

# Suicide attempts in Turkish immigrants

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**All immigrants living in Basel City and admitted to the University Hospital of Basel-City, Switzerland, after a suicide attempt, were consecutively examined during a 7-year period (n=70)**

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**Of the suicide attempters from Turkey, 48 (68.6%)  
were women, while 22 (31.4%) were men**

Overall, 27 (56.3%) female and 6 (27.3%) male suicide attempters were below the age of 25 years. Thus, women below the age of 25 years accounted for 27 (38.6%) of the 70 suicide attempters in our group of Turkish immigrants.

- 35,7% of the suicide attempters were first generation and 64,3% second generation immigrants.

- Fifteen (68.2%) men and 14 (29.2%) women were between 25 and 39 years old. None of the women was older than 54 years, and none of the men was older than 49 years

- Only 1.4% of the immigrant suicide attempters were over 54 years old, although the proportion of the Basel population of Turkish immigrants beyond the age of 54 years amounts to 3.9% (Statistical Office, Basel-City, 2004). This suggests that older immigrants commit fewer suicide attempts than younger immigrants.

As many as 38.6% of all Turkish suicide attempters in our study were women aged between 15 and 25 years, although only 14.95% (mean proportion) of the Turkish population in the city of Basel (1991 to 1997) consisted of women aged 15 to 25 years.



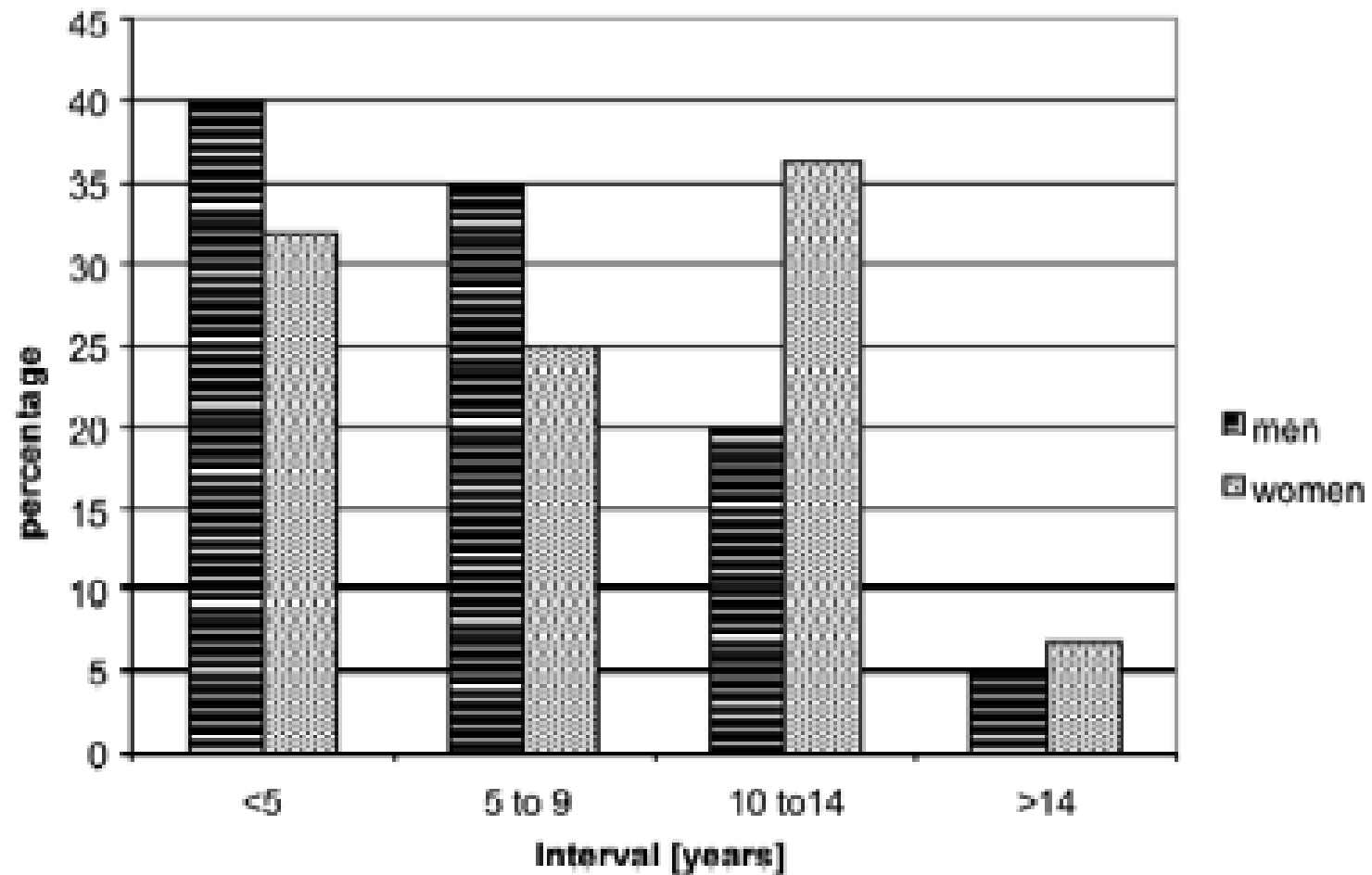
- 14 (56,0%) of the suicide attempters women and 11 (44,0%) men were first generation. 75,6% (34 of 45 of the suicide attempters) were women second generation immigrants

- Among the first generation the sex ratio female to male was 1,3 and among second generation 3,1.

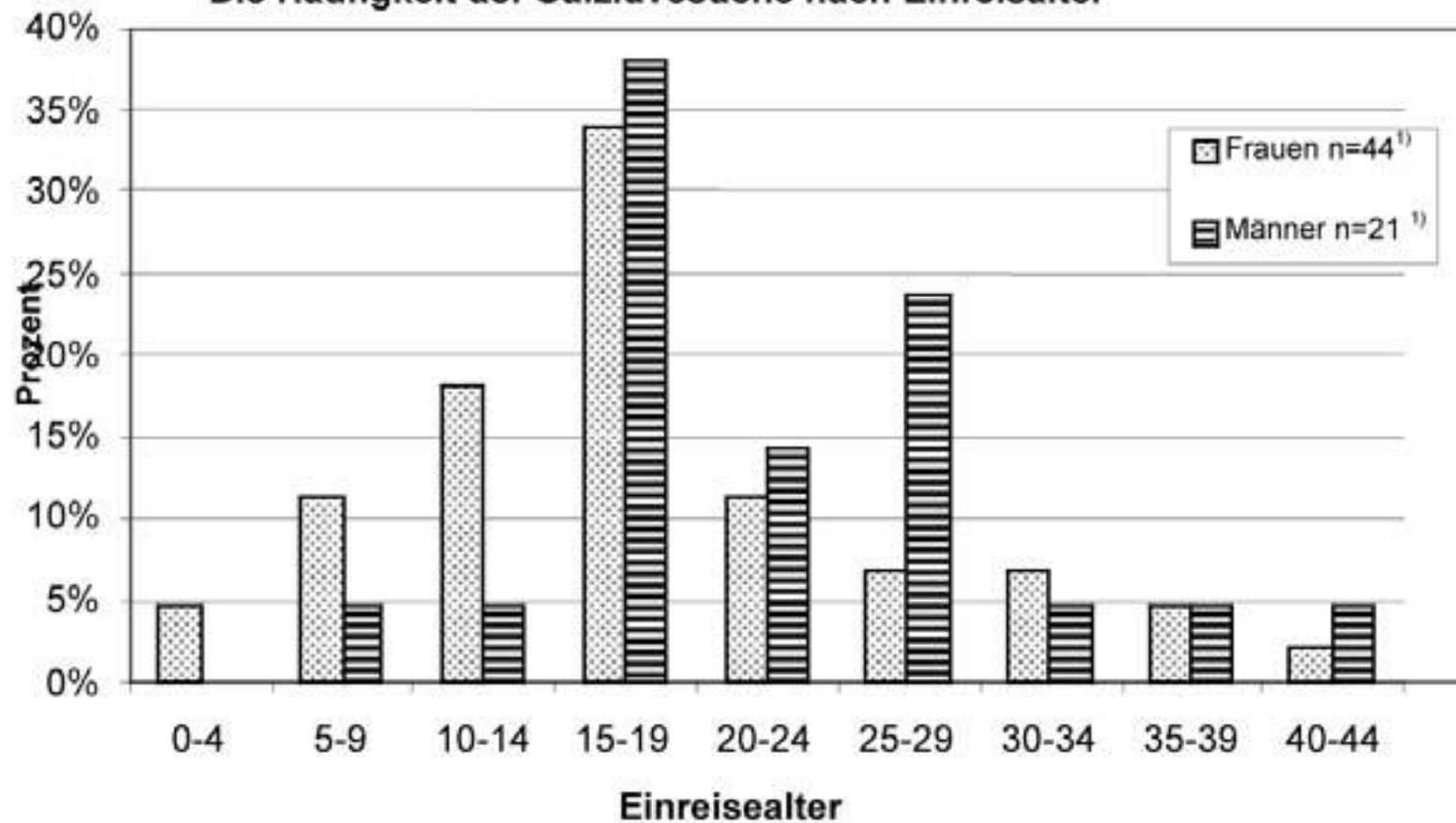
- One (1.4%) of the suicide attempters had committed his first suicide attempt before immigration.
- If this patient, along with the five Turkish suicide attempters born in Switzerland, was excluded from the analysis

- The mean age at the at the immigration was in first generation immigrants 28,2 years ( $SD \pm 6,3$ ) (in women 28,3 ( $SD \pm 6,3$ ) and in men 28,0 ( $SD \pm 6,5$ )) and 14,0 years ( $SD \pm 4,5$ ) in second generation immigrants [13,4 years ( $SD \pm 4,6$ ) in women and 15,8 years ( $SD \pm 3,7$ ) in men].

Interval between immigration and first suicide attempt in Turkish patients (5 subjects born in Switzerland and 1 subject with a first suicide attempt before immigration were excluded)



Die Häufigkeit der Suizidversuche nach Einreisealter



The group of 15 to 19 years old at migration  
were 36.9% (24 of 65) overrepresented.  
34,1% (15 of 44) women and 38,1% (9 of 21)  
men.

Hauptproblembereiche	1. Generation		2. Generation		Gesamt	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Beziehungsprobleme mit Partner	15	(60,0)	29	(64,4)	44	(62,9)
Probleme mit Eltern	0	(0,0)	9	(20,0)	9	(12,9)
Drohende Ausweisung	4	(16,0)	2	(4,4)	6	(8,6)
Andere	6	(24,0)	5	(11,1)	9	(12,9)



- 8 (18.2%) of 44 Turkish female suicide attempters who reported problems in the partnership were victims of physical violence

**24,1 % of females from first generation and  
14,7% of females from second generation  
mentioned violence in family and  
partnership as the main problem.**

	1. Generation		2. Generation		Gesamt	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Benzodiazepine	5	(20,0)	7	(15,6)	12	(17,4)
Analgetika	4	(16,0)	13	(28,9)	17	(24,3)
Antidepressiva	6	(24,0)	5	(11,1)	11	(15,7)
Neuroleptika	3	(12,0)	4	(8,9)	7	(10,0)
Alkohol	1	(4,0)	1	(2,2)	2	(2,9)
Andere Intoxikation	7	(28,0)	11	(24,4)	18	(25,7)
Schnittverletzungen	2	(8,0)	4	(8,9)	6	(8,6)
Andere Selbstschädigende Handlungen	1	(4,0)	3	(6,7)	4	(5,7)

# Conclusions

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- The immigration in adolescents (15 to 19 years) seems to be a risk factor.

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- Female migrants of 2. generation seem to be at risk with regard to suicidal behavior.

# Conlusions

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**Violence seems to be a significant problem in suicidal female immigrants of both generations.**

- Yilmaz and Battegay reported that physically abused female Turkish immigrants with a psychiatric disorder attempted suicide significantly more often than a similar group of women not exposed to violence