

One million people commit suicide each year: WHO

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One million people die by their own hand each year, accounting for more deaths than wars and murders put together, the World Health Organisation said Friday, calling for urgent action to address the problem.

"Data from the WHO indicate that approximately one million people worldwide die by [suicide](#) each year. This corresponds to one death by suicide every 40 seconds," the organisation said in a report launched ahead of the World Suicide Prevention Day on Monday.

And while the number of deaths by suicide is staggering, the number of attempts each year is 20 times higher, the WHO said, pointing out that five percent of people in the world try to kill themselves at least once during their lifetime.

And the problem is getting worse, the organisation said, insisting that "given the magnitude of the public health problem of suicidal behaviours", urgent action was needed.

"As suicide is largely preventable, it is imperative that governments, through their health, social and other relevant sectors, invest human and financial resources in [suicide prevention](#)," the report said.

According to Dr. Shekhar Saxena, who headed the team behind the report, [suicide rates](#) have risen sharply in some parts of the world in recent years, with some countries seeing their rates jump by as much as

60 percent.

"Although suicide continues to remain a serious problem in high income countries, it is the low and [middle income countries](#) that bear the larger part of the global suicide burden," the report said, adding: "It is also these countries that are relatively less equipped to prevent suicide".

The highest documented suicide rates can be found in Eastern European countries like Lithuania and Russia, while they are lowest in [Latin America](#), WHO said.

The United States, Western European countries and Asia fell in the middle of the range, the report showed, but stressed that statistics are not available for many [countries](#) in Africa and South-East Asia.

Globally, suicide is meanwhile the second cause of death worldwide among 15-19 year-olds, with at least 100,000 adolescents killing themselves each year, according to the study.

Among adults, the suicide rate is highest among those aged 75 and older, the WHO said, pointing out that "elderly people are likely to have higher suicide intent and use more lethal methods than younger people, and they are less likely to survive the physical consequences of an attempt".

The report also showed that men were three times more likely to commit suicide, but that three times as many women as men attempted to kill themselves.

"The disparity in suicide rates has been partly explained by the use of more lethal means and the experience of more aggression and higher intent to die, when suicidal, in men than women," it explained.

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