Jumping, lying, wandering: analysis of suicidal behaviour patterns in 1,004 suicidal acts on the German railway net.

Abstract:
Current knowledge on behavioural patterns and personal characteristics of subjects who choose the railway as means of suicide is sparse. The aim of this study was to determine the frequency of three distinct behaviour patterns (jumping, lying, wandering) in railway suicides and to explore associated variables. Cases were derived from the National Central Registry of person accidents on the German railway net covering the period from 2002 to 2006. A retrospective analysis of registry protocols of all 4127 suicidal acts allowed classification of behaviour patterns in 1004 cases. Types of suicidal behaviour occurred with nearly equal frequencies; jumping in 32.2%, lying in 32.6% and wandering in 34.2% of cases. Age and sex were not associated with type of suicidal behaviour. The proportion of jumping was highest during 9:01 am to 6:00 pm while at night, lying was used most frequently. Jumping predominated in the station area, while lying and wandering on the open track. Fatality was highest in liers and lowest in jumpers. The frequency of jumping decreased during the study period by 12.6% (p< .05). These findings may help to elucidate differential risk features of this highly lethal suicide method.