

Bringing together leaders in suicide prevention to create a new framework for policy-making

Establishment of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making

1) Background to Establishment

Since the Basic Act for Suicide Prevention was implemented in 2006, suicide prevention in Japan has advanced significantly. Suicide began to be recognized as a social issue instead of being trivialized as a personal issue, and suicide prevention measures as “comprehensive support for living” are now a priority for society.

Since 2010, when practical approaches started to be implemented by municipalities, the annual number of suicides has continued to decrease. The number of suicides in 2012 was less than 30,000 for the first time in 15 years, and the provisional number as of the end of July this year was more than a 10% decrease compared to last year. The average has returned to levels from before the sudden increase in suicides that occurred in 1998.

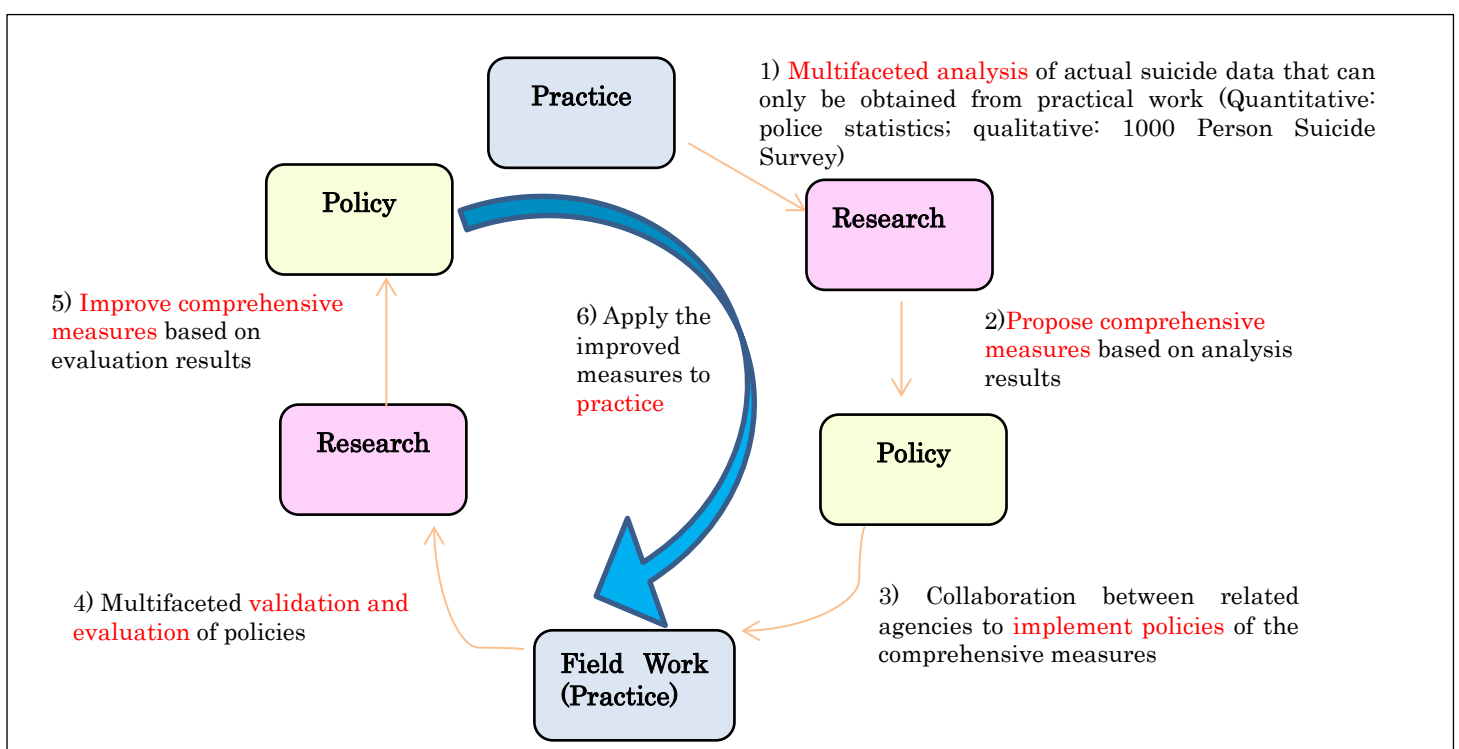
However, there are still over 25,000 suicides every year (70-80 people a day), so the situation cannot be taken lightly. The number of suicides may have decreased on an annual basis, but since the number of suicides that have occurred overall can only increase, this actually only means that it is increasing more slowly.

Japan's suicide rate remains the highest of the G7 nations, with the suicide rate of youth also rising noticeably in the last few years. The situation remains critical, and there is no reason to reduce preventive measures. On the contrary, further measures must be taken based on the experience we have gained.

2) Goal of Establishment

Until now, Japanese suicide prevention measures were necessarily stopgap measures, akin to trying to plug the holes in a leaking bucket. It is important to take a medium- to long-term perspective and implement future suicide prevention measures strategically and stably throughout society as a whole. It is important to establish a societal self-correcting cycle for suicide prevention.

The Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making was established to improve collaboration between implementation, research and policy for suicide prevention by bringing together leading figures in suicide prevention to create a new framework for policy-making. A framework will be made to create policy proposals considering practical approaches actually used as well as academic perspectives of suicide and suicide prevention. Establishing a PDA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) to comprehensively implement suicide prevention throughout society as a whole is the goal of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making.



3) Activities

In order to achieve the goal stated above, the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making will strive to fulfill the following 5 functions:

1. Forum

Providing a forum for interested parties from different organizations, specialties and positions to discuss suicide and suicide prevention (support methods and policies). The Society will strive to be a forum where no discussion will be taboo, such as the issue of side effects of psychotropic drugs, the terminology used for suicide, and how to handle personal information when assisting people who have attempted suicide.

2. Actor

Functioning as an actor, announcing research results and proposing policies both domestically and abroad. The Society will strive to be an actor promoting suicide prevention in Japan, through efforts such as encouraging media organizations to follow the Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide and studying the pros and cons of suicide prevention education in schools.

3. Database

Gathering information on experimental regional measures, experiences from the field including failures, research results on suicide prevention measures, and awareness tools, and providing this information to society at large as a database. A system will also be developed to allow members of suicide prevention groups nationwide to share information.

4. Matchmaker

Matching researchers in various fields with people engaged in activities that could be the subject of their research (with the understanding and permission of those involved), as well as matching policy makers with researchers.

5. Watchdog

Acting as a watchdog, observing the progress of suicide prevention measures from multiple angles. For example, establishing suicide prevention policy evaluations to inspect the state of suicide prevention measures of the national government and local governments, or evaluation and inspection of media reporting on suicides.

4) Rules (TBD)

- Rules for entry into the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making are currently under consideration
- Considering possible conflict of interest, the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making will not accept any funding from religious institutions, political parties or pharmaceutical companies (guidelines on conflict of interest will be made)
- Aim to become a general corporation during this fiscal year, and be designated as a Cooperative Science and Research Body by the Science Council of Japan

【CF Basic Law on Suicide Countermeasures】

(Purpose)Article 1.

... The purpose of this law is to prevent suicide and enhance support for the relatives, etc. of suicide victims by comprehensively promoting suicide measures, and thereby contribute to the creation of a society where citizens can live healthy, meaningful lives.

(Basic Philosophy)Article 2.

2. Suicide countermeasures must be implemented not just from the perspective of mental health, but also in a way that is in line with the realities of suicide based on the fact that suicide has various complex factors and contexts.

4. Suicide countermeasures must be implemented through the close coordination among the national government, local public entities, medical institutions, business owners, schools, private-sector entities that conduct suicide-prevention activities, and other related parties.

5. Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy-Making Founders

Practical

石倉紘子	自死遺族サポートチームこころのカフェきょうと 代表
伊藤敬雄	小平駅前クリニック： 精神科医
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大内衆衛	荏原病院： 精神科医
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齋藤友紀雄	日本いのちの電話連盟 理事
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茂幸雄	NPO法人心に響く文集・編集局
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藤澤俊樹	NPO法人いわて生活者サポートセンター 事務局長
山口和浩	NPO法人自死遺族支援ネットワーク Re 代表
山本ゆき	山本孝史のいのちのバトン 代表

Research

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Policy

阿部守一	長野県知事
梅林厚子	福井・大野市議会議員：自死遺族アルメリアの会 代表、自殺対策地方議員の会 準備会幹事
大坪冬彦	東京・日野市長：自殺のない社会づくり市区町村会 世話人
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柳澤光美	参議院議員：自殺対策を推進する議員の会 事務局長
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