



American University *of* Armenia

Հայաստանի Ամերիկյան Համալսարան

Suicide and Armenia

Educational Multimedia Piece

Capstone Project Presentation by: Meri Hovnanyan

Description of the research

In Fall of 2017, the number of suicide reports by the online newspapers has increased dramatically. Almost every day there was a report about a person committing suicide.

However, the suicide rate in Armenia is not high, in 2017 out of 562 suicide attempts only 152 ended with death, but for a country where the population is 2.8 million 562 attempts seem high. Unfortunately, suicide in Armenia is not only about numbers but also about media reporting. Numerous studies have proved that detailed reports about suicide can increase the number of people committing suicide.

This research attempts to understand

- what is suicide,
- why people commit suicide,
- how can we prevent it and
- how Armenian news outlets report about suicide.

The research is presented in the form of multimedia which can be found on *Medium* online publishing platform.

**Educate Public
about Suicide
being a Public
Health Problem**

The Multimedia Piece

The multimedia piece consists of 4 sections

1. Summary of Emile Durkheim's *Suicide*
2. Suicide in Armenia and Gender Differences in Suicide
3. The ways Armenian media report about Suicide
4. Suicide Prevention in Armenia

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

One of the founders of modern sociology.

With the rise of capitalism, people have become more individualistic, family structure has been weakening, and people have been provided with choices. In the case of making a right choice people are rewarded, in the case of making a wrong choice people are lost. Capitalism gives people a choice and choices itself give people hopes. High hopes can mentally exhaust a person. We all have tendencies to feel grief and sorrow, but sometimes we perceive them as a sign of failure, which in fact is a fair response to difficult human conditions. Another issue that Durkheim brings is that people are not as collective as they were before. Things like family and religion lose their values in our lives. Since they are not shared experiences, people often don't bother with other people's issues. This brings isolation and the feelings of being misunderstood.

According to Durkheim there are 4 kinds of Suicide

- Altruistic Suicide: people who no longer care about their individual needs.
- Egoistic Suicide: people who feel detached and isolated from the community.
- Anomic Suicide: people who lose their place in the society.
- Fatalistic Suicide: people who feel that they lost their freedom.

Suicide in Armenia

- For every 100.000 there is seven completed suicide - The rate considers to be low.
- According to the Ministry of Emergency Situation Department in Armenia, the number of people committing suicide decreases every year.

But Why?



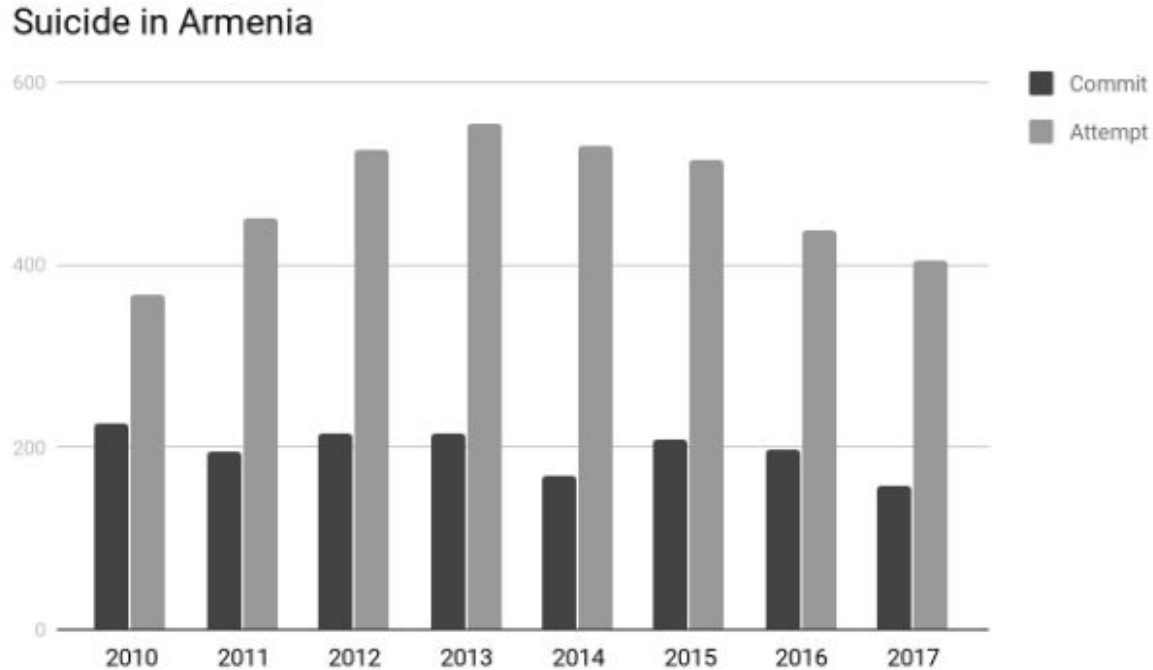
Hypothesis

Emigration rate increases = Suicide rate decreases

*According to “Return and protection” social — legal NGO estimates each year 35.000 people leave Armenia, however, in 2016 the number has increased by 2000.

Numbers of Suicide

According to the Ministry of Emergency Situation of Armenia





The ratio of men committing suicide is three times higher in the world, and in Armenia as well, than of women.

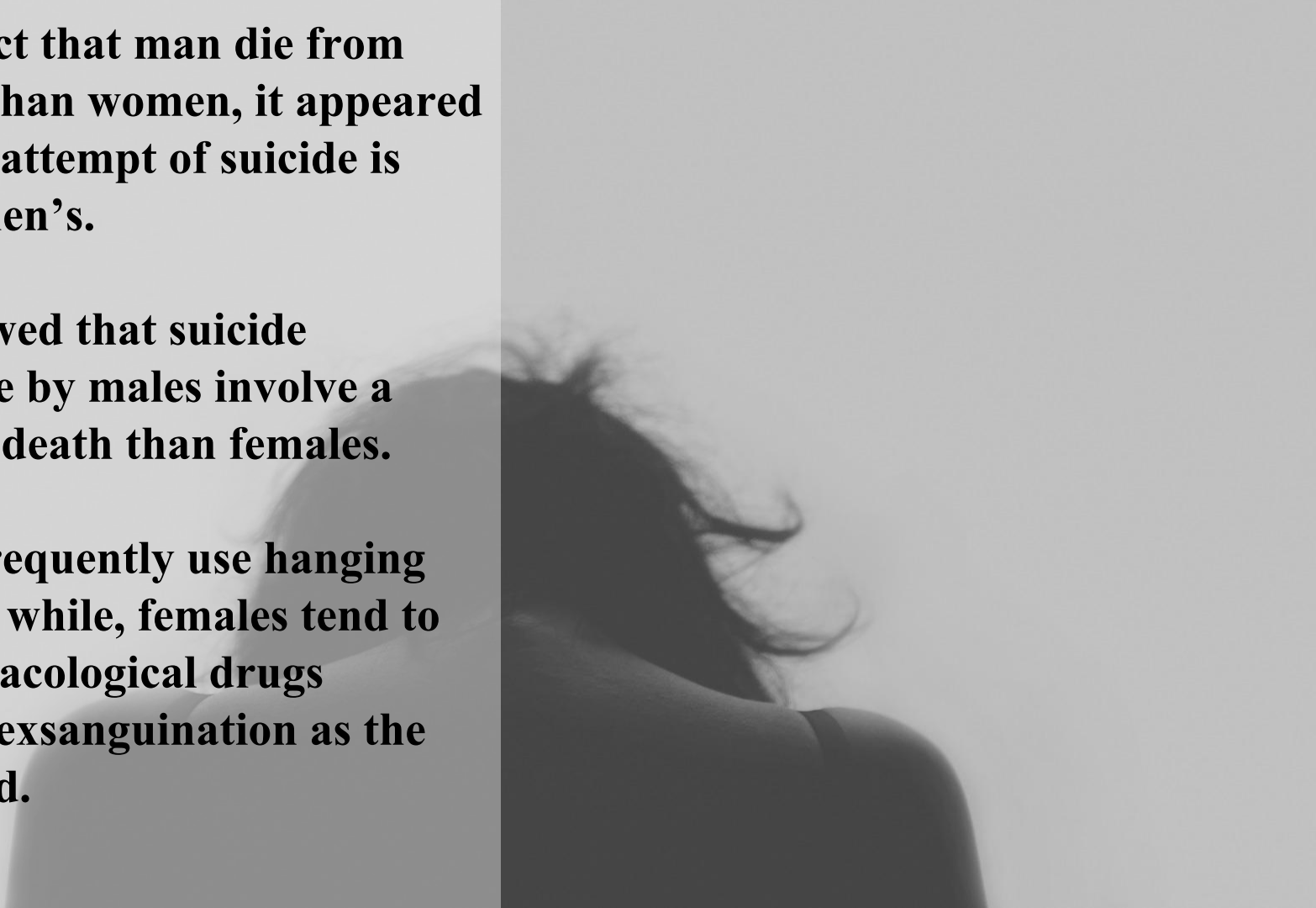
In Armenia 70 % of people who commit suicide are men. 50% of men who commit suicide don't have jobs.

Research showed that men experience depression differently than women. Men's perception of depression is not always recognized as depression and often men fail to recognize their own distress as depression.

Despite the fact that men die from suicide more than women, it appeared that women's attempt of suicide is higher than men's.

Research showed that suicide attempts made by males involve a higher risk of death than females.

Males more frequently use hanging and asphyxia, while, females tend to choose pharmacological drugs overdose and exsanguination as the suicide method.





Media

Studies show that detailed suicide reporting can increase the number of people committing suicide.

Thus, the World Health Organization along with the suicide prevention organizations, has developed guidelines for responsible reporting on suicide.

Things not to include in reports

DON'T include placement and methods of suicide

DON'T include the content of the suicide note

DON'T describe suicide as inexplicable or "without warning"

DON'T put big or sensationalistic headlines

DON'T include photos of suicide methods

Armenian media

Armenian news outlets such as Tert.am, Shamshyan.com, Aravot, Joxovurd DO NOT follow the guidelines of responsible reporting. They vividly describe the methods of suicide, publish the content of the suicide note, include the exact location of suicide, include photos of methods of suicide.



Suicide Prevention

The idea that mental health is equally important as physical health is still developing in Armenia. Fortunately, centers like Analytical Center for Suicide “ANTISUICIDE” are working to increase awareness of these issues; however, there should be government support because those centers don’t have enough funding to work on a broader scale.

Specialists claim that we need to start suicide prevention from early ages in order to make them resistant to stress, so that they will be less likely to fall into depression and commit suicide.



Specialists whom I interviewed for the multimedia piece

Kamo Vardanyan - Suicide Expert, Head of Research Center and a professor at the Armenian State Pedagogical University

Madlena Arakelova - Psychotherapist at the “Gratsia” International Rehabilitation Center of Armenian Red Cross Society

Madlena Arakelova



Kamo Vardanyan



Lilit Baghdasaryan - Head of Analytical Center for Suicide Prevention “Antisuicide.”

***You can read the piece and watch the videos on medium.com/@merihovnanyan**



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Thank You

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