Methodological concerns in the 'Economic burden of suicide deaths in India (2019)'

Anamika Pandey, G Anil Kumar, and Rakhi Dandona*

Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi, India

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We read with interest the research article by Nigam and colleagues[1] published in *The Lancet Regional Health—Southeast Asia*, which estimated the economic burden of suicide deaths in India and states in 2019 using the approach previously applied in other studies.[2,3] However, we found certain methodological issues with this study[1] and have highlighted them in this Correspondence. We replicated the analysis using the approach described in the paper and data provided in the Excel file published online. We utilised the number of suicide deaths from the Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) 2019 Results tool[4] as these data were not reported in the paper[1] but were mentioned. Our replication yielded lower estimates of economic loss than reported in the paper using the same data and approach. For instance, for females and males aged 10–14 years, the replicated economic loss estimate was 1.2–6.0 times lower across the states than that reported (Supplementary Information). Varying levels of estimates were calculated for other age groups as well. Given this variation, to confirm our approach, we replicated the economic loss due to maternal deaths as reported by Kirigia and colleagues[2] which is the basis of the approach followed by Nigam and colleagues.[1] Our replicated estimates matched with those reported in the paper by Kirigia and colleagues.[2] Furthermore, the authors have provided estimates for Puducherry. However, the GBD does not provide separate suicide estimates for Union Territories except for Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir & Ladakh. Given these discrepancies, the reported economic loss estimates due to suicide deaths by Nigam and colleagues[1] warrant further review.

Contributors

GAK performed the calculations with inputs from AP and RD. AP drafted the correspondence and other authors contributed and agreed with the final version. All authors had the final responsibility for the decision to submit the correspondence for publication.

Declaration of interests

We declare no competing interests.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lansea.2024.100516.

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*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: anil.kumar@phfi.org (G.A. Kumar).

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