Physical Disorders and Suicide

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Abstract. Numerous studies have confirmed associations between physical disorders and suicide. Although mental disorders consistently have been emphasized as a risk factor for suicide, only around half of all people who die by suicide have been in contact with mental health providers. It is, therefore, vital to identify other markers of suicide. A substantial percentage of people who died by suicide have been in treatment for physical disorders, for instance, 14% of all persons dying by suicide have previously been diagnosed with a neurological disorder. Identification of high-risk groups among somatic patients might prove to be a feasible way to reach target groups that we would otherwise miss. The aim of this lecture will be to provide an overview of the association between different major physical disorders and suicide based on recent international evidence in this field as well as examine the support for different causal mechanisms and explore venues of prevention.