



Fetal growth, early life circumstances, and risk of suicide in late adulthood.

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Abstract: Recent studies in Sweden and Scotland have found early life conditions to be associated with increased risk of attempted and completed suicide in adolescence and young adulthood. It is not known, however, whether early life conditions affect suicide risk throughout the life course, from adulthood into old age. We examined the effects of early life conditions, including markers of fetal growth, and social and economic characteristics in adulthood, on risk of suicide by violent and non-violent methods in women and men aged 31-87 years using Cox regression. 11,650 women and men born at the Uppsala University Hospital in Sweden between 1915 and 1929 were followed from 1960 until 2002 using linked records from obstetric archives, Census, population and mortality registries. During 435,039 person-years of follow-up 161 completed suicides (104 in males, 57 in females) were observed. An inverse association was found between lower birthweight-for-gestational age and risk of violent suicide in females, although the association did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance (minimally adjusted HR 2.02, 95% CI (0.88-4.63); Table 4). Being male, unmarried, and in the "other or unknown" social class category in adulthood were independently associated with increased rates of suicide. There was a weak association between higher maternal parity and suicide rates. Our findings suggest differences in effects of fetal growth patterns and perinatal circumstances on suicide risk later in life, and suggest that suicide in adults and in the elderly may be influenced by a different combination of factors than those that influence suicide in adolescence and young adulthood.

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