

ABSTRACT

A Statistical Review of Suicide in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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Suicide is a major public health problem in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with the highest reported rates in the English speaking Caribbean. No previous study has investigated the variation in the occurrence of suicide within the country. This allows for the identification of the possible etiological factors. **Method:** Data from the Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was analyzed for suicide rates by census administrative areas and a range of social and demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity religion etc. Spearman rank correlation, Pearsons coefficient tests and multivariate regression were used to establish associations between the occurrence of suicide and these factors. **Results:** The age distribution of suicide showed a bimodal pattern for both genders. For males, there were two peaks in the 25 to 34 age group and the 55 to 64 age group. While for females it was in the 15 to 24 age group and the over 65 age group. A geographical pattern was found for suicide, with higher rates in the rural regions of the country, mainly in the eastern and southern districts. Significant positive associations were found for the various administrative areas between suicide and the number of Indo-Trinidadians (0.01 level), Hindus (0.01 level), Muslims (0.05 level), of persons in the low income bracket (0.01 level), persons in receipt of public assistance (0.05 level). Significant negative associations were found between suicide and the number of Afro-Trinidadians (0.01 level), Anglicans (0.01 level), Methodists (0.05 level), in the various administrative areas. The Annual Suicide Rate and Divorce rates were negatively associated for the period of study. Multivariate analysis of the data relating to Administrative Areas revealed that the percentage of Hindus was the most important factor though it did not attain statistical significance. This implies that there are other confounding factors for example access to lethal method, which was not specifically studied and ethnicity. Further that no causative relationship could be inferred based on the findings of this study. **Conclusions:** Suicide in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago appears to follow a trend related to ethnicity and religion and certain socioeconomic factors.

Keywords: Dave P. Ameerali, Suicide, Ethnicity, Religion, Administrative Areas, Age groups, Socioeconomic factors, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.