BACKGROUND

The aging population has been widely discussed in academic research in all world, but issues related to the mental health of the elderly have been neglected. The same phenomenon is repeated in Brazil, even faster and more strikingly. The elderly are considered the population group at greater risk for suicide worldwide. This study aims to analyze the epidemiology of elderly suicide in Brazil between 2012 and 2016, focusing on the means used for suicide.

METHODS

- Epidemiological, cross-sectional, retrospective study with data on the suicides in the elderly population, obtained on the website of the Department of Statistics of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS – DATASUS).

RESULTS

- There were 8,977 suicides in the population over 60 years in the period between 2012 and 2016.
- The rates always remain higher among the elderly population: the average rate of the last 5 years among the elderly is 47.2% higher than the average of the general population.

IMPLICATIONS

The results show the need for specific actions aiming at this population. In addition to restrictions on means, the most significant alternatives for suicide prevention in the elderly in Brazil would be:
- Professional training;
- Inclusive public health policies
- Comprehensive attention to elderly mental health, considering that, in many cases, depression in this group can present itself atypically. The deficiency in addressing psychological distress in the elderly is reflected in the data of this study. Th

Given this, it is believed that the results found in this study call for new initiatives giving visibility to this theme and, subsequently, foster actions that aim elderly suicide prevention in Brazil, considering its uniqueness from the epidemiological data presented in this research.

REFERENCES

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Figure 1: Evolution Rate of suicides in elderly men and women (total population over 60 in the general population) Brazil 2012 to 2016. Source: DATASUS, 2019

Figure 2: Proportion of use of different means of suicide among men and women over 60 between 2012 and 2016, by ICD. Source: DATASUS, 2019.

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