

## Present and Future Subjects of Suicide-related Reports in Japan

The Editor,

Sir,

The National Police Agency has reported that the number of suicides in Japan has increased to more than 30 000 per year since 1998. Additionally, there were also more than 30 000 suicides in Japan in 2006 and this figure has remained constant for nine consecutive years. Developing preventive measures to curb this high number is of immediate concern in various fields like government, medicine and policing (1, 2). We believe that researchers in medicine should report suicide trends and suicide prevention measures and that they should consider the opinions and advice of researchers from various fields and from various countries with regard to suicide prevention measures. Therefore, medical researchers in Japan must publish reports in English and help to decrease this country's suicide rate. In the current study, we searched for all medical reports in English on suicide in Japan among papers indexed by PubMed during the sixteen-year period from 1990–2005; the key words used in the search were "Suicide" and "Japan."

During the study period, 223 papers were found published in English with the key words "Suicide" and "Japan." There were 80 such papers during the first eight-year period from 1990–1997 and 143 during the second eight-year period from 1998–2005. Therefore, the number of papers on Japanese suicide in English increased markedly in the eight years from 1998 to 2005, totalling about 1.8 times that of the previous eight years. Results indicated that the number of papers on Japanese suicide in English increased with the rapid increase in suicide starting in 1998 but that the current decrease in the number of suicides has not affected

the number of those papers. In the United States of America and the United Kingdom, many researchers (3, 4) described the need for measures from medicine to decrease the number of suicides. Because the number of papers on Japanese suicide published in English has increased in recent years, more time is needed for the effect of this increase to become visible and continuing to report on medical aspects of suicide is crucial.

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