

# **REGISTRATION OF HOSPITAL CONTACTS DUE TO SELF-HARM IN A DANISH COMMUNITY**

## **A COMPARISON OF DATA IN A REGIONAL SURVEY AND DATA IN THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL REGISTER**

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National representative data on suicide attempts is a necessary tool for evaluating suicide prevention strategies. Hence, it is important to have access to a systematic collection of data that allows for analysis of periodical and regional trends. Focus on an identified public health problem like suicide attempts among young people might increase the awareness of health care personnel in emergency departments and, thus, influence the classification of emergency contacts. The Danish Hospital Register was established in 1978, and recorded primarily data on in-patients. But since 1995, the register has also included all emergency contacts. Data are registered by the patient's unique citizen number and include administrative information, reason for contact (e.g. disease, accident, violence or self-harm) and diagnosis by ICD10 codes. The Danish Institute for Suicidological Research was established in Denmark in 1989. In the last 12 years, the Centre has collected data on suicide attempts from the regional hospitals in Fyn. Based on these data, an increase in the rate of suicide attempts among young women since 1989 has been reported. This trend differs from the observed decline in the suicide rate and also in the number of registered hospital contacts in Denmark across all age groups.

The aim of the present study was therefore to compare the reported rate of suicide attempts based upon data collection focused on suicide attempts, with the rate, which is calculated from data in the Danish National Hospital Register. By use of the unique citizen number it was possible to compare the two different data set, and thus to identify differences in registration practice by a routine registration of hospital contacts and registration by a project especially aimed to provide data for suicidal research. The results provide guidelines for amelioration in the future routine registration of hospital contacts due non-intentional, intentional and self-inflicted injuries. The results also points to the necessity of critical assessment of regional data that are collected for special research projects, before they are used as indicator of the national prevalence of suicide attempts.