Title: Suicide in the Eldery

Authors: Catarina Laginhas, Círia Pereira, João Nuno Fernandes, Francisca Braga, João Azenha, João Bessa, Círia Pereira

Introduction:

Suicide is a complex and multifaceted behaviour.

Older people have the highest mortality rate due to suicide in almost all regions of the world.

The investigation of suicidal behaviour in older age is of increasing interest since the number of people aged 65 years or more is significantly increasing in high-income countries.

Objectives: Our aim is to perform a narrative review of the literature regarding suicide in older people.

Methods: A semi-structured search was conducted on Pubmed concerning the relationship between suicide and older people.

Results:

Suicidal behaviour in older adults is a major public health issue. Suicide rates increase during the life course.

In recent years, several studies tried to single out suicide risk factors in older people. Suicidal behaviour in older people is a result of numerous interactions that are dynamically changing as people age.

Suicide attempt has been recognized as a significant risk factor for completed suicides.

Men's prevalence is higher than that of women, in part because they tend to use more lethal suicide methods.

Mental disorders play a consistent role in older adult´s suicide. Depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and psychotic disorders seemed to have an impact on suicide. Among these disorders, depression is frequently underdiagnosed and undertreated in older adults. Dementia also represents a risk factor for suicidal behaviours.

Certain risk factors are comparable to those observed in other age segments of the population. These include somatic conditions, pain, loneliness, stressful life events, illnesses in family members and friends, personal loss and feelings of hopelessness.

Conclusion:

Suicide among older adults is a multifactorial problem with several interrelated factors. Suicide prevention strategies for older adults should broaden their focus to address the many socio-environmental conditions relevant to this stage of life.