Abstract

Background: Suicide is a public health problem worldwide. Estimates have indicated that over 1 million people commit suicide every year all over the world. Brazil has a moderate suicide death rate (4.1 per 100,000 inhabitants), but the fact that it is a large country leads to the coexistence of diverse characteristics and levels of development across the different Brazilian regions. In this sense, the South region has been shown to present suicide rates above the national average. Objective: To estimate the profile of suicide in municipalities comprising the Santa Catarina Coal Mining Region from 1980 to 2007. Methods: This ecological, time-series, descriptive study sought to characterize epidemiological aspects related to suicide method, marital status, sex, age, and occupation in the municipalities of the region in the years 1980 to 2007. Results: A total of 474 suicides occurred in the period, yielding a mean death rate of 10.83 per 100,000 inhabitants. There was a predominance of males, at a 5:1 ratio, and a peak rate in the 55-64-year age group (11.31 per 100,000 inhabitants). The suicide method most commonly used was hanging (72%) and the most frequent occupation was hard labor work (11.60%); in relation to marital status, married subjects (48%) were the ones with the highest rates of suicide. Conclusions: The Santa Catarina Coal Mining Region has suicide mortality rates above the national average. This study highlights specific characteristics of suicide in the region and may contribute to the development of preventive measures.

Keywords

Suicide, epidemiology, southern Brazil.