

Letters to the Editor

TOWARDS SUICIDE PREVENTION

Sir,

I read with great interest the article titled "Towards Suicide Prevention" by Prof. A. Venkoba Rao which appeared in the IJP Vol.41, No.4 October 99 p.280-289. Having had the experience of starting and running crisis prevention centres in India, I would like to supplement to the section "Beyond Crisis Intervention".

1. David Lester (1997) has recently reviewed all the studies which examined whether suicide prevention centres have a preventive effect on suicide rate. From his meta analysis he concluded that there was a small but definite preventive effect by the suicide prevention and crisis centres.
2. Data from crisis centres around the world reveal that 30-40% of their clients have significant suicidal ideas.
3. The author has quoted Litman (1996) and stated that "An evaluation of the centres has indicated that their effectiveness in bringing down the rate of suicide in the community has not been established". The article has no such statement.
4. I would like to add a quote from the same article (Litman,1996). "Team spirit is what enables a crisis centre to deal with lethal emergencies and all sorts of frustrating circumstances that we cannot control, including the suicide of clients. We always need the sympathetic support of our colleagues".
5. Suicide is a complex and multidimensional problem which requires a multifaceted approach. WHO and the International Association for Suicide Prevention have a policy of greater collaboration and cooperation between professional and volunteer sectors. A cooperative consultative team approach is necessary to achieve any reuction in suicide rate.

suicide prevention centres, a review. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behaviour*, Vol.27, 3, p.304-311

Litman,R.E. (1996) Suicidology : A look forward and ahead. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behaviour*, 26, 1, 1-7.

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