

TITLE: SUICIDE PREVENTION IN NAVY: IS IT TIME TO REVISIT STRATEGY & QUANTIFY INTERVENTIONS.

ABSTRACT

Background: The data generated by Annual Health Reports of Navy over the last decade have brought out that there has been a rising trend in intentional self-harm/ suicide cases. The causes of suicide can range from service related issues like leave, grievances etc., to personal issues like financial problems, marital discord and relationship complications. It is therefore important to review the existing strategies of suicide prevention in Navy.

Methods: It is a qualitative study, in which intentional self-harm/ suicide cases in Navy were analysed for the last decade. The primary data was studied for decadal trends, frequency of suicides annually and causes of suicides among Naval personnel. International review of Suicide Prevention Strategies in Armed Forces worldwide was done and was compared with suicide prevention strategies in-vogue in Navy. The data was collated in MS excel and analysed using IBM SPSS version 23.0.

Results: Decadal graph of suicides in Navy shows mixed trend, with spike in number of cases in last 03 years. Average number of suicides was 4.7 per year between 2010 to 2020, with maximum number of 08 cases in 2018. Internationally, USA (Males) has highest Suicide rate per lakh personnel of 33.4, Navy has Suicide rate of 10.4 per Lakh personnel in 2020. Suicides in which reason could be ascertained, most common cause was Service related issues i.e. Disciplinary action, non-adjustment with Service life etc., followed by marital discord and financial problems.

Conclusions: Existing strategies of Suicide Prevention in Navy should be strengthened and renewed focus should be given to Primary preventive strategies. On ground implementation of the existing strategy should be followed-up objectively with pre-determined indicators. A Hub and Spoke Model called *IN-SMART* (Indian Navy Strategy for Mental Health Assistance, Resilience and Training) is proposed for each Station, with introduction of Mental Health Resilience Coordinator in each Unit.

Keywords: Suicide, Mental Health, Armed Forces, Prevention Strategy