



Lack of access to appropriate care is one of the many factors that magnify the stigma associated with mental illness and with suicidal ideation and behaviour. Kabul, 11 September – World Suicide Prevention Day 2013 was celebrated in Afghanistan this year under the slogan of “Stigma – a major barrier to suicide prevention”. Suicide is a growing problem in Afghanistan.

H.E. Dr Suraya Dalil, Minister of Public Health of Afghanistan, said, “Precise data on the burden of suicide are lacking in Afghanistan. However, the limited evidence indicates that suicide is more common among females than males. The major causes of suicide include poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, drug abuse, stress and depression”.

Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative for Afghanistan, said, “Major priorities for suicide prevention include conducting research on suicide and suicidal behaviour, awareness campaigns, strengthening protective factors, training of health professionals, increasing resource allocation and providing access to mental health services, and reducing stigma”. He further added, “Together, we can join our resources to support the provision of required services, become active in support groups on the ground, inside the communities, to build a stronger family, a stronger community and a healthier Afghanistan”.

### **Related link**

[Advice on suicide prevention](#)

[Regional mental health and substance abuse programme](#)

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