



Faculty of
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21st European Symposium on
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Rethinking Suicide Research & Prevention

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Vilnius, Lithuania

ABSTRACT BOOK



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- Austėja Agnietė Čepulienė
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- Dovilė Grigienė
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All members of the Organizing Committee are from the Suicide Research Centre at Vilnius University. More details: <https://www.fsf.vu.lt/en/institute-of-psychology/centre-for-suicidology>

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Climate change as a correlating factor in the variation of suicidality rates: the effect of temperature extremes in Lithuania

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The weather has always played a significant role in human health and well-being. However, due to climate change, shifted and/or disrupted weather patterns are creating new challenges for human health. Northern Europe is one of the fastest heating regions in the world. Climate change reveals a completely different perception of weather as a phenomenon itself. Therefore, rising temperatures and weather extremes could increase the potential risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour. There is a growing number of research globally that climate change brings new challenges to the emotional and mental status of human beings. In Lithuania, the effect of cold and hot weather conditions on overall mortality is evident. However, coupling climate (extreme weather) and mental health (suicide rates) is only in the initial stages.

This research focuses on the analysis of the relations between air temperature extremes and the daily numbers of suicides in Lithuania. It covers the period from 2000 to 2024. The overall number of suicides per day is the main criterion of analysis. Regional distribution, resident type, sex and age of the cases are used as additional criteria. We used the Universal Climate Thermal Index (UTCI) as an indicator of thermal conditions. UTCI is a universal and widely applied tool for describing the impact of thermal stress on the human body, and it is instrumental in health-related research. Temperature extremes are defined as UTCI values (5 and 95 percentiles), and higher than “strong” cold and heat stress UTCI categories. Moreover, the cumulative and lagging effects of heat (cold) are taken into account. The results revealed some connectivity between the daily number of suicides and extreme weather conditions. Therefore, in the near future, climate change could become an important factor in the variation of suicidality rates.