

## An analysis of suicide causes and countermeasures of the elderly in Rural Areas

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### Abstract

*The survival of the status quo of the elderly in rural areas should not be ignored. The fact that the suicidal rates of the elderly in some rural areas are increasing year by year is worth of thinking for everyone. Through the visit and survey into the elderly in Suntiepu town, Guangshan County, Henan province, this paper analyzes the causes of the elderly suicide. Therefore, countermeasures and methods are put forward to solve the problem from three aspects: the old man itself, rural households, government and community.*

**Key Words:** rural area; commit suicide; the elderly

### 1. Introduction

At present, aging of the population has become the most serious problem in the worldwide, which has brought great challenge. As the advent of 21st century, our country has become an aging society, with the passage of time, the aging expands in a faster speed. In China, according to the statistical yearbook, the elderly over the age of 65 is 7.0% of the total population, while it came to 10.1% in 2014. It is predicted that by 2020, China's elderly population will reach 240 million, which account for about 15.6% of the total population in our country. At the same time, with the development of aging population, the intergraded development of urban and rural areas, the issues, for example the suicide, of the elderly in the rural areas has attracts more and more attention of the society.

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"A survey about the suicide of the elderly in China's rural areas" points that the loss of subjectivity of old people and the relaxation of the rural social association is the main reasons for the rural elderly suicide, while the reasons of the former is complicated. The phenomenon of the elderly suicide reflects the condition of their later life.

As the development gap between urban and rural areas, young adults in rural choose to leave their homes to pursue a higher quality of city life, leaving the elderly alone. According to the national ministry of health statistics yearbook sampling surveyed in 2013, we got the proportion of the elderly suicide among 100 thousand.

**Table 1: The proportion of the elderly suicide among per ten thousand**

	0—15	15—30	30—45	45--60	60--75	75~
Female	0.64	10.75	16.28	28.67	55.21	142.35
Male	0.96	11.48	17.91	33.74	68.25	204.64

According to the WHO standards, the elderly over the age of 60 suicide rate is quite high. The survey data of scholars Yan wu Liu shows that there are 303047 deaths per year by suicide in China's rural areas on average. Horizontally, the average suicide rate was 253.55/100thousand per year, the older men of the suicide rate was 281.25/10 million; women's suicide rate is 227.27/100thousand per year; Vertically, the elderly suicide rate has been into growth and the risk of it may be out of control. From 1980 to 1990, the annual suicide rate is 60.85/100 thousand totality, from 1990 to 2000, the data up to 192.70/100thousand, while after 2000 is to 507.10/100thousand.

## 2. Analysis of the causes of suicide

To find the reasons of elder people suicide, we did a survey in August 2016. We visited and surveyed into 500 elder people in Suntiepu town, Guangshan County, Henan province, which can offer a valuable reference to make measures to solve this problem. The group of national natural science fund of Hua Zhong University of Science and Technology collected the elderly attitude toward suicide, which offer a guide for our sample data. Based on the data about the elderly in Hubei province and in order to get a better data, we visited and surveyed into 500 people in Suntiepu town, Guangshan County, Henan province randomly. The results are as following:

Respondents: Using the method of interviewing investigation, we had an interview, randomly and partly, about the elderly over the age of 60 in Suntiepu town, Guangshan County, but exclude those persons who have consciousness and mental diseases.

Ways: With a special question made by us, we did a survey about the elderly conclude the basic personal information, living condition and mental health state. The basic information conclude the place of residence, marital status, whether taken care of, health state and the level of education; the living condition investigation include: whom they lived with, whether they have social insurance, the state of the economy. The main source of life. If they were abused and the types and whether someone have commit suicide around them; Psychological condition investigation include: whether they had a thoughts of suicide, had an idea that there would be a better life if they died and when they have difficulties, the way they would do and

some other reasons why the elderly suicide etc.

Data analysis: Through the visited and surveyed into 500 elder people in the rural areas, and present the basic living conditions for the satisfaction of relevant national policy has sorted out the statistics compare with the relevant data, the following figure:

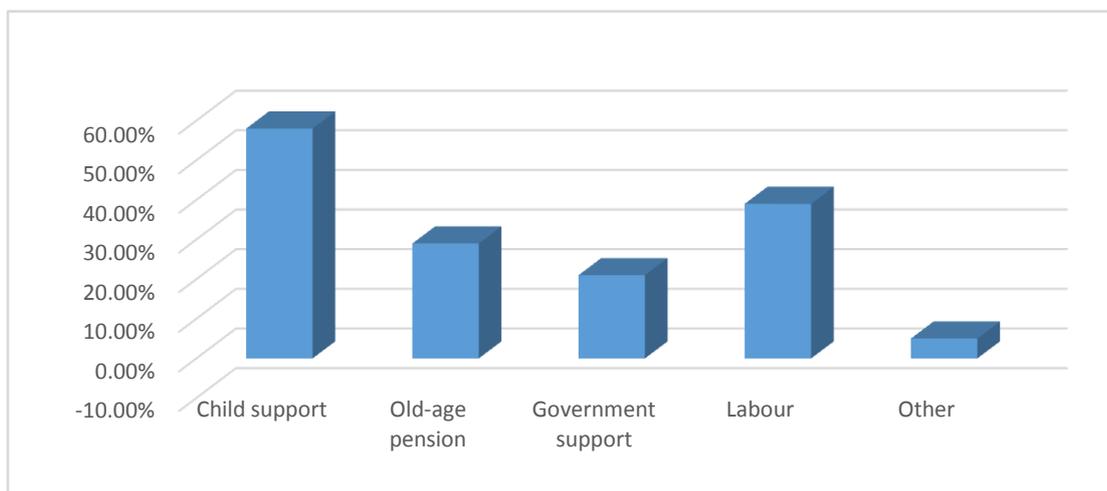
**Table 2: The basic situation of the rural elderly**

Option	Number	Suicidal thoughts	Percentage
SEX			
Male	196	13	6.63%
Female	304	23	7.57%
Age			
60~	295	22	7.46%
70~	121	8	6.61%
80~	84	4	4.76%
Education time			
0~3	367	27	7.36%
3~6	129	13	6.77%
6~	4	0	0%
Living conditions			
Alone	83	8	9.64%
Child	197	13	6.60%
Wife	220	13	5.90%
Physical condition			
Healthy	297	9	3.03%
Be ill	203	15	7.39%
Children are around			
Y	278	6	2.16%
N	222	15	6.76%
Whether children filial piety			
Y	379	20	5.27%
N	7	2	28.57%
Both	114	20	17.54%
Whether enjoy pension policy			
Y	398	17	4.27%
N	102	8	7.84%
The elderly-care policy are satisfied			
Y	286	10	3.50%
N	214	18	8.41%
The health policy are satisfied			
Y	396	17	4.29%
N	104	11	10.57%

Results: From the research on the basic living conditions of the elderly, it can be seen that the elderly life condition is not optimistic at present. The survey data shows that 7 persons think their children are not filial piety and two of them have the idea of suicide, the suicide rate in the survey accounted for 28.57%. It is very important for children to have filial piety, which is helpful for parents to have a good later life instead of having a thought of suicide. Though some measures have been taken by our government, there are still 10.57% don't enjoy the national pension policy and 9.64% don't have medical insurance. It indicates that those people who live alone have a thought of suicide account for 9.64%. Thus improving the elderly living condition and enriching their spiritual life is the best way to reduce the rate of elderly suicide.

### 2.1 The difficulties of the elderly in the rural areas

Problems of the elderly faced on the material thing are the economy problem. When the needs of the economy can supply material life, the elder's life won't be too embarrassed. However, it is very difficult for them to earn much money. Below is the data analysis of the visiting 500 rural elder people.



**Figure 1: Rural elderly living sources**

As is shown, some elder people have a widely way to get money to support themselves, such as child's support and the old-age insurance they enjoyed, etc. Those people who have a good physical condition can support themselves by the farmland, while those who loss of physical strength gradually can't support themselves by farming, what's worse, the instability of agricultural income also make "economic endowment" becomes a luxury. Those people who can't engaged in physical labor the main revenue is the supply of their children, once their children's life have some problems, they are unable to or not to support their parents, it's hard to guarantee basic living conditions for the elderly. The elderly may suffered from the pain, although they can get some help from the government and social assistance, while it makes an useless attempt, they are still unable to pay for the huge medical expenses.

## 2.2 Lack of care for children

"A survey about the suicide of the elderly in China's rural areas " from the perspective of the change of intergenerational pointed out the elderly suicide is more than young people's mistakes, the loss of subjectivity in the elderly is also an important reason .Previously the status of the elderly in the family is very high, the higher, the more respect in the family and the social mainstream culture guides children to respect and love the elderly, but now the main relationship of the father-son replaced by the relationship of man and wife , which is the main reason for the elderly can't get respect from their children.

Since the 1970 s, the implementation of the country's family planning policy, the neonatal birth rate in the rural areas received serious limitations, thus most of the rural households only raised one child. As time goes on, the one-child gradually into the society to seek a new life. Modern heart already no longer in song that "Parents do not travel far" traditional like filial piety virtues under the pressure of living conditions. Influenced by the national family planning policy, now great changes have taken place in family's structure, which lead to many children can't give must care and love to their parents, so a lot of "empty nest elder" was shown to us. Below is a data statistics about whether the elderly have accompany with their child:

**Table 3: Children in the side of the data statistics**

Number of children	Non-empty nest elderly	Empty nest elderly
1—3	12%	33%
4~	7%	48%

There are three common ways of pension: the "social pension", "family pension" and "self-pension" from the respect of the economic support of the elderly in the rural areas. Among them, the "social pension" is a new way of pension, its concrete manifestation is most rural empty-nesters can enjoy pension or retirement subsidies provided by the government. And "family pensions "is one of the most common ways of pension, it refers to both the psychological and physiological needs of the elderly which are depend entirely on the family.

With the development of the society, the social competition is increasing gradually and the influence of the national family planning policy make a great changes on family structure, which leads to many children can't give necessary care and love to their parents. It is difficult for the endowment institutions to work well because the development of the rural areas is relatively backward. Only family pension can get a better results in the rural areas, but it is difficult for children to take care of their parents because they may away from parents to work, this also makes the rural areas elderly lack of child care.

## 3. Intervention strategies for suicide in rural elderly

On the issue of rural areas elderly suicide , HuaZhong University of Science and Technology director of the China rural governance research center, xuefeng He .He is own the order suicide in the moment to "intergenerational exploitation" : the suicide of the rural people in order to build a house to their children to get married and to look after the child they worked very hard in their young once the "mission" of the rural arear elderly is done, their life become embassies step by step they lost their labor ability, whether in physical or emotional the feedback from children they get is little. "After being sucked all the value of the

old man, they seemed like nothing, only to die." He said. To prevent the suicide of the elderly, we should make a happier life for the "be drained" people.

### **3.1 Improving the self-consciousness of the rural elderly**

Changhong Zhu think the rural areas in China is still on the family old-age security as the main method, and the traditional filial piety culture is the most important foundations to support family endowment culture. With the development of the society, the conceptions of endowment is changed in the rural, which includes general recognition that "he begot more sons and daughters are all the same", "my daughter is also a support person" etc. the right social viewpoint, all this requires that the rural elderly have to change their traditional ideas.

The improvement of rural area elderly ideology embodied in: arranging their later life actively, enriching their life and getting a relief from the community by taking part in all kinds of old collective activities and cultural activities. Besides, they can also help other elderly people actively, which not only makes themselves happy, but also fully demonstrated the value of their existence. Improving the consciousness of self-pension is a great help for the elderly life quality.

At this stage of the rural areas, the economic conditions is not very good, guiding the elderly to accept half marketization and internationalization of family pension can only relieve the contradictions of current rural pension and health care also reduce the pressure of children to look after their parents. At the same time, encouraging rural areas elderly "bulk", community organizations need to create conditions for the old man to get together and take care of each other. They also need to make the necessary public services better. Only do this can they really give up the thought that by suicide can they get relieve from the pain of elder life from deep heart.

### **3.2 Take up the responsibility of supporting the elderly**

Shaobin Zhou in "on the pattern of China's rural endowment" pointed out that the main factors influence the rural elderly living conditions is the younger are far away from home to earn money, which brings great damage to the elderly both psychology and physical. "China's rural elderly suicide survey" pointed out that the change of family intergenerational relationships is an important cause of the old man committed suicide. The change of family generation, the decline of patriarchy and masculine and the change of family structure are the key cause for children to abandon the old man. Brother's unity, the harmony of husband and wife, the peaceful life of small home can make the community prosper.

The development of China at present stage, the government must intensify the publicity and education work, which will enhance their children's consciousness of family pension, making them have a filial piety and fulfill their obligations to support parents from all aspect, especially for children have a responsibility to support the elderly on the economic, to make sure that the old man has a good quality of life in old age.

### **3.3 Improve the rural pension system**

In the aspect of old man's endowment subsidies, Firstly, make sure that all the elderly can enjoy pension allowance; Secondly, make sure that money can put on the elderly's hands; Thirdly, improving the old-age

subsidies standards constantly. Issued by The State Council on September 6, 2013, "Several opinions on the rapid development of pension services" requests that province regions, municipalities directly under the central government to fully improve the market mechanism and at the same time make good use of market in the allocation of resources, making the development of pension services as the body of the development of social forces. The market and government should develop endowment services and provide convenient services and reasonable price products to meet the diversified and multi-level needs of pension services.

In terms of economic construction, to solve the problem on the rural areas old-aged must start from the rural its status. Our nation need to increase financial input to the rural and develop rural economy to achieve the purpose of increasing farmers' income. Government should encourage the city to develop with the rural, to invest in the countryside, to create more jobs to keep the rural youth labor. And they should encourage and guide the rural youth to get development in the rural, to formulate feasible policies to subsidies the migrant workers so that many knowledgeable people will back to home to develop the rural economy, thus the status quo of rural old man can change fundamentally and they can have a happier life.

In the aspect of cultural heritage, the country and the government make efforts to promote and encourage traditional culture of "filial piety" strengthen the concept of rural elderly endowment and intensify women's concept of support the old. State and the government should carry forward the development of the filial piety culture of the Chinese nation actively, vigorously and strengthen the cultivation of family traits and education and guide the whole society in many ways, especially the rural families, in a society that family-oriented, family trait is good, which is helpful to carry forward the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, to promote socialist core values within the family and get prosperous.

#### **4 Epilogue**

Through the access to relevant information and the survey of rural elderly, in order to make readers understand the main causes of suicide in rural elderly, so as to put forward countermeasures and suggestions to alleviate suicide phenomenon among rural elderly. Yan Hai jun's "China in Yabian" has called for the government to pay attention to the support problems in rural areas. The problem of old people's life in rural areas is also an important task in today's harmonious society. They have gone through the youngest years of their lives, and build a harmonious society with their most precious youth. They should not drowned in the hardships of life, and even choose to end their own life. To protect the legitimate rights, care for the quality of life and improve the living standards of the elderly in rural areas will help carry forward the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, and promote the development of harmonious society. Only by this way can we put the "people-oriented" fall into place.

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