

Young people who have attempted suicide disadvantaged on the job market

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World Suicide Prevention Day: Young people who have attempted suicide disadvantaged on the job market

People who have attempted suicide when young are less likely to have a successful professional career later in life. This was discovered in a joint study by the Swedish Karolinska Institutet and MedUni Vienna. The prospect of long-term unemployment later in life threatens many people who have attempted suicide once or more. However, they make up an even larger proportion of the statistics for long-term sick leave and disability pensions.

Studies prove the connection between suicide attempts in young people

and later unemployment. However, the effects on professional development are stronger than previously thought. In this study, long-term unemployment (more than 180 days in a year), as well as long-term sick leave (more than 90 days in a year) and disability pensions, were carefully examined. Scientists from MedUni Vienna and Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm also evaluated data from several Swedish registers. Since the sixties of last century, detailed data concerning the health system has been collected in Sweden. This data gives an overview of the entire population. For the study, the [professional development](#) of all 16-30 year olds (cut-off year 1994) who have attempted suicide was examined.

The study, which was published in the top journal *International Journal of Epidemiology*, shows a clear connection between suicide attempts and later difficulties in establishing oneself on the [job market](#). People who attempted suicide once or more at the age of between 16 and 30 years, later had a 1.6 fold increased risk of long-term unemployment. An even greater tendency, shown for the first time by this study, is that of long-term sick leave (2.2 fold increase) and of disability pension (4.6 fold increase). "These risks apply to the Swedish population, on the basis of those we analysed, however it is to be assumed that the identified risk patterns are essentially also valid for Austria and other countries with highly developed health and welfare systems," explains the lead author, Thomas Niederkrotenthaler, of the Institute for Social Medicine at MedUni Vienna on the occasion of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10th September.

"The effects of suicide attempts on participation in the job market have until now been considerably underestimated, because generally only the cases of long-term unemployment had been taken into account. What is more, this shows that [suicide attempts](#) also have a strong effect on [sick leave](#) and disability pensions," according to Niederkrotenthaler.

"Taking these results into consideration, it is very important to better understand the backgrounds that lead to the marginalisation of the job market," highlights the Director of Studies Ellenor Mittendorfer-Rutz from the Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Division of Insurance Medicine at Karolinska Institutet. "This knowledge is absolutely essential to develop specially-tailored programmes for job market inclusion."

Disability pensions have, until now, often represented a permanent withdrawal from the job market. However, that in itself can be damaging to health in the long-term. Lack of prospects, as well as having no social network with colleagues, can have negative psychosocial effects. A subsequent reintegration into the job market appropriate for the individual's abilities can be preferable, also for socio-economic reasons, says the scientist. As of 2014, there are improved opportunities for a return to professional life in Austria. Whether these opportunities prove successful needs to be examined in future studies.

More information: "Future risk of labour market marginalization in young suicide attempters – a population-based prospective cohort study" – Thomas Niederkrotenthaler, Petter Tinghög, Kristina Alexanderson, Marie Dahlin, Mo Wang, Karin Beckman, Madeleine Gould und Ellenor Mittendorfer-Rutz. *International Journal of Epidemiology*

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