Access to information: questions on equality, gender and geographical gap in relation to suicide prevention

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ABSTRACT

According to studies, Fiji has very high suicide cases. Yet, there is a need to further investigate research methods used, and sources used for these studies. Due to a lack of information on suicide cases in isolated and informal settlements in Fiji, WINET-Fiji (Women’s Information Network): a registered NGO decided to conducts workshops on suicide prevention in 8 locations around Fiji. While, the aim of these workshops was not to investigate suicide rates in Fiji, the data derived from the workshops conducted provide insights into the rate of suicide in Fiji. During their workshops, WINET-Fiji discussed issues such as preventive measures, warning signs, community based counselling and avoidance of silence. From these workshops, the issues that emerged indicated a lack of equality where dissemination of information in the community is concerned. Added to that, the inequality based on gender, residence of people, also became obvious factors that could have led to loss of life or attempted loss of life.

Most of the research and data collected in Fiji on suicide have been based on hospitalised cases or those sent for referral for counselling (Henson et. al, 2012; Hawton & van Heeringen, 2009; Roberts, et al. 2007). Little has been documented from isolated areas, where both attempted and completed suicide cases also exist. Thus, this paper discusses the results of the qualitative study carried out during these workshops.

Key Words: Suicide, gender, inequality, Fiji, social protection