

Summary of:

Leineweber, Markus (2000): *Modernization and mental health: Suicide among the Inuit in Greenland*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Dep't of Cultural Psychology, University of Nijmegen (the Netherlands)

"This report addresses the high suicide rates in Greenland. The leitmotif is the relationship between the recent increase of suicide rates and the postwar-modernization of Greenland. First, an update of earlier studies on the epidemiology of suicide rates is presented. The data show that in the first half of the 1990's suicide rates appear to have stabilized, though they remain extremely high and suicide is regarded as a persistent public health problem in Greenland. After a description of suicide rates, specified by sex, age and different regions of Greenland, general characteristics of the background of suicides are described. Based on an examination of death certificates and police reports for the period 1993-1995, frequent conflict within the family and with friends, a recent life-threatening experience, expressing suicidal intentions and the acute abuse of alcohol are identified as the most common characteristics among suicides. Next, possible explanations of the high suicide rates are discussed in relationship to recent historical developments in Greenland. Sociodemographic indicators of suicide are presented and the temporal distribution of regional suicide rates is examined more closely. The results indicate a general relationship between regional suicide rates and postwar-modernization, indicated by a distinct pattern of suicide rates among regions in correspondence with the progress of postwar-modernization in the regions. Finally, directions for future research are presented and possible implications for intervention and prevention are discussed."