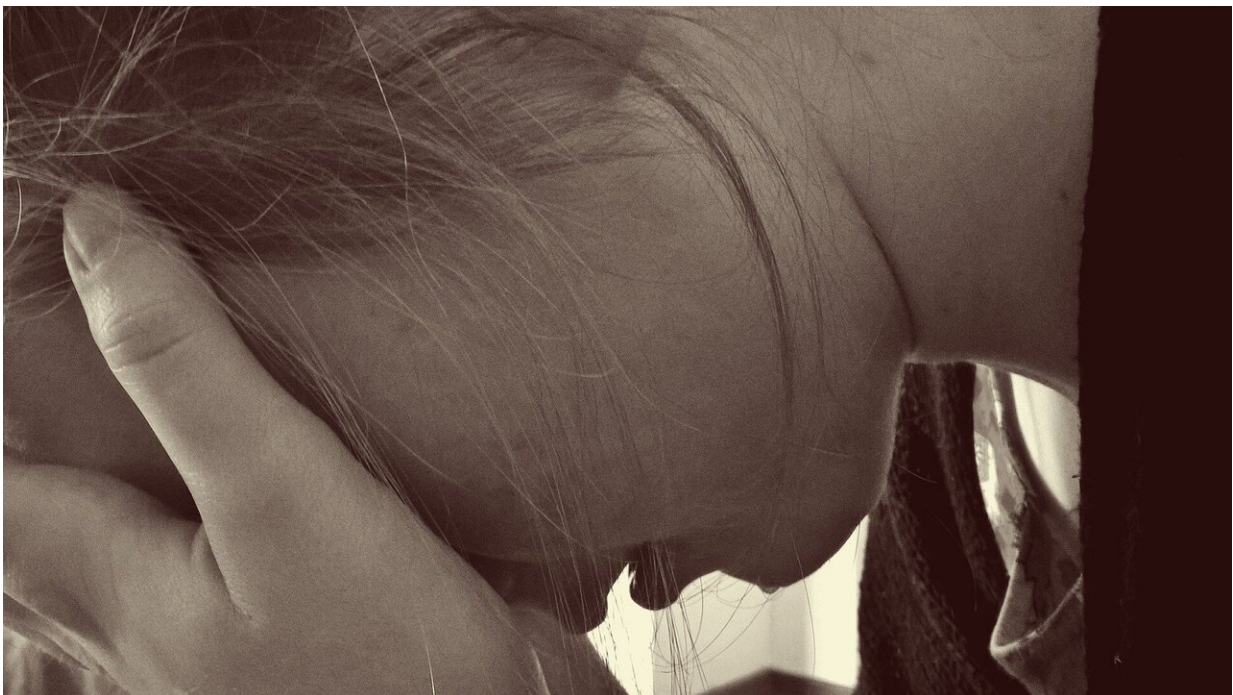


New study is the first to examine contextual factors associated with higher rates of suicide in the Americas

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A CAMH-led study of national suicide rates in 33 countries in the Americas over the past 20 years has found several key contextual factors associated with national rates of suicide.

The authors state that while [suicide rates](#) in the rest of the world have been going down in the past two decades, they have been increasing in North, Central and South America, highlighting what they say is an urgent need for more enhanced and targeted suicide prevention efforts.

The study, just published in *The Lancet Regional Health—Americas*, is believed to be the first of its kind to examine the impact of specific contextual factors associated with national suicide rates in the Americas. Using [public health data](#) from the World Health Organization Global Health Estimates database from 2000 to 2019, the authors found eight population-level factors associated with suicide rates: [alcohol use](#), education inequality, health expenditure, homicide rate, intravenous drug use, number of employed doctors, population density and unemployment rate.

"By quantifying the associations between these specific factors and country-level suicide rates, we can provide decision-makers with the evidence they need to create effective national suicidal prevention strategies," said author Dr. Shannon Lange, Independent Scientist at the Institute for Mental Health Policy Research at CAMH. "Our results indicate that multi-sectoral measures targeting health and social well-being should be emphasized."

Overall, the study found that there are some significant differences in the factors associated with male and female suicide rates. For example, when education inequality (unequal distribution of academic resources) increased, the suicide rate increased among females, in particular.

"Our findings highlight the vital importance of considering [gender differences](#) when developing, adapting and testing suicide risk reduction initiatives," said Dr. Lange. "Gender norms and expectations are likely to influence suicide risk factors so it can't be a one-size fits all approach."

Overall, Canadian men and women had the 6th highest suicide rate among the 33 countries studied in North, Central and South America.

More information: Shannon Lange et al, Contextual factors associated with country-level suicide mortality in the Americas, 2000–2019: a cross-sectional ecological study, *The Lancet Regional Health—Americas* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.lana.2023.100450](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2023.100450)

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