



Introduction

Suicide prevention is a pressing issue that requires comprehensive and data-driven strategies. With this understanding, the Mental Health and Substance Use Programme at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean recognized the need for region-wide monitoring of media outlets to ensure responsible reporting of suicide. This approach acknowledges the significant impact of media on public perception and attitudes towards suicide. This story delves into the collaborative efforts made by the Regional Office and WHO headquarters to strengthen evidence-based and data-informed suicide prevention in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, with a particular focus on the outcome of responsible reporting and the crucial role of the monitoring tool developed.

Purpose

Our objective was to establish a region-wide monitoring system for responsible reporting of

suicide in the media. By doing so, we aimed to promote and strengthen responsible reporting practices, ultimately contributing to more effective suicide prevention strategies.

Recognizing the need to monitor media outlets in the Region for responsible reporting of suicide, the Regional Office and WHO headquarters collaboratively developed a comprehensive monitoring system. This system enables countries and territories in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to monitor their media at country level, assess responsible reporting practices and develop targeted strategies for improvement.

Background

Covering 22 countries and territories, the Eastern Mediterranean Region is home to nearly 679 million people. With varying income levels and the consequences of humanitarian crises, the Region faces significant mental, physical, social and economic challenges. While the suicide rate in the Region decreased by 17% between 2000 and 2019, there is still much work to be done in suicide prevention.

WHO advocates for comprehensive national suicide prevention strategies and emphasizes the implementation of evidence-based interventions. These interventions include limiting access to means of suicide, responsible media reporting, fostering socio-emotional life skills in adolescents, and early identification and management of individuals affected by suicidal behaviours. To successfully implement these interventions, foundational pillars such as situational analysis, collaboration, awareness-raising, capacity-building, financing and surveillance are crucial.

Methodology, findings and insights

Objective 1: Identifying dominant media outlets

To identify the dominant international media outlets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, a scoping exercise was conducted using Google searches. While this method provided initial insights, it was not comprehensive. Additional analysis was performed using the web analytics tool Similarweb, which identified market leaders in news and media for each country in the Region.

Fifteen media websites were investigated in detail. The research team collected data on website traffic, average visit duration and pages per visit. The most accessed media outlets in the Region were determined based on these metrics. These media outlets were then used for the

subsequent objectives and the development of the tool for responsible media reporting of suicide.

Objective 2: Monitoring media coverage

The objective was to establish sustainable monitoring of international media outlets covering countries and territories in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Existing tools and guidelines for responsible reporting of suicide were evaluated, and the TEMPOS tool was chosen for a trial run. This involved coding digital articles from selected media outlets, assessing their portrayal of suicide and determining if they aligned with responsible reporting criteria.

Insights gained from the trial run highlighted the need for further refinement of the coding process and the importance of ongoing monitoring at country level. Expert input was sought, and recommendations were made to improve the coding system, ensuring its effectiveness in supporting responsible reporting practices.

Conclusion

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with WHO headquarters, is dedicated to establishing a comprehensive region-wide monitoring system for responsible reporting of suicide. This initiative emphasizes evidence-based and data-informed approaches to suicide prevention, promoting adherence to reporting guidelines, reducing stigmatization and fostering accurate reporting practices. By deepening our understanding of the impact of media on suicide prevention, we can develop targeted strategies to effectively address this urgent public health issue.

To support countries and territories in their efforts to actively monitor their media and make significant progress in suicide prevention, the Regional Office is proud to offer a jointly developed monitoring tool. This empowering resource is readily available for use, enabling proactive oversight of the media landscape and encouraging responsible reporting practices that drive positive change. Together, we are striving to create a more compassionate and supportive society where responsible reporting plays a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being of individuals.

We invite countries and territories to take advantage of this monitoring tool and join us in our collective efforts to promote responsible reporting, protect lives and foster a healthier future for all.

Access the tool and contribute to responsible reporting of suicide

If you're passionate about promoting responsible reporting of suicide and actively contributing to our region-wide monitoring system, we invite you to access our tool. This powerful resource allows you to monitor and analyze suicide reporting practices, playing a vital role in fostering a safer media environment.

By utilizing this tool, you can make a meaningful impact on suicide prevention efforts and contribute to building a more compassionate and supportive society in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Together, let's drive responsible reporting practices and build a more compassionate and supportive society in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Attachments

1. [Mapping guidelines](#) . Explore the first attachment, which includes comprehensive mapping guidelines. These guidelines will assist you in effectively tracking and analyzing suicide reporting practices, ensuring accurate and responsible reporting.
2. [Comprehensive version of the tool](#) ([Arabic](#) | [French](#)). The second attachment offers a comprehensive version of our monitoring tool. This version provides an in-depth understanding of its features and functionalities, empowering you to make the most of the tool's capabilities.
1. [Brief version of the tool](#) ([Arabic](#) | [French](#)). For a quick overview and easy reference, the third attachment contains a more concise version of the monitoring tool. This condensed version highlights the essential aspects and key functionalities of the tool.

By utilizing these attachments, you can actively contribute to responsible reporting practices, support suicide prevention efforts, and work towards creating a safer and more informed media environment. Together, let's make a positive difference in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and strive for a society that prioritizes the well-being of its individuals.

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