



PRESS RELEASE – Tuesday, 10 September

EPA STATEMENT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION: EVERYONE IS CONCERNED!

World Suicide Prevention Day, 10 September 2019 - Suicide is a major public health problem: 1 million people die by suicide in the world every year, and over 150,000 deaths by suicide take place in Europe every year. It is estimated that there are 10–40 attempted suicides for each completed suicide. Suicide usually has no single cause; however, up to 90% of individuals who complete suicide meet the criteria for a psychiatric disorder. Suicide rates are higher amongst males than females; the age group in which most suicides occur is 35–44 years, but suicide represents a concern also among adolescents and in late life.

Today on World Suicide Prevention Day, the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) highlights the importance of investing in suicide prevention and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration for the development of effective practices.

“Suicide prevention should be included as a top priority in the political agenda of all countries”, says Philip Gorwood, EPA President. “Urgent actions are needed to prevent, detect early, and treat completely psychiatric disorders – depression in particular as one leading cause of suicide death in high-income countries.”

According to Marco Sarchiapone, Chair of the EPA Section of Suicidology and Suicide Prevention, *“patients should be assessed by trained and skilled operators; and multidisciplinary treatment team, including psychiatrists and other health professionals, should be implemented, possibly with the involvement of the family and the community”.*

As stressed by Diego Palao Vidal, EPA Board member, *“psychiatrists play a key role in suicide prevention, by sharing evidence-based interventions but also leading multidisciplinary strategies to reach people who are at immediate high risk”.*

The EPA encourages policy and decision makers at all level to put in place comprehensive suicide prevention strategies by:

1. Developing targeted action plans for suicide prevention at individual, community and system level.
2. Exchanging good practices between countries and learning from successful interventions, such as the [Denmark's experience](#) which prove that investing in suicide prevention initiatives can save lives.
3. Increasing support to translational and clinical research as a mean to reduce unacceptable differences on suicide rates between European Countries (from 3.8 to 30 suicides x 100.000).
4. Raising awareness and breaking taboos around suicide: talking about suicide prevention may reduce stigma and may help more people with suicide risk to seek and have access to effective help and care.
5. Creating community engagement by bringing together policy makers, professionals, academics and citizens: *everyone can make an important contribution in preventing suicide*



Suicide is preventable, acknowledging this fact means that we are all accountable for what is not being done to avoid it.

“Thus – Philip Gorwood concludes – why not make an optimistic proposal, let’s aim at dividing by two the number of 150,000 deaths by suicide per year in Europe in 5 years. This could be the best way to delimit problems, increase exchanges between European countries that have large differences, boost translational research so that important findings benefit to patients, facilitate preventive messages, and tackle of the difficulties to have a real, significant impact on such disaster”.

Notes for editors :

1. The **World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)** is an awareness day observed on 10 September every year, in order to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides, with various activities around the world since 2003. The WSPD is organized by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO), under the motto “Working Together to Prevent Suicide”. More on the WSPD 2019 [here](#).
2. The **European Psychiatric Association (EPA)**: with active individual members in as many as 88 countries and 44 National Psychiatric Association Members that represent more than 80,000 European psychiatrists, the **EPA** is the main association representing psychiatry in Europe. The EPA’s activities address the interests of psychiatrists in academia, research and practice throughout all stages of career development.

The EPA deals with psychiatry and its related disciplines and focuses on the improvement of care for the mentally ill as well as on the development of professional excellence.

www.europsy.net

3. The **EPA Section of Suicidology and Suicide Prevention** aims at improving research in this field and translating research findings into clinical practice. The Section adheres to a bio-psycho-social perspective and involves an international and multidisciplinary network of researchers and clinicians.

<https://suicidologysection.org/>

4. **For more information:**

Mari Fresu mari.fresu@europsy.net