
CONSUMPTION OF CIGARETTES AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR. A PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSY STUDY

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Introduction:

According to the literature, consumption of cigarettes has been related to suicidal behavior. Furthermore, evidence suggests that increased consumption of cigarettes is associated with an increased risk of suicide.

Objectives:

- To verify the association between the consumption of cigarettes and completed suicide.
- To confirm a higher consumption of cigarettes in completed suicide versus controls.

Methodology:

Completed old suicide and controls were recruited through the Institute of Legal Medicine of the province of Seville, Spain. After the physical autopsy was conducted, family members were asked for a posterior interview following the Psychological Autopsy methodology.

Results:

There were 412 subjects collected for this study; 270 completed suicide and 142 controls.

Only one third of suicides did never smoke whether almost half of controls did so (27.5% vs. 47.2%; $\chi^2=23.73$; $df:3$; $p<0.0001$). We did not find any difference between the quantity of cigarettes used by those subjects that smoke daily in suicides (53.2%) and controls (44.5%). However this lack of association may be due to the type of controls. Controls were in a substantial percentage cardiac sudden death subject and smoking tobacco has been largely associated with cardiovascular disorders. Almost 50% of controls had never smoked (compared to 27% of suicides).

Conclusions:

- There are fewer subjects that have never started smoking within the suicide subjects compared to controls.
- The number of cigarettes in those who smoke daily was not associated to any group. This results may be influenced by the characteristics of our control population.