

- **Suicidal Behaviour in Europe**

Oxford has been the UK centre in the WHO:Euro Multicentre Study of Suicidal Behaviour, which began in 1989 and has been conducted in more than 20 centres throughout Europe. Oxford is also a centre in the European Network for Suicidology. Oxford is the UK centre in the Child and Adolescent Self-harm in Europe (CASE) Study. This involves investigation of the extent and nature of deliberate self-harm in adolescents in the general population and collection of information on children and adolescents presenting to clinical services following deliberate self-harm

- **International Review Group for Evaluation of Studies of Treatment and Prevention of Suicidal Behaviour**

We have established a group of international experts within the Cochrane Collaboration to conduct systematic reviews of research trials on treatment and prevention of suicidal behaviour that can inform strategies for prevention on a worldwide basis

- **The International Handbook of Suicide and Attempted Suicide**

A major handbook on suicidal behaviour worldwide has been edited by Professor Hawton and a colleague in Europe, including contributions from experts in Europe, North America, Australasia and the Far East

## Sources of funding

We have been supported by:

- Department of Health and the National Health Service Executive for England and Wales
- Medical Research Council
- South East Region (and Anglia and Oxford) NHSE Research and Development Committee
- The Community Fund
- Oxford District Health Authority
- Oxford Research and Development Strategic Research Fund
- The Nuffield Trust
- European Union (WHO:Euro Multicentre Study of Suicidal Behaviour)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Zeneca Agrochemicals

### Professor Keith Hawton

*Director*

Professor Hawton, who is a Consultant Psychiatrist with Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare Trust and Professor of Psychiatry at Oxford University, has been working in the field of research into suicide and deliberate self-harm for more than 25 years. His work has resulted in over 200 publications. He has written and edited several books, including *The International Handbook of Suicide and Attempted Suicide*.

Professor Hawton has been presented with the following awards:

- 1995 Erwin Stengel Research Award  
*International Association for Suicide Prevention*
- 2001 Louis I. Dublin Award  
*American Association of Suicidology*
- 2002 Research Award  
*American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*

## Advisory group

Professor Douglas Altman  
Mr. Simon Armson  
Dame Fiona Caldicott  
Professor Guy Goodwin  
Professor Muir Gray  
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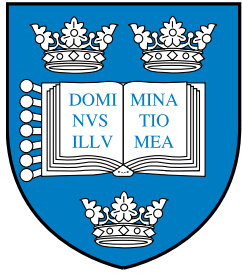
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# University of Oxford CENTRE FOR SUICIDE RESEARCH

Department of Psychiatry,  
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Director: Professor Keith Hawton



*Suicide and attempted suicide (now usually termed 'deliberate self-harm' in the UK) are major problems in most countries in the world. There are more than 800,000 suicides per year worldwide. The number of episodes of deliberate self-harm is far greater. In the UK there are approximately 5000 suicides per year, and considerably more deaths from suicide than from road traffic accidents. The number of people presenting to hospitals following deliberate self-harm episodes exceeds the number of suicides in most countries by at least 20 to one. In the UK there are an estimated 170,000 cases annually. This figure has increased substantially in recent years. Both suicide and deliberate self-harm involve large numbers of young people, many in their teens. Prevention of suicidal behaviour is a major health care target for the UK Government, which in 2002 established a National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England. A separate prevention strategy has been established in Scotland. Suicide prevention is a high priority in an increasing number of other countries. The programme of work being conducted at the Centre for Suicide Research is aimed at increasing knowledge directly relevant to prevention of suicide and deliberate self-harm.*

## Scope of research

Our research encompasses both suicide and attempted suicide. The research programme includes epidemiological studies and investigation of the full range of the causes of suicidal behaviour - psychological, psychiatric, social and biological. We are especially interested in developing and evaluating effective methods of treating people after suicide attempts and preventing suicidal behaviour. We are also concerned with improving care for bereaved relatives and other people affected by suicide.

## Objectives

These are to:

1. Conduct high quality research investigations that will:
  - a) Increase knowledge of the causes of suicidal behaviour
  - b) Provide evidence on the strategies that will reduce suicidal behaviour
  - c) Inform treatment provision for individuals who are at risk of suicide or have made suicide attempts
2. Disseminate research findings that are relevant to prevention of suicidal behaviour
3. Collaborate and interchange with other major centres internationally and with other research groups in the UK
4. Provide training opportunities for research workers and students who wish to develop research experience and skills relevant to suicide prevention

## Specific areas for research

- Evaluation of suicide prevention strategies
- Monitoring trends in attempted suicide and suicide
- Psychological autopsy studies to identify the psychiatric and social causes of suicide in specific subgroups (e.g. high risk occupational groups, young people, older people)
- Deliberate self-harm and suicidal ideation in adolescents
- Genetic and other biological influences on deliberate self-harm
- Studies of suicide attempters, including survivors of serious suicide attempts, to identify the psychological, social and biological causes and correlates of suicidal behaviour
- Outcome following deliberate self-harm
- Economic costs of suicidal behaviour
- Media influences on suicidal behaviour
- Development and evaluation of specific treatments for suicide attempters
- Systematic reviews of the worldwide literature on clinical studies relevant to suicide prevention

## Other activities

- Internet website for information on the activities of the Centre and on matters relevant to suicide prevention
- Organisation of symposia relevant to suicide prevention
- Advice to researchers in other centres, both nationally and internationally
- Policy advice to purchasers of healthcare and clinicians nationwide
- Annual Report on Deliberate Self-Harm in Oxford
- Training for young researchers

## National collaboration

- Involvement in the Steering Group for the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England
- With several other research groups in the United Kingdom
- Royal College of Psychiatrists Research Unit
- Annual Research Workshop on suicidal behaviour at Green College, Oxford, organised by Professor Hawton, for the major research groups in the British Isles
- Involvement in the Steering Group for the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide in Psychiatric Patients
- Samaritans of United Kingdom and Ireland

## International collaboration

### Other Suicide Research Centres Worldwide

We have established liaison with several research centres in other countries including Australia (Brisbane), Belgium (Gent), China (Beijing), Denmark (Odense), Finland (Helsinki), Hong Kong, Ireland (Dublin and Cork) and Northern Ireland, The Netherlands (Amsterdam and Leiden), New Zealand (Christchurch), Scotland (Edinburgh), Sweden (Lund), and the USA (New York). Professor Hawton is International Advisor to the Beijing *Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention* in China and the *Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention* in Hong Kong.