

Pietermaritzburg Suicidology Project

School of Applied Human Sciences (Discipline of Psychology), University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus

The Pietermaritzburg Suicidology Project (PSP) was established in 1983 in the context of a general hospital clinical psychology service. In developing a clinical psychology service at Northdale general Hospital, Pietermaritzburg, we found ourselves inundated with referrals from physicians concerning cases of suicidal behaviour, particularly in adolescents. In most cases these involved overdoses of medication or ingestion of poisonous substances. In view of the high incidence of the problem and complex psychosocial dynamics involved, we developed a treatment strategy that we in turn subjected to research evaluation. Our research has also developed to exploration of other facets of suicidal behaviour, including psychodynamics, family dynamics, gender, HIV/AIDS, culture, and prevention strategies.

The PSP is an ongoing, largely unfunded research project incorporating clinical service, research and clinical training for psychology interns. In addition to the attached listing of our work, our activities include contributions to public service organizations and training of volunteer counsellors.

This work has also led to the development of an Honours-level (4th year) module in suicidology that has been offered on the Pmb campus of UKZN since 2001.

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PIETERMARITZBURG SUICIDOLOGY PROJECT

Outputs as at June 2018

Journal Articles (chronological)

Articles and chapters available from founders on request.

- LAZARIDES, A., WASSENAAR, D.R., & SEKHESA, T. (2018). A thematic content analysis of suicide notes from South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*. DOI: 10.1177/0081246318780144
- PILLAY, A.L. & BUNDHOO, H.Y. (2015). Depressive, suicidal and related symptoms in university students in Mauritius. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 21, 253-260.
- PILLAY, A.L. & BUNDHOO, H.Y. (2011). Mauritian undergraduate university students' sources of stress and support. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 41, 417-423.
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- ROBERTS, K., WASSENAAR, D.R., CANETTO, S.S., & PILLAY, A.L. (2010). Murder-suicides in KwaZulu-Natal 1992-1994. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25 (5), 877-899.
- PILLAY, A.L., & WASSENAAR, D.R. (2007). Managing suicidal adolescents. *Continuing Medical Education*, 25(5), 216-218.
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- WOOD, N. & WASSENAAR, D.R. (1989). Family characteristics of Indian parasuicide patients: A controlled study. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 19, 172-184.
- PILLAY, A.L. & VAWDA, N.B.M. (1989). Alcohol related parasuicide among married individuals. *South African Medical Journal*, 75, 120-121.
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- WASSENAAR, D.R. (1987). Brief strategic family therapy in the management of adolescent Indian parasuicide patients in the general hospital setting. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 17, 93-99.
- PILLAY, A.L. (1987). Factors precipitating parasuicide among young Indian South Africans. *Psychological Reports*, 61, 545-546.
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WASSENAAR, D.R. (1991). Brief strategic family therapy for adolescent parasuicide in the general hospital setting. In D. Lester (Ed) *Suicide '91': Proceedings of the 24th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Suicidology*, pp. 30-32. Denver: American Association of Suicidology,

Conference Presentations

PILLAY, A.L., & WASSENAAR, D.R. (2005). Ethical issues in psychotherapy attendance following non-fatal suicidal behaviour. Paper presented at XXIII World Congress of the International Association of Suicide Prevention, Durban, September.

WASSENAAR, D.R. (2005). Ethical issues in suicide prevention research. Paper presented at symposium (Convenor: Dr K Hofman) on Ethical issues in Suicide Prevention Research. XXIII World Congress of the International Association of Suicide Prevention, Durban, September.

APPALSAMY, P. (1999). The suicide trajectory model. Paper presented at third postgraduate research conference, School of Psychology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

PILLAY, A.L., v.d. VEEN, M.B.W. & WASSENAAR, D.R. (1998). Gender and suicidal behaviour in South Africa. Paper presented at 2nd Pan-Asia Pacific Conference on Mental Health, Beijing.

WASSENAAR, D.R., & PILLAY, A.L. (1998). Gender, culture and suicidal behavior in South Africa. Paper presented at 106th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco.

PILLAY, A.L. & WASSENAAR, D.R. (1995). Family conflict and adolescent suicidal behaviour in South Africa. Paper presented at International Conference on Conflict and Development in Adolescence, Ghent, Belgium.

Postgraduate Theses and Dissertations (in Chronological order)

MOGOROGA, W. (2016) Coping skills and suicide ideation in South African Police Service members in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Masters research in progress, Pietermaritzburg, UKZN.

LAZARIDES, A. (2015). A thematic content analysis of suicide notes from Johannesburg and Durban. Unpublished Masters thesis, Durban, UKZN.

PAUTZ, N. (2012). A systematic review of the effectiveness of suicide prevention strategies. Unpublished Honours project, Pietermaritzburg University of KwaZulu-Natal.

JACOBS, N. (2010). Becoming a self-harmer: A discourse analysis. Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

SKEAD, L.C. A press report study of the demographics of homicide-suicides in South Africa: 2001-2009. (2010). Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

- BARNES, S. A study of the relationship between coping resources and suicidal ideation in male adolescents. (2010). Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
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- HENSHALL, C. (2007). Help-seeking behaviour in adolescent males: barriers to seeking professional and non-professional help. Unpublished Honours project, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal
- CALDER, L. *A review of suicide research in South Africa*. (2003). Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- TOWNSEND, K. (2003). A study of murder-suicides in KwaZulu-Natal. Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- APPALSAMY, P. (2002). The development of a process theory of suicidal behaviour. Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- DESCOINS, S. (2001). Seasonal, monthly and weekly variation in suicide in Pietermaritzburg and the relationship between suicide and meteorological factors. Unpublished Masters thesis, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- PYKE, D. (2001). Reasons for living: Cultural comparisons and implications for suicide prevention. Unpublished Honours project, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- OSBORNE, S. (2001). Murder-suicide in South Africa: A study of press reports (1997-2001). Unpublished Honours project. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
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- POTT, K.F. (1997). A one-year pilot study of non-fatal suicidal behaviour among the black population at Edendale Hospital. Unpublished Honours project, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- GOLTMAN, M. (1997). A survey of suicides 1988-1996 among the black population within the Pietermaritzburg Region. Unpublished Honours project, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- BURNS, K. (1995). Preventing suicidal behaviour amongst adolescents: Hospital admissions as a behavioural measure in analysing the effectiveness of a school-based programme. Unpublished Masters thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
- DAVIES, M. (1995). Preventing suicidal behaviour amongst adolescents: A preliminary study utilizing adolescents' attitudinal changes as a measure in analysing the effectiveness of a school-based parasuicide prevention programme. Unpublished Masters thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
- HARE, A. (1995). An investigation into the relationship between suicide intent, attributional style and coping styles in a sample of female Indian and 'coloured' adolescent parasuicides. Unpublished Masters thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
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- BOYA, S. (1990). Coping strategies and personality in suicidal and non-suicidal Indian female hospital patients. Unpublished Masters thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
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