A Report of Recent Suicides in Japan

The Editor,

Sir,

According to a report by the National Police Agency, the number of suicides in Japan has increased to more than 30 000 per year since 1998. There were also more than 30 000 suicides in 2007; this trend had continued for ten years. Statistics concerning suicide from the National Police Agency in Japan are crucial to the discussion of suicide prevention. However, these statistics are only reported once a year. When suicides increase rapidly, immediate suicide prevention measures must be planned in accordance with the causes of the rapid increase. Previous reports have indicated that the increase in suicides in Japan since 1998 is related to social and economic factors (1–6), and in the present paper, we call for personnel in related fields to pay close attention to the increase in suicides. There is a global economic recession with social downturns. In Japan, such economic and social downturns are reported almost daily. Therefore, the increase in suicides might be due to these. A report by the National Police Agency related to suicide prevention measures stated that suicide statistics are to be reported by prefectures each month starting in 2009. Ascertaining monthly suicide statistics may prove helpful to the discussion of specific suicide prevention measures that are urgently needed. Relevant organizations should also take additional specific measures to prevent suicide.

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