



Namibia launches study on prevalence of and interventions for suicide

25 October, Windhoek: Self-directed violence is a serious social, economic and public health concern with devastating impact on individuals, families and communities, said the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), Ben Nangombe at the launch of a National Study on the Prevalence and Interventions Related to Suicide.

Nangombe further said that the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) is committed to reduce the high rate of attempted suicide and suicide. The study was necessitated by limited empirical data on the prevalence, causes and precipitating factors of suicide in Namibia. It is a first of its kind and was conducted in all fourteen Regions of the country from April until September 2016.

The study focused on the prevalence of fatal suicides and non-fatal suicidal attempts, prevalence of suicidal ideation (idea-forming), causes of suicide, knowledge of suicide prevention and treatment efforts, attitudes towards suicide, as well as the types and effectiveness of suicide prevention and treatment efforts. It also made recommendations for effective preventative and treatment programmes.

The study reveals that women are more likely to attempt suicide, while men are significantly more likely to end their lives by suicide. The study results will be used to inform the drafting of the 2nd Five Year National Strategic Plan on the Prevention of Suicide in Namibia for the period 2018/19-2022/23, as well as the development of a policy framework to guide suicide prevention, treatment, management and coordination.

Nangombe informed the meeting that in 2011, Namibia had the eleventh (11th) highest suicide rate in the world and fourth (4th) highest in Africa. He further said that in 2015, the suicide rate in Namibia was 22.1 suicides per 100,000 population compared with 11.4 suicides per 100,000 population worldwide. He concluded by highlighting that the

Ministry is implementing a number of preventive and treatment interventions in collaboration with other government Ministries, private sector, civil society organizations and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The study was launched on 25 October at the UN House in Klein Windhoek, Namibia as part of the Ministry's activities in commemoration of the World Suicide Prevention Day and World Mental Health Day. Other activities included outreaches to different settings with awareness raising messages including schools, churches and workplaces.