

# Suicide: Affected by the Internet

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Dear Sirs,

In the latest issue of Yonsei Medical Journal, Song, et al.<sup>1</sup> reported valuable data for one of the most important problems in the modern world. They investigated determinants and risk factors related to searches on suicide in Korea utilizing big data retrieved from Google. In doing so, they revealed a significant positive relation between trends in suicide rates and suicide-related searches on Google.

Over the last decade, the Internet has emerged as a major resource for obtaining information. Notwithstanding, while multimedia, especially the Internet, are not sources of major health problems, they contribute to a variety of adolescent health problems, including depression, suicide, and self-harm.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Internet use may exert both positive and negative effects on young people at risk of self-harm or suicide, and recognizing the actual impact thereof requires high quality research.<sup>3</sup>

We believe that families and schools play a pivotal role in promoting adolescent psychological health. However, as this article indicated and several others did before, the target of interventional approaches should be one of the origins of the sampling, the internet. So that, enhancing the web-based suicide prevention strategies that the authors truly mentioned could be a choice. Applications, such as the "Respect for Life Online Gate-keeper," and the other suggestions that the authors offered are good examples of ways to initiate steps towards this path: we have seen progress toward effective engagement via online health intervention strategies. However, empirical research on this subject is scarce,<sup>4</sup> and many challenges regarding the implementation of new approaches with which to engage users in mental health intervention programs lay ahead. Thus, further internet-based quantitative and qualitative research is necessary to clarify relevant determinants of these issues.

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