

Rising cases of suicide in Ghana: A Researchers' perspective

Instances of reported cases of suicide are becoming very common in our country, Ghana. What makes it more worrying is the fact that the recent trend has been cases involving the younger generation; the youth. In the last few weeks, there has been shocking reports of suicide cases among two young female university students in Ghana. Our sympathy goes to the families and friends of these ladies. The burden of depression and suicide is disturbing.

Mr Kenneth Asayah Ae-Ngibise, a Research Fellow and member of a team of researchers from Kintampo Health Research Centre (KHRC) who have been working on a mental health project on suicide, was contacted to share some insights on this alarming health issue in relation to the health research work he and his team conducted.

According to Mr Kenneth Asayah Ae-Ngibise, the team examined the trends and perceptions of Suicide in Kintampo North Municipality and Kintampo South District in Ghana. In a population of about 140,000 residents, they recorded 35 confirmed cases of suicide over a 10-year period (2005-2015). Though this number of cases is low compared to other countries, the team observed an **increasing trend** in recent years. It is likely that these cases were under reported because of cultural practices that prevents discussions on suicides.

Majority of the cases were mainly adult men over 40 years of age. Family members of suicide victims indicate that they would have sought health for their suicide victims if they were knowledgeable about depression and suicide. They also acknowledge stigma associated with suicide.

There were **inadequate health care professionals** to take care of people with suicidal ideation. There was only one clinical psychologist and no psychiatrist, no social workers in the two Kintampo districts at the time of this study. There are currently no **interventions** for people with suicidal ideation.

The team concluded that **Depression and its consequences of suicide can be prevented through** public education on early signs of depression, multi-sectoral collaboration between social services and health, support from family especially among young adults, reach out to people who are suicidal and listen to them. Counseling services are urgently required for the family of suicide victims to avoid others from occurring.



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