Suicide: The story of data

Ho Manh Toan

Phenikaa University

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This short paper explores data articles that are related to or about suicidal behaviors. The author used the keyword "suicide" to find related data articles on three prominent journal articles: *Scientific Data*, *Data in Brief*, and *Data*.

The author then manually reads each result to make sure that it qualifies. Finally, only seven articles were chosen. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. List of data articles on *Scientific Data*, *Data in Brief*, and *Data*

Data	Year	Sample Size	Subject	Technique
[1]	2019	44 people (442,270 unique variants)	Medical genomics; Molecular neuroscience; Next-generation sequencing	Genetic
[2]	2020	10,067 participants	Infectious diseases and public health	Survey
[3]	2015	775 people (6 SNPs)	Biology	Genetic
[4]	2020	32,018 depressive posts and 32,021 non-depressive posts	Artificial Intelligence; Natural Language Processing (NLP); Machine Learning	Text mining
[5]	2020	169 patients	Psychiatry and Mental Health	Survey

[6]	2017	20 children	Medicine; Psychology	Case review
[7]	2017	None	Psychology: Clinical Psychology	Measurements

There are several points that we can observe. Firstly, there has been an interdisciplinary effort to understand suicide better. Aside from the survey [2,5,6], text mining [4] and genetic sequencing [1,3] were also used to find the causes or predictive behaviors of suicide. Secondly, most of these articles are relatively new, and the earliest was from 2015 [3].

The availability of datasets can be attributed to the establishment of data journals and the open access movement [8]. However, it is notable that experts have been warning about the increased risk of suicide over the past two decades [9,10].

The study of suicide had been established in the 18th century with a classic work from Émile Durkheim [11], and later it has been developed by many social scientists [12-14].

However, a glance at the question inside the surveys [2,5] left a sour taste. For instance, the suicide-related question in a survey was:

"Do you think about committing suicide, and are these thoughts persistent and related to COVID-19 issues?"

Even the answer is quite simple: Yes or No.

Understandably, a sensitive issue like suicide is hard for studying through a survey. Nonetheless, a complex and pressing matter should not be treated as an afterthought.

Indeed, the problem could result from the philosophical nature of suicide and the hesitation of suicide-related theories. A person arrives at such a finale of his/her life, indicating a disfunction of the mindsponge mechanism [15].

Theoretically speaking, the overload numbs the mindsponge process, preventing a person from processing, filtering, and rejecting values and information. Thus, the numbness will eventually require the system to restart itself. This idea can be studied further with the help of the flexibility of Bayesian analysis [16].

We still have a long way to go until we can fully understand why we decide to take our lives. Hopefully, we will soon understand it enough to help those suffering in the dark.

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