

Monitoring and Evaluation of Media Reporting on Suicide

In Trinidad and Tobago



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Overview

- Country Context
- Mental Health Programme
- Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Sensitization of Media Workshops
- Launch of National Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Suicide: A National Public Health Crisis

- Trinidad and Tobago has the 3rd highest rate of suicide in the region of the Americas

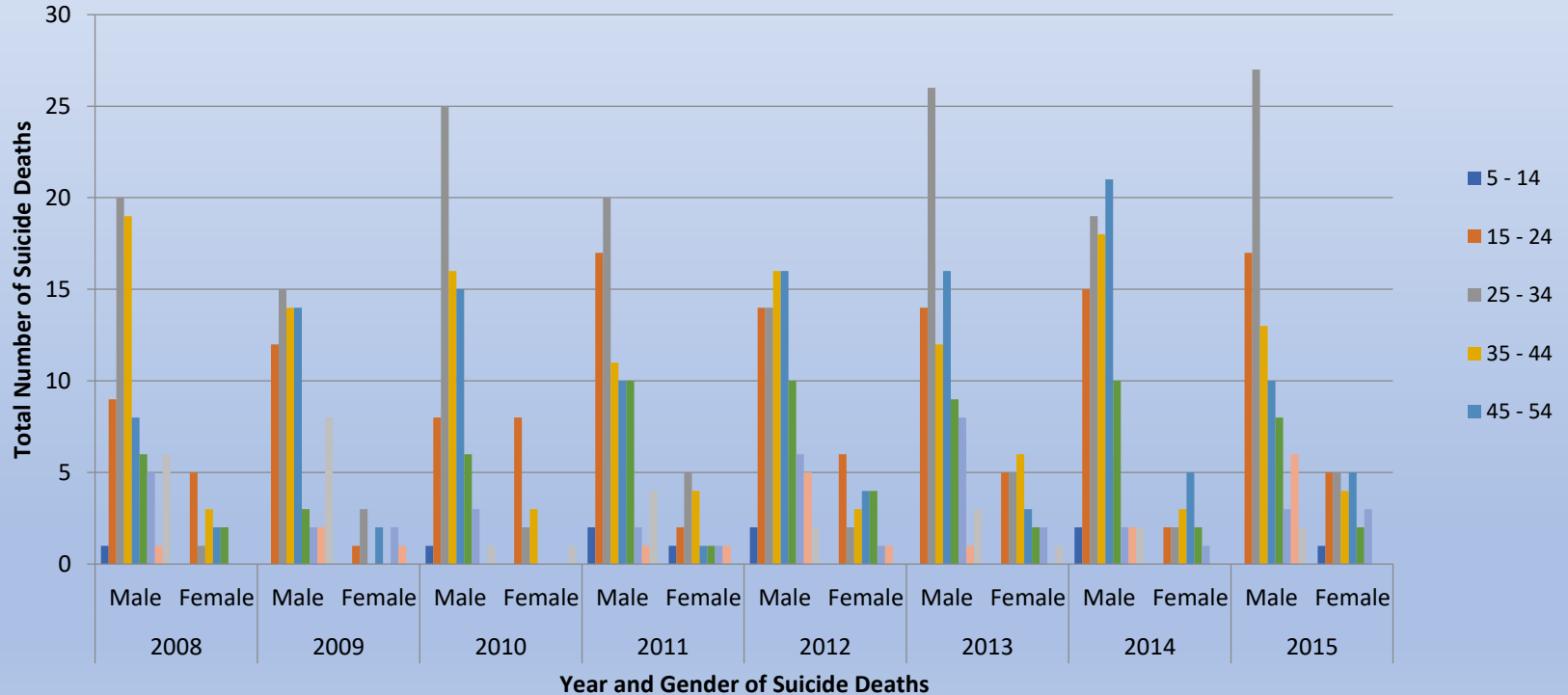
Suicide Rate	Rate/100,000
National	14.5
Regional	9.6
Global	10.4

Suicide Trends over 10 years

Year	Male	Female	Total
2009	70	9	79
2010	75	14	89
2011	77	16	93
2012	85	21	106
2013	89	24	113
2014	91	15	106
2015	86	25	111
2016	80	14	94
2017	83	20	103
2018	49	14	63

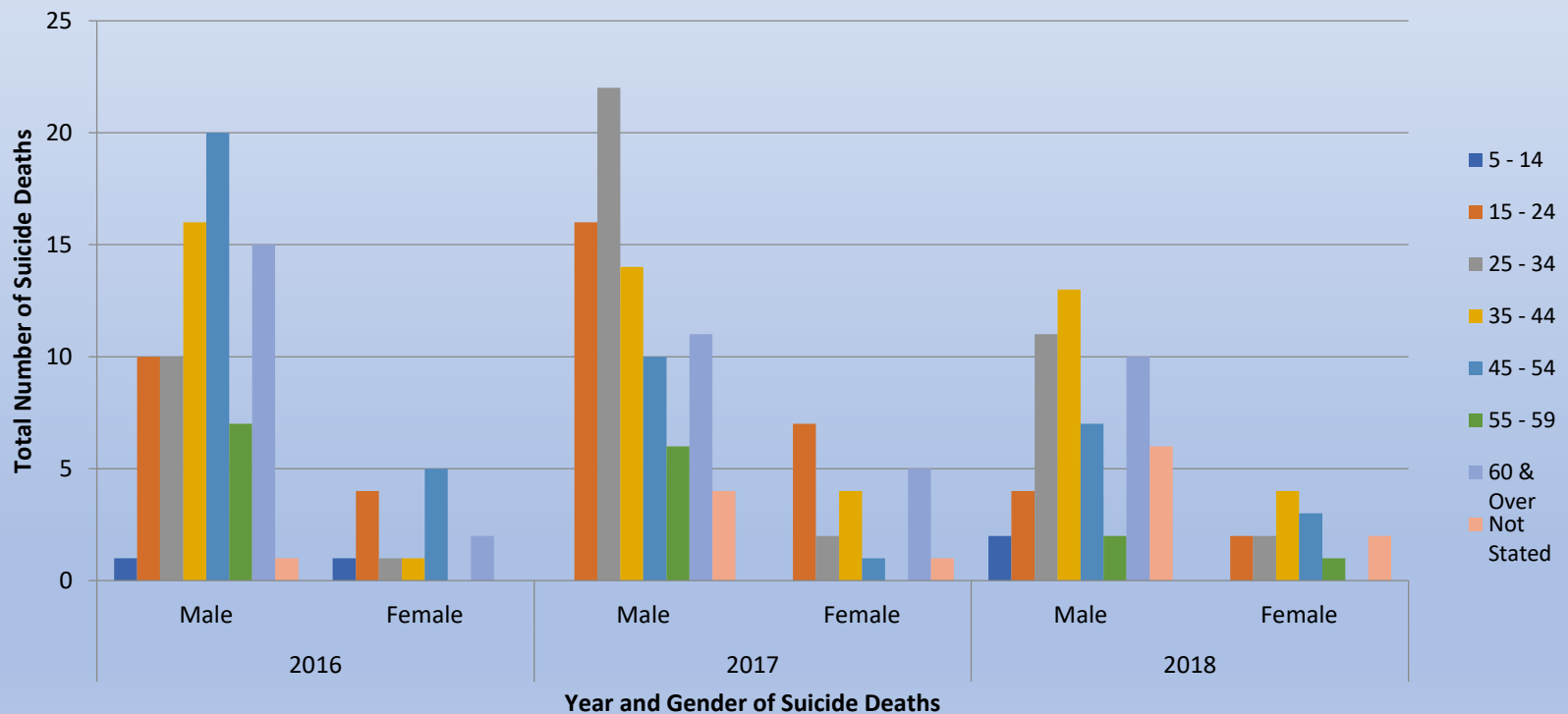
Deaths by Suicide 2008 - 2015

Column Graph showing Deaths by Suicide From January 01 2008 to December 31 2015



Deaths by Suicide 2016 - 2018

Column Graph showing Deaths by Suicide From January 01 2016 to December 31 2018



Mental Health Programme

- Vertical Service at Ministry of Health, reports to the Chief Medical Officer
- The mission of the programme is to promote positive mental through advocacy, education, prevention, research, access to services
- Human Resources - Manager, Mental Health Planners, Mental health Information Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Field Officer, Business Operations Assistant
- Mental Health Services are provided by Regional Health Authorities



Ministry of Health

Mental Health Unit

How can you contact us?

The Mental Health Unit is located at:
5th Floor Sacred Heart Building
16-18 Sackville Street,
Port of Spain

Call us at:
(868) 285-9126 ext. 2577, 2571, 2573

Email us at:
mentalhealth@health.gov.tt

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Some steps to a healthier you

- Take care of your body
- Exercise regularly
- Relaxation is key
- Eat a balanced diet
- Remember to de-stress
- Talk about how you feel
- Seek help from a professional if needed

**Who we are
What we do
How we do it**

Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-2024



The Role of the Media


- Suicide is a phenomenon that is already taboo and stigmatized
- The media have a key role to play in shaping public perceptions surrounding suicide and are therefore responsible media reporting is an integral approach to suicide prevention
 - The Werther Effect
 - The Papageno effect
- Irresponsible reporting on suicide has occurred frequently in our local setting

Sensitization Workshops

- First Media sensitization workshop on Suicide in the region in March 2017 which included a session to draft National Guidelines
- Subsequent meetings were held locally and virtually to refine guidelines
- Guidelines we officially launched on World Suicide Prevention Day 2018



National Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide




Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Health

Ministry of Health Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide

Suicide is a national health issue in Trinidad and Tobago. The media perform an integral role in the responsible reporting of this issue. The way in which suicide is reported can either contribute to suicide contagion or encourage individuals in vulnerable conditions to seek help. Suicide Contagion or "Copycat Suicide" occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to further suicides.

Points to Note when Reporting Suicide

1. Suicide is preventable.
2. Always include a message of hope at the end of all media reports.
3. Include local help resources and encourage people to seek help.



11 BEST PRACTICES FOR RESPONSIBLE SUICIDE REPORTING BY THE MEDIA

11 BEST PRACTICES FOR RESPONSIBLE SUICIDE REPORTING BY THE MEDIA INSTEAD OF THIS	DO THIS INSTEAD
1. Describing details of the method or location of death.	Exercise caution. You may mention that someone has died by suicide, but do not explicitly describe the method and location.
2. Including words and video/photographs that might be painful to loved ones.	Use images and words that engender hope and encourage persons to seek help.
3. Publishing the identity of minors including names, addresses and images.	Use general details such as gender and age.
4. Providing a simplistic explanation for suicide or attributing it to a single cause such as stress or job loss.	Explain the complexity of suicide by including the warning signs, risk factors and coping strategies.
5. Normalising suicidal behaviour as an acceptable or common response to life's hardships.	Explain that suicide is a public health issue and that most persons experiencing hardships do not die by suicide.
6. Using sensational headlines or prominent placement in newscasts, including describing suicide as an epidemic.	Inform the audience about the event without using emotional or dramatic headlines. Use non-sensational words like rising or changing.
7. Using stigmatising language such as successful/ unsuccessful suicide, failed attempt or committed suicide.	Use phrases like "died by suicide" or "took his/her life".
8. Reporting the content or details of a suicide note.	Share that a note was found and is being examined by the police.
9. Speculating and quoting the opinions of first responders on the reason for the suicide.	Provide facts. Research data from credible sources such as the World Health Organization or the Mental Health Unit, Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago.
10. Glorifying or describing the suicide as valiant.	Present a balanced story on the person.
11. Referring to persons as 'suicidal' or 'the mentally ill'.	Use person-first language such as 'a person contemplating suicide' or 'persons living with a mental illness'.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA RESOURCES ON SUICIDE REPORTING

1. **Ministry of Health**
 - a. <http://www.health.gov.tt/newsletters>
 - b. <http://www.health.gov.tt/snapchat/default.aspx?id=230>
2. **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)**
 - a. https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=docdownload&gid=36815&Itemid=270&lang=en
3. **World Health Organization**
 - a. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>
 - b. <https://www.who.int/mental-health/prevention/suicide/resource-media.pdf>
4. **Social Media Blogging Tools**
 - a. www.blogggonline.com/www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide
 - b. <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/self-harm-and-suicide>
 - c. <https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/3054045959423>
 - d. <https://help.instagram.com/55349006954878>
 - e. <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/Snapchat-Safety>
5. **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**
 - a. <https://www.lifeline.com/800-5588888> (888) 220-3636; (888) 231-3634

Trinidad Express Pre-Sensitization

Life of abuse ends in suicide

The woman who drank poison and wrote a note in hospital that she was physically and emotionally abused for half of her life, has died. Rachel Madoo, of Felicity, died on Thursday three days after she drank an insecticide. Madoo's mother, Deomatie Madoo, said her daughter told her she consumed the poison after she was beaten, dragged and slammed against a wall. The mother said she begged her daughter to live with her and stay away from her abuser. She claimed that the man also abused Madoo's 13-year-old daughter.

A note written on an envelope by Madoo explained why she wanted to end her life. "I live in an abusive relationship with (name called) for 17 years. I have a 13 year old daughter whom he also abused as well. He would beat me and always tell me I have a man. Until on Monday he came home and started cursing and beating me until I got fed up and drank poison. I am presently in Mount Hope and I need help. My husband work in the army. I fear for my life please help me please", Madoo wrote.

March 9th 2018, Trinidad Express

Trinidad Guardian Pre sensitization

Girl, 15, commits suicide

In the final entry in her diary, 15-year-old Rehana Nandlal wrote that she and her 42-year-old lover would do what they had to do and then end their lives. The Barrackpore West Secondary student carried out her side of the pact on Tuesday. She was found with a bottle of weedicide at her side on the stairway of a church near her home on Monday. Rehana was rushed to the San Fernando General Hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival. The troubled teen, who lost both parents to illnesses several year ago, ran away from her home on Monday.

“She always got good grades in school and I would always get good reports about her,” said Tara, who had been her sister’s guardian for the last 18 months.

July 22nd 2011, Trinidad Guardian

Trinidad Express Post Sensitization

Nail Tech found hanging in Salon

POLICE are investigating the death of a 35 year old nail technician found hanging in her hair and nail salon in Couva on Thursday.

Priya Harricharan was discovered dead in her workplace “Nalini for Hair” at Balmain.

One of Harricharan’s co-workers found her with rope tied around her neck, tied to an iron rod in the ceiling.

Lifeline has a toll free number - 800-5588. They can also be contacted at 231 2824 and 220 3636. Anyone who may be interested in becoming a Lifeline “listener” can email ttlifeline@gmail.com.

January 7th 2019, Trinidad Express

Trinidad Express Post Sensitization

Suicide after shooting outside ex-girlfriend's house

POLICE are investigating a suicide and shooting in Siparia.

Dillon Bedassie fired several shots outside his ex-girlfriend's home before daybreak on Friday before he turned the gun on himself.

In the hail of gunfire, the ex-girlfriend's 17 year old relative, Jonathan Moore, was outside and he was struck twice.

Police said Moore was hit in the chest and foot.

He was taken for emergency surgery at the San Fernando General Hospital.

Bedassie died at the scene.

December 21st 2018, Trinidad Express

Trinidad Guardian Post Sensitization

Two cops dead following domestic dispute

A domestic dispute has claimed the life of two police officers.

Dead are woman police officer Rackel Kipps and her male companion Kevin Youksee.

Youksee shot Kipps dead before turning the gun on himself.

The murder-suicide has left the couple's two-year-old daughter without parents.

According to reports, residents of Spring Valley, Mt D'or, heard three gunshots around 11 am.

Kipps was reportedly shot twice before Youksee, who was attached to the Tunapuna police Station, turned the gun on himself.

Kipps died at the family's home while Youksee died while at hospital.

Investigations are continuing into the matter.

More details in tomorrow's Guardian.

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ADDITIONAL MEDIA RESOURCES ON SUICIDE REPORTING

1. Ministry of Health

- <http://www.health.gov.tt/news/newsitem>
- <http://www.health.gov.tt/sitepages/default.aspx?id=230>

2. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

- https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=docdownload&gid=38815&Itemid=270&lang=en

3. World Health Organization

- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>
- https://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/resource-media.pdf

4. Social Media Blogging Tools

- www.bloggingonsuicide.com
- <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/self-harm-and-suicide>
- <https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/305410455169423>
- <https://help.instagram.com/553490068054878>
- <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/Snapchat-Safety>

5. National Suicide Prevention Hotline

- <https://www.lifeline.com/800-555888>; (868) 220-3636; (868) 231-2824

**How do we know if these
guidelines are effective?**

Abstract

This paper examines a method for monitoring the reporting practices of media houses in Trinidad and Tobago with respect to deaths by suicide from the period September 2018 to present. Specifically, this paper analyzes the writing styles, chiefly, words, phrases and images of an assortment of newspaper articles by using **Quantitative Content Analysis** to establish patterns in reporting and measure adherence to the **National Guidelines for Responsible Reporting on Suicide**.

Newspaper articles were accessed via official online newspaper websites as well as utilizing **Google Alerts** to have direct links sent to established email accounts. These articles were reviewed using the National Guidelines outlining **eleven (11) best practices** and the varying media houses were contacted to discuss the content of the article. A total of **three (3) major newspapers** were represented within the study and thus the process of monitoring responsible media reporting commenced.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Article Date	Source	Author	Link	Headline	Brief Description
27-Sep-18	Trinidad Express	Susan Mohammed	https://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/local/suicide-watch-for-sankat-as-lawyer-speaks-out/article_848f20fa-c27e-11e8-96d5-3f233a3e05f8.html	Suicide watch for Sankat, as lawyer speaks out	FORMER UWI principal Professor Clement Sankat and his wife have hired a high-profile attorney to handle the case of their son, Nishal Sankat, accused in the US of burglary, trespassing and grand theft.
30-Sep-18	Trinidad and Tobago Guardian	Bobie Lee Dixon	http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/everyone-can-be-touched-6.2.679515.9f68f1e1a4	Everyone can be touched	The article describes the effects of suicide on the ones left behind as well as gives statistics provided by WHO on the effects of suicide and depression.
29-April-2019	Newsday	Janelle De Souza	https://newsday.co.tt/2019/04/27/psychologist-everyone-can-help-prevent-suicide/	Psychologist everyone can help prevent suicide	This short article informs other than not only politician, researchers, and other officials, but every single person had a role to play in helping to prevent suicide.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Each article is evaluated on eleven (11) domains to correspond to the best practices in the national guidelines

1. Details on method and/or location
2. Use of Videos and Photographs
3. Published identity of minors
4. Providing a Simplistic explanation
5. Normalizing suicidal behavior
6. Use of Sensational Headlines
7. Use of Stigmatizing language
8. Reporting content/details of suicide note
9. Quoting opinions of others
10. Use of glorifying language
11. Not using person-first language

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Scoring – One point is allocated to each guideline that is violated.

Rating	Score
Good	Less than 5
Bad	More than 5
Neutral	5

Articles are also given a rating based on the following

1. Providing information on support
2. Providing statistics/data from credible sources
3. Providing information on coping strategies

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Notifications of articles are received as they happen through a google alerts and a subsequent evaluation of the article is done on the same day
- 53 articles evaluated over 11 month period (September 2018 – July 2019)
- Number evaluated as good bad and neutral:

	Guideline Criteria	Information
Good	34%	9%
Bad	7.5%	32%
Neutral	7.5%	34%
Not Applicable	51%	25%

Follow up

The following information is also recorded in the M&E framework

- Date accessed
- Whether the organization was contacted
- Additional comments

Limitations

- Currently M&E only done for electronic newspaper articles however contact is made with media house when live streaming that violate the guidelines come to our attention
- If the words “suicide” is not used in article it is missed

Next Steps

1. Disseminate more widely with periodic in-house follow up
2. Provide supplementary information periodically to maintain relevance of issue
3. having each report evaluated by more than one person and improve inter-rater reliability.
4. Collaborate with the Trinidad and Tobago Publisher and Broadcasters Association to have the guidelines integrated into the Broadcasters ethics code
5. Document the development and monitoring process as a Special report in the PAHO Journal of Public health

