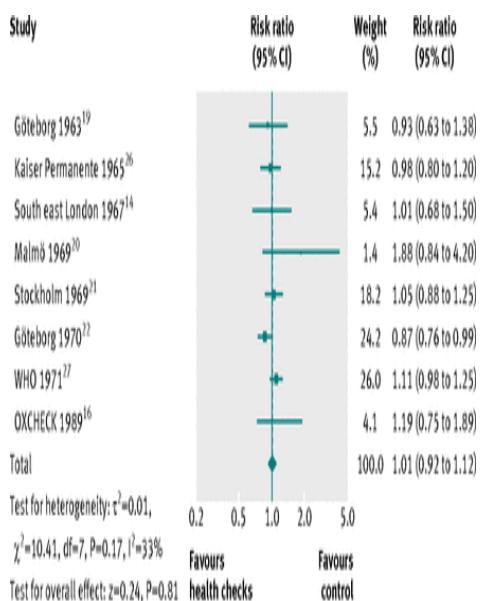


This recession is killing people: suicides are rising

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The British Medical Journal [has an article out this week](#) on the relationship between suicides and unemployment in the UK, with an emphasis on the period 2008 - 2010.

The data looks like this:



The article concludes:

Between 2008 and 2010, we found 846 (95% confidence interval 818 to 877) more suicides among men than would have been expected based on historical trends, and 155 (121 to 189) more suicides among women. Historically, short term yearly fluctuations in unemployment have been associated with annual changes in suicides among men but not among women. We estimated that each 10% increase in the number of unemployed men was significantly associated with a 1.4% (0.5% to 2.3%) increase in male suicides. These findings suggest that about two fifths of the recent increase in suicides among men (increase of 329 suicides, 126 to 532) during the 2008-10 recession can be attributed to rising unemployment.

Conclusion The study provides evidence linking the recent increase in suicides in England with the financial crisis that began in 2008. English regions with the largest rises in unemployment have had the largest increases in suicides, particularly among men.

Sad as that conclusion is it is but the tip of the iceberg: suicide is the most extreme expression of mental distress. The manifestation of that distress across vast numbers of people who will, thankfully, not take their lives is now the daily fare of GPs, my wife amongst them.

This is the so far untold cost of this recession.

And it is the cost of George Osborne's callous refusal to tackle unemployment and to deliberately consign people to this despair as a result. He thinks he can get away with that because depressed people, he hopes, don't vote.

I sincerely hope that GPs do their best to make sure they do at the next election.

Hat tip: Clive Peedell