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## Suicide deaths up 26 percent in pandemic year: PSA

*Katrina Domingo, ABS-CBN News*

4-5 minutes



FILE. Pandemic-fatigued Filipinos turn to faith. *Fernando G. Sepe Jr., ABS-CBN News*

**MANILA (UPDATE)** - The number of deaths due to self-harm increased by about a quarter in 2020, making suicide the 27th leading cause of death in the Philippines, recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed.

Deaths due to suicide spiked to 3,529 last year, which is 25.7 percent higher compared to the 2,808 deaths due to self-harm in 2019, the PSA said in a statement released on March 16.

The study covered deaths reported in the Philippines from January to December 2020, but has yet to account for Filipinos who died abroad, the PSA said.

Earlier, experts said pandemic fatigue is affecting more Filipinos, endangering the general public's mental health.

This was evident in the increase of calls to helplines, fully-booked consultation schedules, and rise in activities that sought to combat stress.

Psychologist Randy Dellosa said Filipinos have grown "sick and tired of trying to consider as a 'new normal' what in reality is an obvious 'abnormal.'"

Estimates also showed some 3.6 million Filipinos suffered from mental health problems, but getting accurate numbers remained a challenge as access to healthcare professionals became more difficult during the pandemic.

Based on the national prevalence study on mental, neurological and substance use disorders reported by National Mental Health Program by Frances Prescilla Cuevas, at least 1,145,871 people are suffering from depressive disorder.

Up until October 6, the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) received around 32 to 37 calls since March 17, raising the monthly average calls to 907. Data from October onwards are unavailable as of posting.

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Despair was also palpable as over 420,000 Filipinos [lost their jobs](#) in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PSA divided COVID-19 deaths into 2 categories: those who succumbed to the virus, and those who were identified to be carriers of the disease after they died.

"COVID-19 with virus not identified was the seventh leading cause of death in the country with 19,800 cases or 3.4 percent of the total deaths in 2020," the study read.

"Registered deaths due to COVID-19 accounted for 8,200 or 1.4 percent of the total deaths in 2020, pushing its rank to number 16," it said.

Deaths linked to road accidents decreased in 2020, the year when the government had to impose lockdowns and limit movement in Luzon and other parts of the country to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Deaths due to transport accidents decreased to 8,000, a 37.4 percent drop compared to the 12,800 incidents in 2019, the PSA said.

Assault-related deaths also declined by 32 percent in 2020, it said.

### **Editor's note:**

A group in the Philippines is dedicated to addressing those who have suicidal tendencies.

The crisis hotlines of the Natasha Goulbourn Foundation aim to make these individuals feel that someone is ready to listen to them.

These are their hotline numbers:

Information and Crisis Intervention Center

(02) 804-HOPE (4673)

0917-558-HOPE (4673) or (632) 211-4550

0917-852-HOPE (4673) or (632) 964-6876

0917-842-HOPE (4673) or (632) 964-4084

In Touch Crisis Lines:

0917-572-HOPE or (632) 211-1305

(02) 893-7606 (24/7)

(02) 893-7603 (Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm)

Globe (63917) 800.1123 or (632) 506.7314

Sun (63922) 893.8944 or (632) 346.8776

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