

“But I Didn’t Want to Go to Hell” Faith Communities’ Stigmatization of Suicide among Young, Rural Micronesian Men

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November 17, 2014

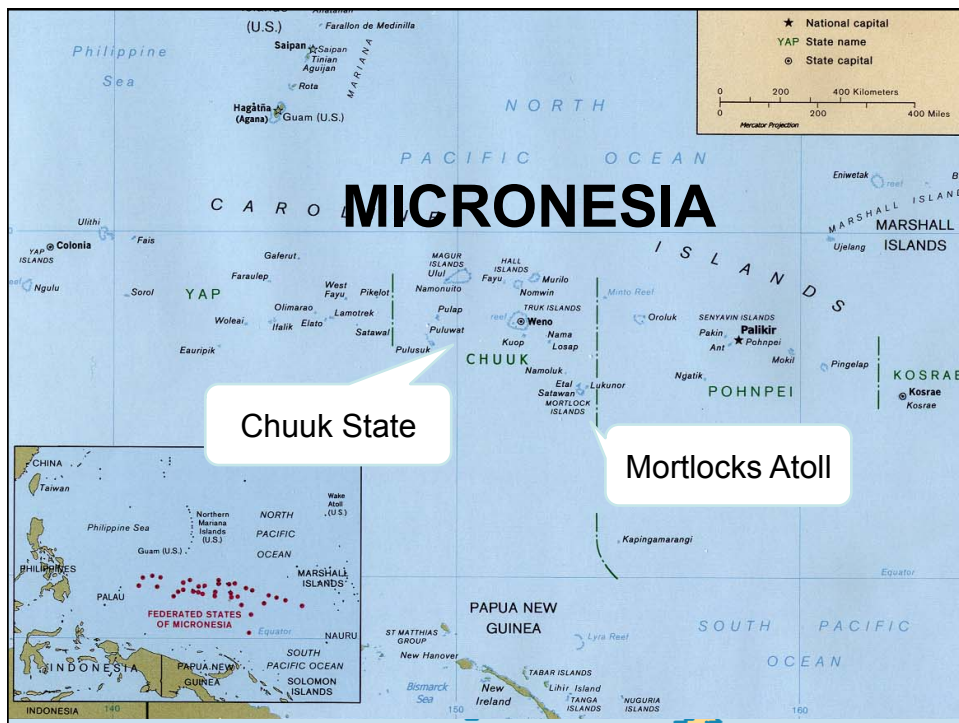
American Public Health Association Annual Meeting

Presenter Disclosure

Alexander Plum

1.) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

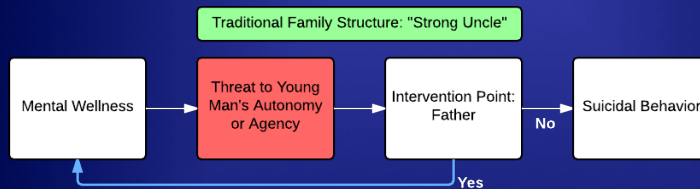


Suicide Facts & Figures

Rubinstein (1992, 1995, 2002)

- A 5-fold increase in suicide rate 1963-83
- 250 per 100,000 for young, Chuukese men
- 1-in-40 between ages 15-24 will commit suicide

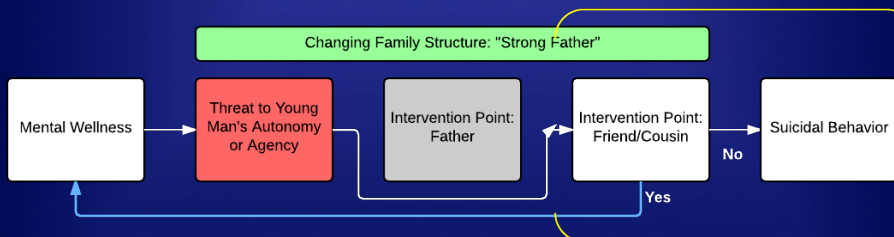
The Family's Role in Suicide



- Hezel 1989: Suicidal behavior bound up in family
- Family: Traditional → Western
- Family: Protective → Causative

Study Question

- What social forces could replace the traditionally protective role of fathers?



- When young men talk about suicide experiences, what do they express about the church?

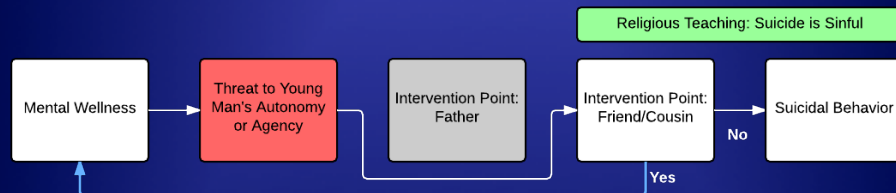
Study Population & Recruitment

- N=39
- Young men aged 14-18 who attended Camp Boys to Men 2010-2013
- Purposive, convenience sampling
- Gatekeepers informed families, got permission for researcher

Study Design & Analysis

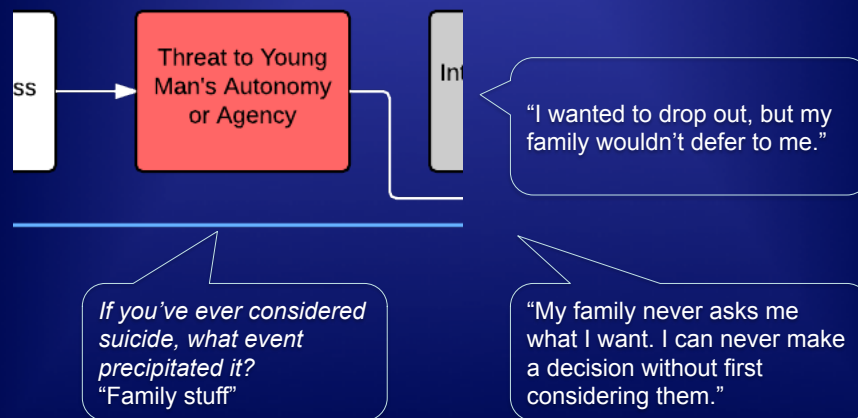
- Qualitative interviews
- Detailed notes
- Inductively coded
 - Hell
 - Tipis (Sin)
 - Fio (Conflict)
- Thematic analysis

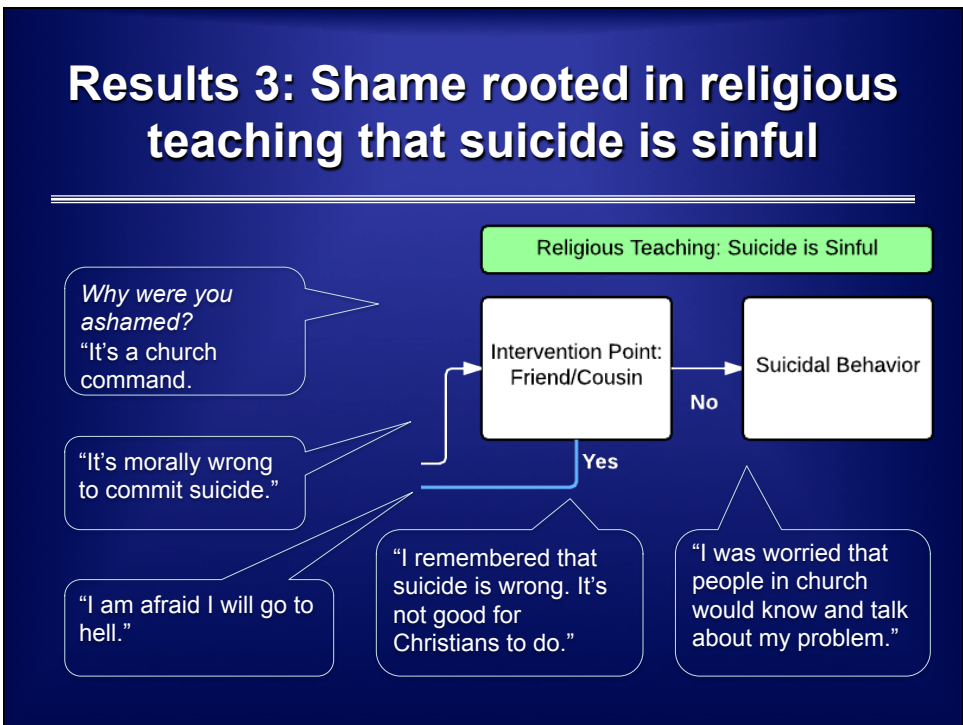
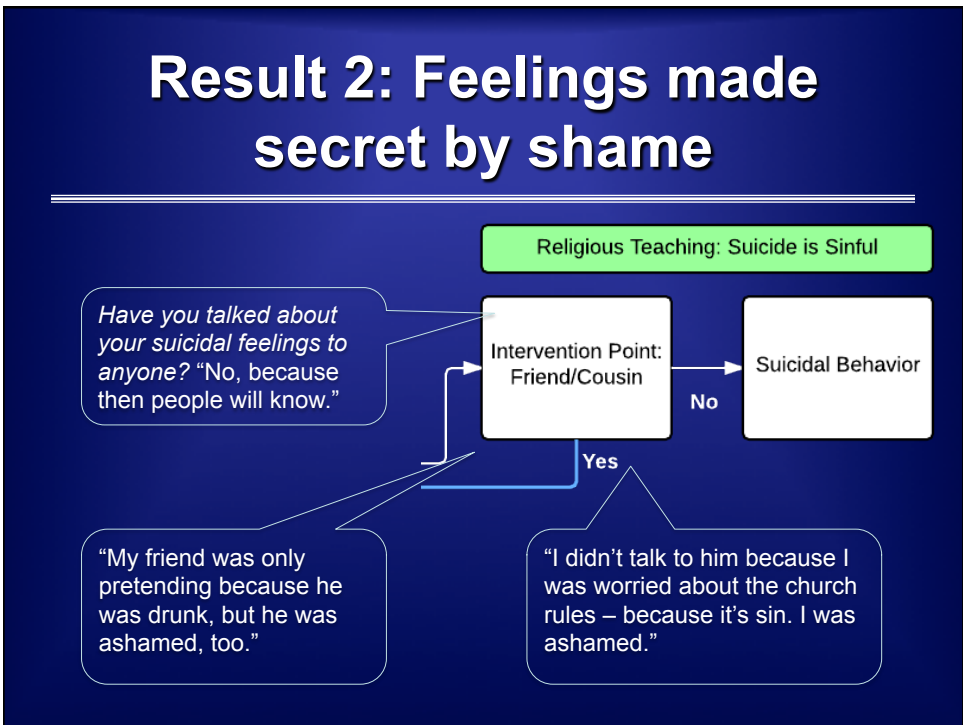
Findings



1. Suicidal behavior triggered by family conflict
2. Suicide-related feelings secreted by shame
3. Shame rooted in religious teaching of sin

Result 1: Suicide triggered by conflict in family





Discussion

- Permanent family shift
- Conflict: moving externally
- Sinful suicide
 - Preventive
 - Stigmatizing
 - Towards a *new culture*?

Limitations

- Convenience sampling
- Interviews not recorded
- Underrepresentation of suicide completers
- Cultural barrier

Future Directions

- Study of Religious Leaders
- Effect on Spiritual Formation
- Explore Ideation More Deeply

Acknowledgments

- Rev. Sitae Ilon Smith
- Department of Behavioral Sciences & Health Education, Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
- Association of Black Public Health Students, Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
- Jessica Sales, PhD, Delia Lang PhD, and Dawn Comeau, PhD
- Student Assembly Annual Meeting Scholarship

Citations

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