

Development Tendency of Suicide Prevention Hotline in Taiwan: From an Individual to a Family and From a Community to a Nation, Taking Taiwan Lifeline as an Example

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Introduction:

Suicide has significant influences to an individual, a family, a society and a nation. Therefore, suicide prevention is always an important subject for all national government and private sectors to face jointly. Since the hotline service was introduced in Taiwan a half century ago, it has had a great many of contributions to the suicide prevention work of Taiwan. Currently, the hotline services which are familiarized by the public are “En-Sin Line”, which is entrusted to conduct by the government; and the “Lifeline”, which is set independently by private sectors. Most of the suicide prevention hotline services in the past only focus on the work of related parties. However, Taiwan Lifeline has realized the influences of family power weakening to personal coping pressure since 2013. Hence, referring to the core concept of family policy of Taiwan government, it shall promote family support system related service plan. This paper is going to research the development tendency of suicide prevention hotlines in Taiwan through empirical materials, and propose practical suggestions for the future.

Literature review:

In the middle of the 20th century, telephone was an advanced tool for communication. It significantly improved the world where long distance communications could only be achieved by telegrams and mails. In 1953, Britain first invented the telephone Samaritans to help those who was seeking suicide by offering telephone services. In 1963, the first LifeLine was held in Sydney, Australia. With the 24 hour Crisis Helpline Service, those prone to suicide were suffering loneliness, disappointment, worries and agonies could be rescued. With LifeLine centers successively settled in many countries, Mackay Memorial Hospital also introduced LifeLine to Taiwan in 1969 and later established the LifeLine center, which was the first telephone counselling institution that aimed at suicide prevention in Taiwan. Today, there are 24 centers and 3,000 volunteers offer service in 50 telephone line, and people can use this service anywhere and anytime in Taiwan.

Method:

This research applies secondary data analysis, use the data from Taiwan Lifeline service statistics of 2006-2015.

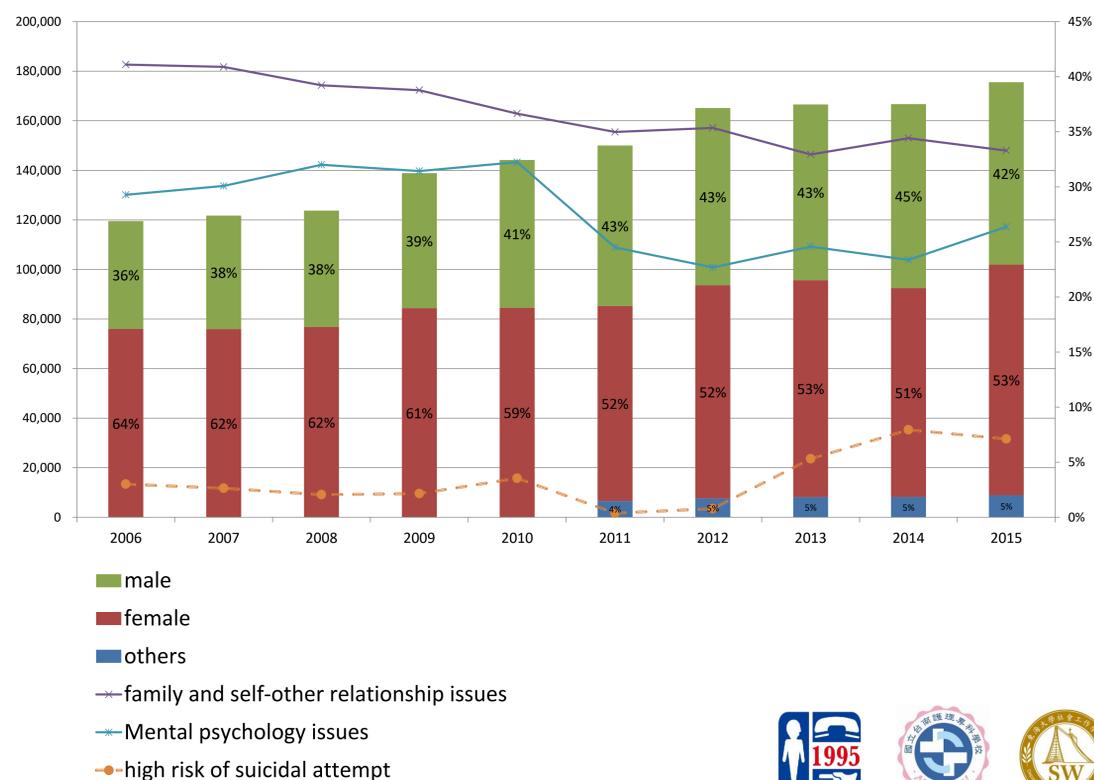
Finding and Discussion:

1. The numbers of service is increasing near 170,000 per year, but male user still less than female. It show that people in Taiwan, women feel more comfortable to talk with someone than men.
2. Over 90% calling without suicide attempt, only less than 5% user feel uncomfortable or suicidal attempt positive. Although people use this service not for suicidal ideation, they still feel bad mood and need someone to listen and give some endorsement.
3. The proportion of “family and self-other relationship issues” (including emotional issues, interpersonal relationships, couple issues and family issues, etc.) accounts near 40%, and the proportion of “personal mental and psychological issues” only accounts for less than 30%. Compared with unpredictably personal mental and psychological issues, the “family and self-other relationship issues” have the advantages to strengthen coping ability on the mental health quality of the public.

Suggestion:

1. It is expected that the value concept which takes community as implementation basis can assist the personal life to obtain support power from the family. Hotlines (like Lifeline, Befriender, IFOTES, etc.) should pay more attention in this issue and cooperate with the government.
2. When the resource of hotlines and family is insufficient, it shall be reviewed and nourished by the national policy comprehensively.

Keywords: suicide prevention, hotline, Lifeline, family support system



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