

Italian contribution to the Multi-country Survey on Higher Education Multidisciplinary Suicide Prevention Curriculum and Capacity Building

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Introduction

Education and training in suicide prevention are recommended components of national suicide prevention strategies worldwide [1]. However, suicide prevention training in tertiary education remains underdeveloped globally [2]. This gap is concerning, as many professionals involved in the direct or indirect care of individuals with suicidal thoughts and behaviors report lacking adequate knowledge and skills in suicide risk assessment and management [3].

In response, an international collaboration was established to design a Multidisciplinary Suicide Prevention Curriculum in Higher Education, aiming to enhance the competencies of future professionals across disciplines.

This poster presents preliminary findings from the Italian arm of the project.

Objectives

This study aimed to gather data on the needs and expectations of undergraduate and postgraduate students from different disciplines regarding suicide prevention education.

The Italian findings, alongside those from the other countries participating in the study, will inform the development of a Multidisciplinary Suicide Prevention Curriculum in Higher Education, tailored to different disciplines, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the competencies of future professionals in suicide prevention.

Methods

Data collection for the Italian sample began on June 13, 2025, within the Department of Psychology at the University of Milano-Bicocca. The survey was administered via Qualtrics Online Survey. Participants who completed more than 95% of the survey were included in the analyses. Preliminary descriptive statistics were conducted using Jamovi (Version 2.6).

The survey

The 55-question survey investigates 6 areas and includes 5 standardized scales.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE Suicide Acceptance Questionnaire (SAQ)
PERSONAL CAPABILITY Gatekeeper Behavior Scale (GBS)
PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY Suicide Competency Assessment Form – Revised (SCAF-R)
ATTITUDES TO SUICIDE PREVENTION Attitudes Toward Suicide Prevention scale (ATTS) Occupational Suicide Attitude Questionnaire (OSAQ)
EDUCATION IN SUICIDE PREVENTION CURRICULUM

References

1 World Health Organization. LIVE LIFE: An implementation guide for suicide prevention in countries. Geneva: WHO; 2021. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026629>

2 Hawgood J, Kolves K, Michail M, Antezana AM, De Leo D. Suicidology post graduate curriculum: priority topics and delivery mechanisms for suicide prevention education. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021;18(18):9926. doi:10.3390/ijerph18189926

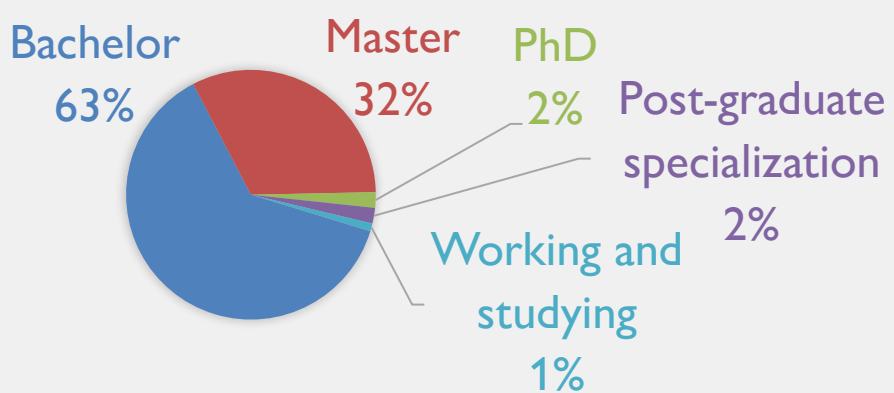
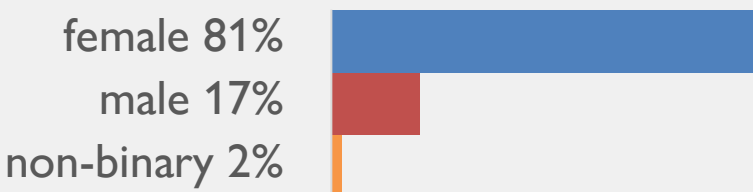
3 Cho GY, Martell CR, Cramer RJ. Ethical and practical considerations for mandating suicide prevention training for mental health professionals. Prof Psychol Res Pract. 2024;55(4):375-83. doi:10.1037/pro0000568

Results

Sample (N = 95)

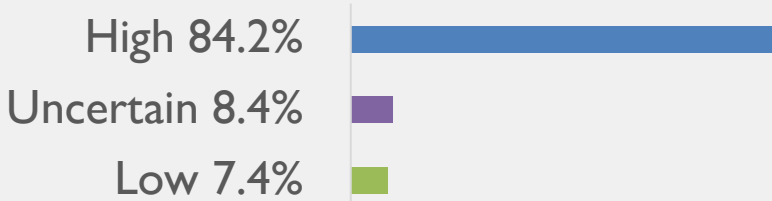
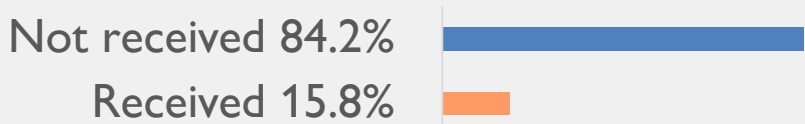
- Mean age = 22.7 ± 3.2 years; range 19–40
- Education level (all psychology students and graduates from the University of Milano-Bicocca)

Gender

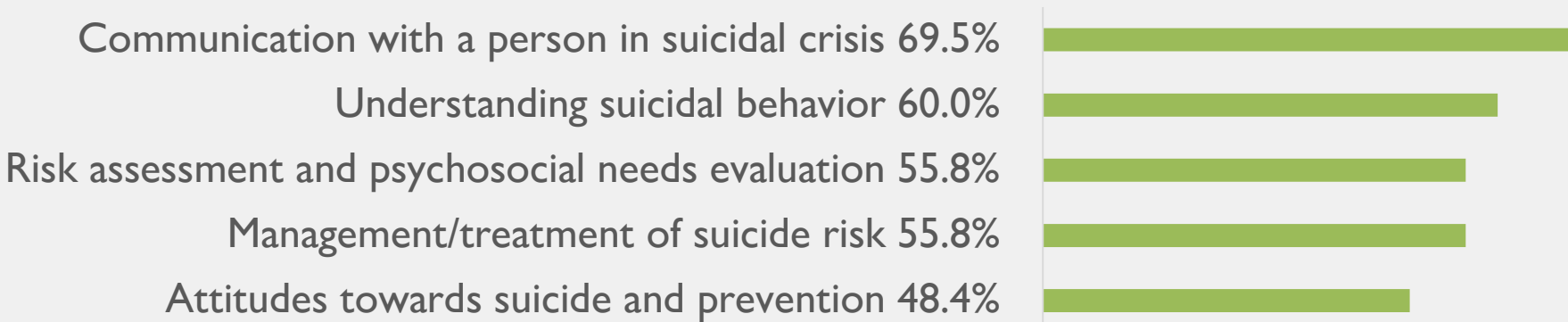


Suicide prevention training

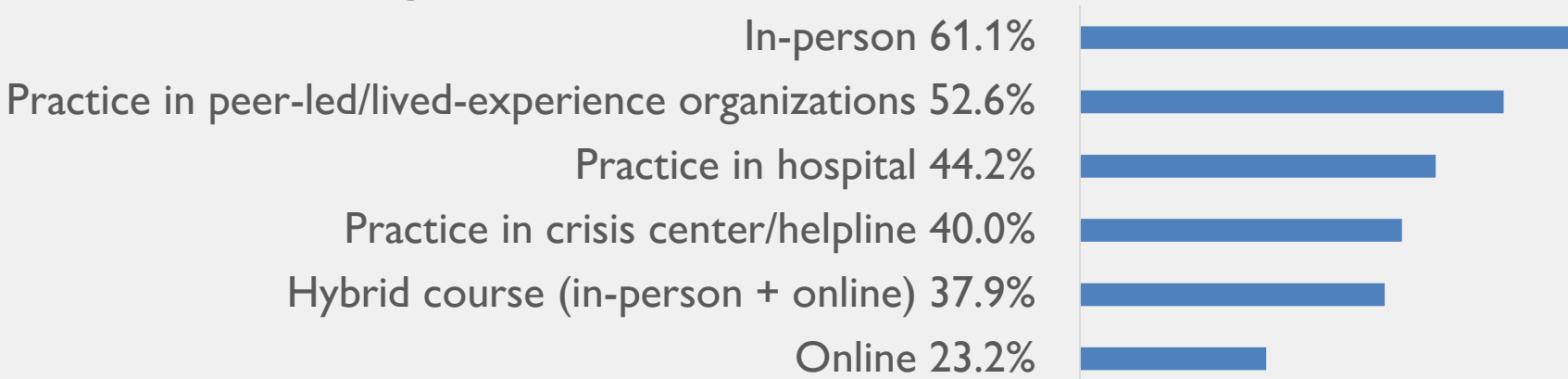
- Training experience
- Perceived priority of the training



Topics most often rated as high priority



Preferred learning modalities



Scales scores

Scale	What it measures	M (DS)	Possible range
SAQ	Acceptance of suicide	24.0 (7.3)	10-50
GBS	Gatekeeper skills	62.0 (13.8)	0-100
SCAF-R	Perceived capability in suicide prevention skills	20.0 (4.9)	10-40
ATTS	Attitudes towards suicide prevention	30.3 (6.4)	13-65
OSAQ-Prevention	Attitudes towards suicide prevention	79.4 (16.9)	0-100
OSAQ-Persons	Attitudes toward persons at risk of suicide	90.4 (15.2)	0-100

Conclusions

Most participants had no prior training in suicide prevention; nevertheless, they considered suicide prevention training a priority in their professional education.

The objective of gathering perspectives from students across different academic disciplines in Italy has yet to be achieved.

Suicide prevention training for professionals who may encounter people at risk remains an area in need of further development.

Survey in progress

Scan the QR code to learn more and join the study.



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