

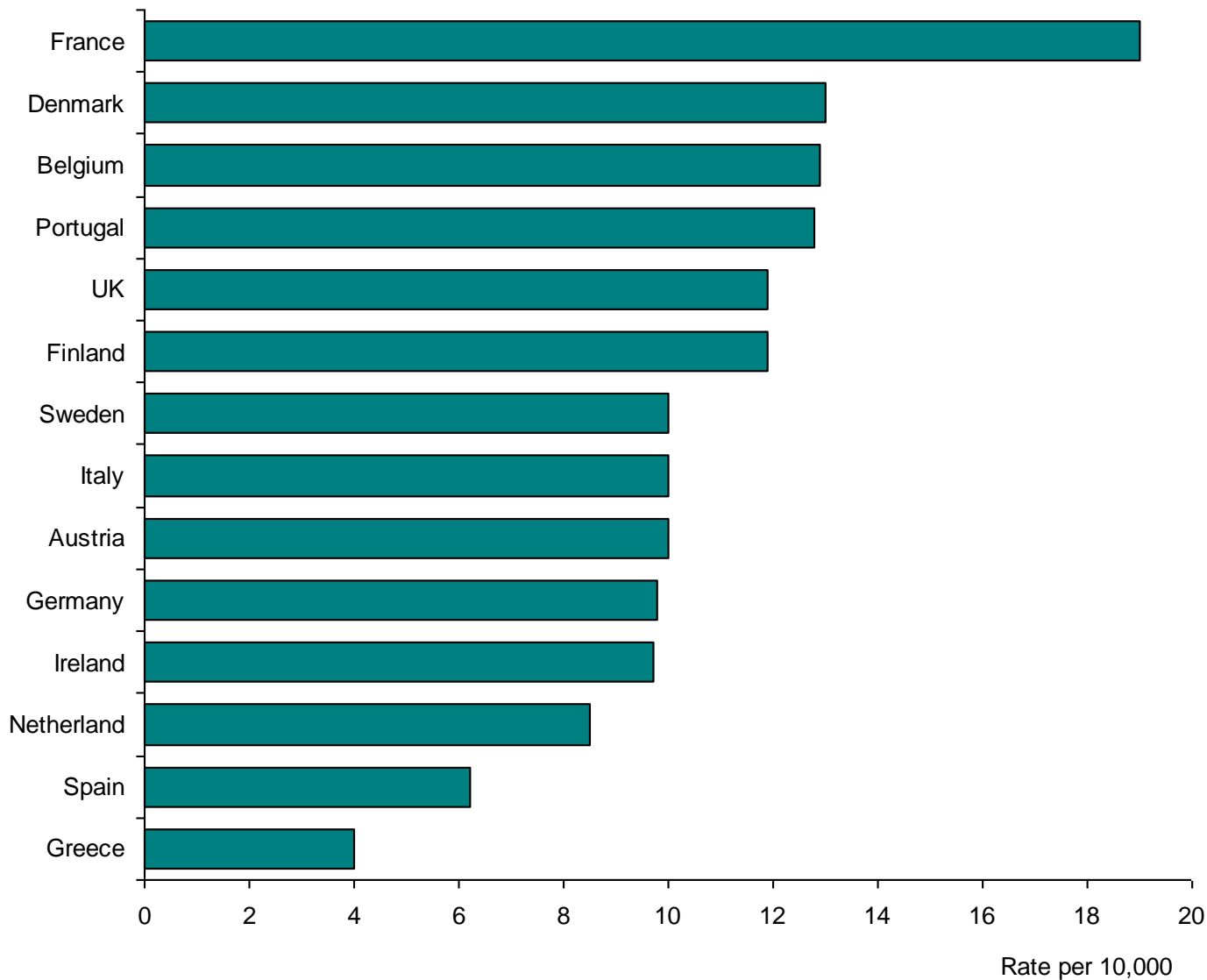
Suicide attempts in French prisons: Results of the TARTARE survey

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Background (1)

- Suicide rates in custody exceed those in the general population
- In 2008, in France → 190 p 100,000
(compared to 30 p 100,000 in the general population of males aged between 25 and 65)
- France ranks first in Europe

Suicide rates in custody in Europe
(Duthé G, Hazard A, Pan Ké Shon JL. Population et société, n°462,
Ined, 2009)



Background (2)

- Socioeconomic differences and other characteristics of prisoners before imprisonment may explain the raised suicide rates in prison
- Most people who commit suicide have serious mental disorders – whether in custody or not
- Some other risk factors, directly linked to imprisonment have been reported to be associated with an increased risk of suicide (such as awaiting trial)
- Even if prison is a violent environment, inmate to inmate violence has never been tested as a risk factor of suicide

Objectives

- (1) To describe suicidal behaviours in prisons
- (2) To determine whether violence in prison was associated with suicide attempts during imprisonment

Population and Methods

Population

- All male inmates of a jail (awaiting trial or misdemeanants) (Bordeaux, France)
- About 800 inmates are incarcerated in this jail and the occupation rate is almost 200 %
- This prison is in the top 10% of French prisons with the highest suicide rate

Population and Methods

Data Collection

- Inmates were face-to-face interviewed by a trained psychologist or a medical doctor
- Interviews were carried out in the parlours
- They lasted between one and two hours
- From May to October 2009

Population and Methods

Questionnaire (1)

- Socio-demographic variables

age, matrimonial status, educational level, housing ownership and country of birth

- Imprisonment and imprisonment conditions

Sentence, charges, living conditions in the prison and in the cell: noise, smell, brightness, privacy, hygiene, friends, work and other activities

- Suicidal behaviours

Suicidal ideation

Suicide attempts



Lifetime

+ During imprisonment

Population and Methods

Questionnaire (2)

- Impulsivness

the Barratt Impulsivness Scale

- Psychopathology

Hyperactivity and attention deficit

Anxiety and depression

Antisocial personality



The Adult Behavior Checklist (ABCL)

- Mental health services utilization during imprisonment

- Violence (victim or perpetrator)

Frequency and types of sustained and perpetrated violences

Results (1)

- 375 inmates were interviewed
 - Sentenced prisoners 195 (52 %)
 - Awaiting trial 180 (48 %)
- Age : average 36 [18-78]
- Most frequent charges (administration data)
 - Injuries and homicide (30.9 %)
 - Robbery and falsification (30.3 %)
 - Drugs (17.7 %)
 - Sexual assaults (12.6 %)

Results (2)

- Reported lifetime history of suicidal attempt → 19.7 %
- During custody
 - Suicidal ideation → 47.6 %
 - Suicide attempt incidence → 13.4 p 100 persons-year
- After a suicide attempt in custody
 - 51.4 % were admitted at the hospital
 - 69.4 % were referred to a psychiatrist or a psychologist

Results (3)

Factors associated with suicide attempts in prison (final logistic regression)

Variables	OR	95% IC
Being victim of physical or sexual violence without being a perpetrator	5.4	[2.4;12.2]
Anxiety and depressive symptoms (Achenbach score \geq 85th percentile)	3.3	[1.4;7.7]
Having one or more children	3.0	[1.2;7.7]
Having a health status perceived as bad	2.5	[1.1;5.5]

Results (4)

- Factors not significantly associated with the likelihood of suicide attempts in prison
 - Personal history of suicide attempts
 - Antisocial personality
 - Hyperactivity
 - Addictive behaviors
 - Social support (friends)
 - Awaiting trial
 - Age
 - Matrimonial status

Discussion

- Evidence of a strong association between violence and suicide attempts
- Cross-sectional design of the survey
→ Causal inference ?
- Selection bias → only one type of prison
- Self reported data → but good consistency with available administration data

Conclusion

- Suicide risk is likely to change over time during imprisonment
- this risk has to be screened during imprisonment
- Being victim of violence is an important factor associated with suicide attempts in prison
- These results could allow to improve screening checklists of suicide risk in prison