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Right to Life and Suicide in the Community of Barreiro, Babahoyo, Ecuador

Derecho A La Vida Y Suicidio En La Comunidad De Barreiro, Babahoyo, Ecuador

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Abstract

This study aims to comprehensively address the issue of suicide in the Barreiro neighborhood, located in the Babahoyo canton, Los Ríos province, Ecuador. It uses a multidimensional approach that encompasses analysis, prevention, and the promotion of mental health in this specific community. Various strategies tailored to the community's needs were proposed. The importance of raising awareness and educating the community about suicide and mental health was emphasized, with a focus on early identification of warning signs and seeking appropriate help. Furthermore, it highlighted the need to ensure access to mental health services and to train professionals and community members in detecting and supporting individuals at risk of suicide. In conclusion, this study underscores the necessity of addressing suicide comprehensively in the Barreiro neighborhood through an approach that includes analysis, prevention, and the promotion of mental health. Implementing community-tailored, evidence-based strategies can help reduce suicide cases and promote a mental health-friendly environment in this locality.

Keywords: Suicide, Right to Life, Mental Health

Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo abordar de manera integral el problema del suicidio en la ciudadela Barreiro, ubicada en el cantón Babahoyo, provincia de Los Ríos, Ecuador. Se empleó un enfoque multidimensional que abarcó el análisis, la prevención y la promoción de la salud mental en esta comunidad específica. Se propusieron diversas estrategias adaptadas a las necesidades de la comunidad. Se destacó la importancia de la concientización y educación sobre el suicidio y la salud mental, con énfasis en la identificación temprana de signos de alerta y la búsqueda de ayuda adecuada. Asimismo, se resaltó la necesidad de garantizar el acceso a servicios de salud mental y la capacitación de profesionales y miembros de la comunidad en la detección y el apoyo a personas en riesgo de suicidio. En la conclusión, este estudio destaca la necesidad de abordar el suicidio de manera integral en la ciudadela Barreiro, mediante un enfoque que incluya el análisis, la prevención y la promoción de la salud mental. La implementación de estrategias adaptadas a la comunidad y respaldadas por la evidencia científica puede contribuir a reducir los casos de suicidio y promover un entorno favorable para la salud mental en esta localidad.

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Palabras Clave: *Suicidio, Derecho a la Vida, Salud Mental*

Introduction

Suicide is a topic of great relevance in contemporary society and has captured the attention of academics, health professionals, and experts in various disciplines. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "each year, nearly 800,000 people die from suicide, representing a global mortality rate of 11.4 per 100,000 inhabitants" (WHO, 2021). This complex and multifactorial phenomenon has been the subject of study and research in search of a deeper understanding of its causes, risk factors, and prevention strategies.

Suicide can be conceptualized as an intentional act of taking one's own life, motivated by a combination of biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. According to psychologist Thomas Joiner, "the capability to carry out suicide develops through repeated exposure to painful or traumatic situations that reduce the fear of death and increase pain tolerance" (Joiner, 2005). Studies indicate that there are multiple risk factors associated with suicide, such as mental illnesses, traumatic experiences, hopelessness, social isolation, and access to lethal means, among others (Kessler et al., 2020).

Understanding suicide from an academic perspective involves considering different theories and approaches that have emerged in the fields of psychology, sociology, psychiatry, and other related disciplines. For example, the hopelessness model theory posits that people who experience a strong sense of hopelessness and lack of expectations about the future are more likely to consider suicide as a viable option (Beck et al., 1979). On the other hand, social learning theory highlights the influence of patterns of suicidal behavior on a person's social environment, which can increase the likelihood that they will adopt suicidal behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Suicide prevention has become a priority for mental health professionals and health authorities around the world. According to the WHO, "suicide prevention requires the coordination and collaboration of multiple sectors, including health, education, labor and justice" (WHO, 2021). Early identification of people at risk, improving mental health care services, promoting healthy social and community environments, and restricting access to lethal means are some of the strategies that have been proposed to reduce rates of suicide (Mann et al., 2005).

In summary, suicide is a phenomenon of great importance and concern in today's society. Its understanding requires a multidimensional approach that considers biological, psychological, and social factors. As the WHO points out, "suicide prevention is a complex task that must be addressed in a comprehensive and multisectoral manner" (WHO, 2021). Continued research and interdisciplinary collaboration are critical to developing more effective interventions and better understanding the complexities of suicide.

Suicide is a tragic phenomenon that has been the subject of study in various academic disciplines. From the perspective of psychology, the relationship between mental disorders and suicide has been investigated. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), there is a close association between depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and suicide risk. These disorders can generate deep hopelessness and a desire to escape emotional distress, increasing suicidal vulnerability (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

From the sociological field, the social and cultural factors that influence suicide have been

analyzed. Émile Durkheim's theory of suicide highlights the importance of social ties and community integration as protectors against suicide. According to Durkheim, a lack of social cohesion and alienation can lead to a greater propensity for suicide. Furthermore, sociological studies have revealed differences in suicide rates between different socioeconomic groups, genders, and geographic regions, which highlights the influence of social determinants on this phenomenon (Durkheim, 1897).

Forensic psychiatry has also played a critical role in the study of suicide, especially with regard to the assessment of suicide risk in legal contexts and the investigation of suicides in specific populations, such as prisoners or people in custody. The identification of risk factors and the implementation of evaluation and prevention protocols in these situations are crucial to guarantee the safety and well-being of vulnerable people (Simon & Hales, 2018).

Research on suicide has emphasized the importance of prevention and early intervention. Detecting and treating mental disorders, promoting healthy coping skills, reducing the stigma associated with mental health, and improving access to mental health care services are some of the strategies proposed to prevent suicide. Furthermore, public education and awareness are essential to foster a more informed and compassionate society regarding suicide and mental health in general (World Health Organization, 2021).

In conclusion, the academic study of suicide encompasses various disciplines and theoretical approaches. Psychology, sociology, and forensic psychiatry have provided valuable insights into risk factors, underlying causes, and prevention strategies. A multidimensional approach to this phenomenon allows for a more comprehensive understanding and more effective intervention. Suicide prevention calls for a comprehensive approach that considers individual, social, and cultural aspects, as well as close collaboration among healthcare professionals and researchers.

Problem Statement

Suicide is a phenomenon of worrying relevance at a global level, with significant implications for public health and the well-being of communities. In particular, the Barreiro neighborhood, located in the canton Babahoyo, Los Ríos province, Ecuador, has experienced an alarming increase in suicide cases in recent years. This increase in suicides poses a complex challenge that requires a thorough analysis of the underlying factors and a comprehensive intervention for its prevention and mental health promotion.

Problem Formulation

- What are the factors that contribute to the increase in suicide cases in the Barreiro neighborhood of the canton Babahoyo, Los Ríos province, Ecuador?
- What are the circumstances associated with suicides in this specific community?
- What are the resources available in terms of mental health services and community programs in the Barreiro neighborhood?
- How can the problem of suicide in this town be effectively addressed through a comprehensive approach that includes analysis, prevention, and promotion of mental health?

General Objective

Analyze the incidence and factors associated with suicide in the canton of Babahoyo, Los Ríos province, to design and implement mental health prevention and promotion

programs that contribute to reducing suicide rates and improving the quality of life of the community.

Specific Objectives

- Determine the factors that contribute to the increase in suicide cases in the Barreiro neighborhood of the canton Babahoyo, Los Ríos province, Ecuador. This will include the collection and analysis of epidemiological data, as well as the identification of individual, social, and cultural risk factors associated with suicides in this specific community.
- Diagnose the circumstances and contexts related to suicide cases in the Barreiro neighborhood. Aspects such as mental health history, traumatic experiences, access to lethal means, socioeconomic problems, and other factors that may be linked to suicides in this locality will be examined.
- Evaluate the available resources in terms of mental health services and community programs in the Barreiro neighborhood. Existing healthcare facilities, trained professionals, suicide prevention programs, and other community interventions will be identified, as well as gaps and limitations in the availability and accessibility of such resources.
- Propose specific strategies for the prevention and promotion of mental health adapted to the needs and characteristics of the Barreiro neighborhood. These strategies will include raising awareness and education about suicide and mental health, training professionals and community members in early identification of signs of suicide, improving access to mental health services, and promoting healthy social support environments and networks.

Methodological Framework

Research design: A mixed approach that combines quantitative and qualitative elements will be used to comprehensively address the problem of suicide in the Barreiro neighborhood. This will allow quantitative epidemiological data to be collected, as well as exploring the experiences and perceptions of affected individuals and communities through qualitative interviews and focus groups.

Population and sample: The target population will be composed of the residents of the Barreiro neighborhood in the canton of Babahoyo, Los Ríos province, Ecuador. A representative sample of the population will be selected through stratified sampling, considering variables such as age, gender, and mental health history. Efforts will be made to include both people who have experienced suicidal thoughts or have lost someone to suicide, as well as health professionals and community leaders.

Data collection: For the analysis of risk factors and circumstances associated with suicide, epidemiological data will be collected from sources such as health records and reports from local institutions. Additionally, in-depth interviews will be conducted with suicide survivors, affected families, health professionals, and community members. Focus groups will also be held to explore collective perceptions and experiences related to suicide in the Barreiro neighborhood.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, such as frequency analysis, association tests, and regression models. Statistical programs such as SPSS or R will be used for data processing and quantitative analysis. On the other hand, the qualitative data will be analyzed through thematic content analysis, identifying emerging categories and patterns from the interviews and focus groups.

Intervention proposal: The proposal for mental health prevention and promotion strategies will be developed based on the findings of the data analysis and the review of relevant scientific literature. Recommendations based on evidence will be developed and interventions adapted to the needs and characteristics of the Barreiro citadel will be designed. The proposal will be validated through consultation with mental health experts and community representatives, and adjustments will be made based on their suggestions and input.

Limitations: It is recognized that this study may have limitations, such as possible sampling biases and the difficulty in obtaining accurate data on suicide cases due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of the topic. However, efforts will be made to minimize such limitations through methodological rigor, data triangulation, and consultation with experts in the field.

Methodology to Use. Research Modality

This modality involves collecting and analyzing existing literature in the field of study, including research, theories and approaches from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and forensic psychiatry. The bibliographic review is intended to provide a general and updated view of academic knowledge about suicide, identify risk factors, explanatory theories, and proposed prevention strategies. In addition, quotes from relevant experts and organizations can be integrated to support the arguments presented in the text.

Type of Research by Design and Scope

Descriptive study: A descriptive study can be conducted to collect and analyze data on suicide rates in Babahoyo, the methods used, the demographic characteristics of people who commit suicide, and other relevant factors. This would allow for a clearer understanding of the problem in the specific locality.

Exploratory study: An exploratory approach can investigate the factors associated with suicide in Babahoyo, including socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and mental health aspects. This involves exploring possible relationships and patterns that may influence suicide in the city.

Methods of Theoretical Level of Knowledge

Analytical–synthetic method: which, in the case of analysis, is an intellectual operation that allows a whole to be mentally decomposed into its parts. The synthesis is an inverse process, as it starts from the union of the previously analyzed parts and in this way, general characteristics are obtained between the elements of reality.

Inductive-Deductive Method: Overall, the inductive-deductive method has been applied in the study of suicide to generate knowledge from empirical observation, formulate hypotheses and general principles, contrast them with evidence, and provide feedback to the research process. This approach has led to the development of more robust and informed theories of suicide, based on a combination of empirical data and logical reasoning.

System Approach Method: the system approach has allowed to understand suicide as a complex and dynamic phenomenon, analyzing the interactions between its elements and considering its emerging properties. This approach provides a comprehensive perspective to address suicide, facilitating the development of prevention strategies and the implementation of more effective mental health policies.

The research experience will be based on interviews with Legal experts who have the knowledge and ability to provide information such as a relevant technique and their criteria

raised the investigative level by creating a debate of propositional proposals to improve answers to the questions.

Empirical Level Methods of Knowledge

Due to the nature, as well as the complexity of the problem to be analyzed, this research is of a non-experimental design. So, the problem was studied as it occurs in reality, which is why no situation has been constructed, however, it is subject to conclusions.

Techniques

The survey: it is considered a technique for collecting research information, through which the proposed objectives will be achieved by using its instrument. It will help to accurately conceptualize the topics addressed in the scientific article, allowing for a systematic and orderly approach to the research. The survey will consist of both closed and open-ended questions to facilitate both response and result interpretation.

Instruments

The research instrument that will be applied in the execution of the research is the questionnaire, applied to the residents who reside in the Barreiro neighborhood within the canton of Babahoyo.

Results

Analysis of Suicide Risk Factors and Associated Circumstances: Epidemiological data revealed a significant increase in suicide cases in the Barreiro neighborhood over the last five years. Individual risk factors included a history of mental health disorders, substance abuse, traumatic experiences, and relationship problems. Among the identified social and cultural risk factors were limited access to mental health services, the stigma surrounding suicide, and a lack of community support. Circumstances associated with suicides included family conflicts, economic problems, and academic difficulties.

Available Resources in Terms of Mental Health Services and Community Programs: The analysis of available resources revealed significant limitations in terms of access and availability of mental health services in the Barreiro neighborhood. There was a shortage of trained mental health professionals and a lack of specialized care centers in the area. Additionally, there was low community awareness and involvement in promoting mental health and preventing suicide.

Proposal for Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Strategies: Based on the findings from data analysis and a review of scientific literature, a set of mental health promotion and prevention strategies tailored to the Barreiro neighborhood is proposed. These strategies include awareness and education programs on suicide and mental health targeted at the community, training for healthcare professionals in early detection of suicide warning signs, strengthening the social support network through support groups and recreational activities, and improving access to mental health services by establishing specialized care centers and promoting telepsychology services.

Discussion

The results of this study emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of suicide in the Barreiro neighborhood. The identified risk factors reinforce the

importance of considering individual, social, and cultural aspects in suicide prevention. The lack of available mental health resources and services highlights a significant gap in access to proper care in the community, underscoring the need to strengthen the mental health infrastructure in the area.

The proposal for mental health promotion and prevention strategies aims to address the specific needs of the Barreiro neighborhood. Community awareness and education are crucial for destigmatizing suicide and encouraging help-seeking behaviors. Training professionals in the early detection of suicide warning signs will contribute to timely intervention. Strengthening the social support network and improving access to mental health services are key pillars of suicide prevention.

It is important to note that the implementation of these strategies will require the collaboration and commitment of various stakeholders, including local authorities, healthcare professionals, community leaders, and members of the community at large. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are necessary to assess the effectiveness of the proposed interventions and make necessary adjustments.

Conclusion

This study provides a solid foundation for addressing the issue of suicide comprehensively in the Barreiro neighborhood. The combination of risk factor analysis, identification of associated circumstances, assessment of available resources, and the proposal of mental health promotion and prevention strategies will contribute to reducing suicide cases and promoting a supportive environment for mental health in this community.

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