

People in unhappy relationships more likely to have suicidal thoughts

September 7 2016, by Johannes Angerer

Being in a relationship does not necessarily, in itself, protect people from having suicidal thoughts. This is the finding of a recent study into the correlation between relationship status and suicidal thoughts conducted by scientists from MedUni Vienna's Institute of Social Medicine and the Department of Basic Psychological Research and Research Methods at the Psychology Faculty of Vienna University. In the general population, those who are young and middle-aged, and particularly those who are in a happy relationship, have a low risk of having suicidal thoughts. This is emphasised by the researchers, speaking on the occasion of the upcoming World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September.

According to the results of the study, which have now been published in the magazine "Crisis", the greatest risk factors are exhibited by people who are unhappy in their [relationship](#). Even people who are single have a comparatively lower risk.

"Data so far clearly show that a person's suicide risk is lower if he/she is in a relationship. However, the recent study suggests that the level of satisfaction with the relationship is also important," explains Benedikt Till of MedUni Vienna. In the general middle-aged population, those who are unhappy in an existing relationship, in which there are unresolved conflicts, are more likely to have suicidal thoughts. People who are in a happy relationship have the lowest risk. 382 people in Austria were questioned for the study.

The greater the number of unresolved conflicts in a relationship, the

greater the likelihood of [suicidal thoughts](#), feelings of hopelessness and depression. The commonest themes that were mentioned under the point "unresolved conflict" or "we no longer talk about this issue" were as follows: the partner's temperament (19.9%), communication (17.4%), (bad) personal habits (17.3%), sexuality (16.0%) and housework (15.5%).

World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September

For many years now, World Suicide Prevention Day has been promoted by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and partly financed by it, together with the World Health Organisation (WHO). Every year, activities are organised throughout the world to raise awareness about suicide and [suicide prevention](#). This year's motto is: "Connect. Communicate. Care." In line with the recent study conducted at MedUni Vienna – the focus is on partnerships, personal and also professional relationships and offers of support.

In Austria, the number of suicides has generally declined over several decades and is currently relatively constant at approximately 1,250 cases per year. At the beginning of the 1980s, there were still more than 2,000 suicides every year in Austria.

More information: Benedikt Till et al. Relationship Satisfaction and Risk Factors for Suicide, *Crisis* (2016). [DOI: 10.1027/0227-5910/a000407](#)

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