Suicide prevention on bridges: Fundamentals (AGB2003/013)

Suicidprävention bei Brücken: Grundlagen

Funding: National (Switzerland)
Duration: Jun 2004 - Dec 2006
Status: Complete with results

Objectives:

General goal of the project is the evaluation of fundamental data relates to suicide by leaping from bridges and its prevention in Switzerland.

Specific goals are as follows:
1. The evaluation of death numbers of suicide by jumping from bridges on specific hot spots.
2. Evaluation of changes in construction and other means to prevent suicide on bridges (including the estimation of their effectiveness).
3. The qualitative and quantitative evaluation of media reports related to suicide by leaping from bridges.
4. Evaluation of the interaction between media reports and suicides by jumping off bridges.
5. Evaluation of media report and other available data related to bystanders of suicide attempts at bridges.

Methodology:

Following steps will be done during the project:

- Comprehensive literature review.
- Contacting different authorities (eg local police authorities, Swiss Federal Statistical Office) and establishing a cooperation.
- And careful documentation of the most important hotspots in Switzerland.
- Detecting "hot spot specific" data.
- Contacting experts abroad and obtaining expert opinions to question.
- Documentation of model examples of preventive measures, in cooperation with experts from the Brückenforschung the Swiss Federal Roads Authority.

Related Projects:

Research organisation:
Swiss Federal Roads Office; Research Roads-Bridges-Tunnels
Project number: AGB2009/014
Project title: Suizidprävention bei Brücken: Follow-up
Project title in English: Suicide prevention on bridges: Follow-up

Partners:
Switzerland
Swiss Federal Roads Office
Universitätsklinik und Poliklinik für Psychiatrie
Organisation: Psychiatrie
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A total of 475 bridge suicides were found for the time period 1990 to 2004. However, this number may be minimally underestimated due to incomplete data collection in some cantons. Suicide by jumping accounted for 10.9% of all suicides. In cantons with systematic recording systems the proportion of persons who jumped from a bridge in relation to all suicide victims who jumped from heights was 22.3%. Twenty three bridges were found with a rate of 0.4 suicides or above per year and were classified as suicide hotspots. Two or more suicides per year were found on three bridges: Pont Bessière in Lausanne, VD; Lorzentobelbrücken in Baar, ZG; Kirchenfeldbrücke in Bern, BE. Eighty two percent of all hotspots are located within a 5 kilometre diameter of a city.

Two different categories of hotspots attracted persons to jump: First, high bridges (more than 25 metres) within or close to city centres and, second, very high bridges (more than 50 meters) in rural regions. Cantons with a high number of persons who jumped from bridges were found to have a higher number of persons who jumped from (all) heights in contrast to those cantons with few jumps from bridges.

The results indicate that people will not necessarily substitute bridge jumps by jumping from other structures e.g. buildings. Suicide prevention measures on bridges are therefore most likely to reduce the overall number of suicides by jumping.

Documents:
AGB2003/013 (Final report)

STRIA Roadmaps: Other specified

Transport mode: Road transport
Decarbonisation, Societal/Economic issues,

Transport policies: Safety/Security