

Association between sunshine and suicide examined in study

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Lower rates of suicide are associated with more daily sunshine in the prior 14 to 60 days.

Light interacts with brain serotonin systems and possibly influences serotonin-related behaviors. Those behaviors, such as mood and impulsiveness, can play a role in suicide.

The authors examined the relationship between suicide and the duration of sunshine after mathematically removing [seasonal variations](#) in sunshine and suicide numbers. They analyzed data on 69,462 officially confirmed suicides in Austria between January 1970 and May 2010. Hours of sunshine per day were calculated from 86 representative meteorological stations.

There was a positive correlation between the number of suicides and hours of daily sunshine on the day of the suicide and up to 10 days before that seemed to facilitate suicide, while sunshine 14 to 60 days prior appeared to have a negative correlation and was associated with reduced [suicides](#). The [correlation](#) between daily sunshine hours and [suicide rates](#) was seen largely among women, while negative correlations between the two were mainly found among men.

"Owing to the correlative nature of the data, it is impossible to directly attribute the increase in suicide to sunshine during the 10 days prior to the suicide event. ... Further research is warranted to determine which patients with severe episodes of depression are more susceptible to the

suicide-triggering effects of sunshine." Benjamin Vyssoki, M.D., of the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, and colleagues wrote in thier paper.

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