Farmer suicide: data from the Queensland Suicide Register (QSR) and psychological autopsy case studies

Hawgood, J., Milner, A. & De Leo, D.  
Australian Institute for Suicide Research & Prevention, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

The link between suicide and certain occupations has been the subject of recent research with higher rates indicated for farmers, building construction, transport workers and cleaners. Increased suicide rates in farmers are of particular interest since their rates are the highest for males and females compared to the employed population of suicides in Queensland, and suicides are apparent throughout the whole of the working aged period (15-64 years). This study identifies critical contributing factors associated with farmer suicide including demographic (age and gender), psychiatric, occupational, social, cultural and environmental factors (including method choice). Logistic regression and odds ratios are used to demonstrate significant differences between farmer and non-farmer suicides based on QSR data (1990-2007), enriched with qualitative case study information obtained from a Psychological Autopsy study. Interpretations and implications for future research and suicide prevention are discussed.