coverage of suicide and initiation of suicide clusters in teenagers in the USA, 1988-96: a retrospective, population-based, case-control study. *Lancet Psychiatry,* 1(1), 34-43. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366 (14)70225-1.

Gunn, J. F. III, & Lester, D. (2012). Media guidelines in the Internet age [Editorial]. *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention,* 33(4), 187–189. https://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000171

Levesque, R. (2007). SPSS Programming and Data Management: A Guide for SPSS and SAS Users (4th ed.). Chicago, Illinois: SPSS Inc. *ISBN 1-56827-390-8*.

Liu J. (2020). Need to establish a new adolescent suicide prevention programme in South Korea. *General psychiatry,* 33(4), e100200. https://doi.org/10.1136/gpsych-2020-100200

Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide and Self-Harm. (2008). Samaritans; Stirling, UK https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines/media-guidelines-reporting-suicide/

National Union of Journalists, Scotland. (2014). Responsible Reporting on Mental Health, Mental Illness and Death by Suicide. A Practical Guide for Journalists by the National Union of Journalists. https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-guidelines-for-reporting-mental-health-and-death-by-suicide.html

newspapers.ng Nigerian Newspapers. Accessed 17/01/21 at 15:31. https://newspapersng.com/

Niederkrotenthaler, T., Herberth, A., & Sonneck, G. (2007). Der "Werther-Effekt": Mythos oder Realität? [The "Werther-effect": legend or reality?]. Neuropsychiatrie : Klinik, Diagnostik, Therapie und Rehabilitation : Organ der Gesellschaft Osterreichischer Nervenarzte und Psychiater, 21(4), 284–290. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18082110/

Niederkrotenthaler, T., Voracek, M., Herberth, A., Till, B., Strauss, M., Etzersdorfer, E., Eisenwort, B., & Sonneck, G. (2010). Role of media reports in completed and prevented suicide: Werther v. Papageno effects. *The British journal of psychiatry: the journal of mental science,* 197(3), 234–243. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.109.074633

Nock, M. K., Hwang, I., Sampson, N., Kessler, R. C., Angermeyer, M., Beautrais, A., Borges, G., Bromet, E., Bruffaerts, R., de Girolamo, G., de Graaf, R., Florescu, S., Gureje, O., Haro, J. M., Hu, C., Huang, Y., Karam, E. G., Kawakami, N., Kovess, V., Levinson, D., & Williams, D. R. (2009). Cross-national analysis of the associations among mental disorders and suicidal behavior: findings from the WHO World Mental Health Surveys. *PLoS medicine,* 6(8), e1000123. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000123

Ogbolu R.E., Mba-Oduwusi N., Ogunnubi O.P., Buhari I. N., Rahmon O., Tade T., Ogunsola K. (2020). Situation Report on Suicide in Nigeria. African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, 23(1), 97-107. http://ajpssi.org/index.php/ajpssi/article/view/421/pdf_321

Olibamoyo, O., Ola, B.A., Coker, O.A., Adewuya, A.O., & Onabola, A. (2021). Analysis of media reporting of suicidal behavior in Nigeria. *Mental Health & Prevention,* 21, 200197. doi/10.1016/J.MHP.2021.200197

Phillips D. P. (1974). The influence of suggestion on suicide: substantive and theoretical implications of the Werther effect. *American sociological review,* 39(3), 340–354.

Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals, update 2017. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (WHO/MSD/MER/17.5). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. https://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/resource_media.pdf

Robinson, J., Cox, G., Bailey, E., Hetrick, S., Rodrigues, M., Fisher, S., & Herrman, H. (2016). Social media and suicide prevention: a systematic review. *Early intervention in psychiatry,* 10(2), 103–121. https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.12229

Shoib S., & Yasir-Arafat S. M. (2021). Quality of Newspaper reporting of suicide inKashmir: Adherence to World Health Organization Guidelines. *Psychiatry,* 84(3), 291-298. doi: 10.1080/00332747.2021.1888605

Sinyor M., Schaffer A., Heisel M. J., Picard, A., Adamson, G., Cheung, C. P., Katz, L. Y., Jetly, R., & Sareen, J. (2018). Media Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide: 2017 Update of the Canadian Psychiatric Association Policy Paper. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry,* 63(3),182-196. doi:10.1177/0706743717753147

Sisask, M., & Värnik, A. (2012). Media roles in suicide prevention: a systematic review. *International journal of environmental research and public health,* 9(1), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph9010123

Sonneck, G., Etzersdorfer, E., & Nagel-Kuess, S. (1994). Imitative suicide on the Viennese subway. *Social science & medicine* (1982), 38(3), 453–457. https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)90447-2

Stack S. (2000). Media impacts on suicide: A quantitative review of 293 findings. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(4),957-972. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42864031

Tatum, P. T., Canetto, S. S., & Slater, M. D. (2010). Suicide coverage in U.S. newspapers following the publication of the media guidelines. *Suicide & life-threatening behavior,* 40(5), 524–534. https://doi.org/10.1521/suli.2010.40.5.524

Till, B., Tran, U. S., Voracek, M., & Niederkrotenthaler, T. (2017). Beneficial and harmful effects of educative suicide prevention websites: randomised controlled trial exploring Papageno v. Werther effects. *The British journal of psychiatry: the journal of mental science,* 211(2), 109–115. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.115.177394

Torok, M., Calear, A., Shand, F., & Christensen, H. (2017). A Systematic Review of Mass Media Campaigns for Suicide Prevention: Understanding Their Efficacy and the Mechanisms Needed for Successful Behavioral and Literacy Change. *Suicide & life-threatening behavior,* 47(6), 672–687. https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12324

Wasserman, I. M. (1984). "Imitation and Suicide: A Reexamination of the Werther Effect." *American Sociological Review*, 49 (3), 427–36 https://doi.org/10.2307/2095285

World Health Organization (WHO). (2015). Mental Health. Responsible and glamourized media reporting. https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/mhgap/self-harm-and-suicide/responsible-and-deglamourized-media-reporting.pdf?sfvrsn=8b6c7723_0

World Health Organization (WHO). (2019). Suicide in the World: Global health estimates. data. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326948/WHO-MSD-MER-19.3-eng.pdf

Appendix A

Data Gathering Table

	CATEGORIES	ITEMS	YES	NO	N/A
	NEGATIVE ASPECTS				
1	Inappropriate Language	Portraying criminalization – 'committed/commit' 'unsuccessful'			
2		Sensationalization – 'epidemic'			
3	Undue Prominence	Front page; top of inside page, use of word suicide in headlines			
4	Explicit Description	Step-by-step method description			
5		Graphic Image or videos depicting method			
6		Detailed information about site including number of incidents at location			
	POSITIVE				
7	Consideration for bereaved	Publishing of suicide notes			
8		Respect privacy of bereaved			
9	Public Education	Educating or correct information about mental illness and suicide			
10		Providing help seeking information or resources			

N/A = Not Applicable