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Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2020-041645
Article Type:	Protocol
Date Submitted by the Author:	13-Jun-2020
Complete List of Authors:	McPhillips, Rebecca; University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL, Social Care and Society Nafees, Sadia; Bangor University, North Wales Centre for Primary Care Research Elahi, Anam ; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Batool, Saqba; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Krishna, Murali; Foundation for Research and Advocacy in Mental Health (FRAME) Kraye, Anne; Bangor University Huxley, Peter; Bangor University Chaudhry, Nasim ; Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning Robinson, Catherine; The University of Manchester
Keywords:	Suicide & self-harm < PSYCHIATRY, PUBLIC HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH

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Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review

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Word count: 2,022

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Over 800,000 people die due to suicide each year and suicide presents huge psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals, communities and countries as a whole. Low and middle income countries (LMICs) are disproportionately affected by suicide. The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and other types of self-harm have been found to be robust predictors of suicidal behaviour. An approach that brings together multiple sectors including education, labour, business, law, politics and the media is crucial to tackling suicide and self-harm. The World Health Organization highlights that evaluations of the knowledge and attitudes that priority groups, not only healthcare staff, have of mental health and suicidal behaviour are key to suicide prevention strategies. The aim of this systematic review is to examine the knowledge, attitudes and experiences different stakeholders in LMICs have of self-harm and suicide.

Methods and analysis: Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane library will be searched. Reviewers working independently of each other will screen search results, select studies for inclusion, extract and check extracted data, and rate the quality of the studies using the STROBE and CASP checklists. In anticipation of heterogeneity, a narrative synthesis of quantitative studies will be provided and meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative studies.

Ethics and dissemination: Ethical approval is not required. A report will be provided for the funding body, and the systematic review will be submitted for publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed, open access journal. Results will also be disseminated at conferences, seminars, congresses and symposia and to relevant stakeholders.

PROSPERO registration number: CRD42019135323

Strengths and limitations of this study

- This systematic review protocol has been written according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA-P) 2015 checklist.

- The review will conform to the PRISMA statement and to the Cochrane systematic review literature guidelines when results are reported
- A strength of this review is the mixed methods approach, which is particularly suited to the investigation of complex topics
- A limitation of the review is the inclusion of peer reviewed studies only, however language restrictions will not be applied
- The findings from this review will be form a robust basis for the development of a community survey on knowledge and attitudes towards self-harm and suicide in South Asia.

Keywords

Self-harm; suicide; attitudes; knowledge; experience; quantitative; qualitative; mixed methods, low and middle income countries, LMICs

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that over 800,000 people die due to suicide each year; 1 person every 40 seconds [1]. Suicide disproportionately affects low and middle income countries (LMICs), in 2014 the WHO reported that 75.5% of suicides globally occur in LMICs, and in South East Asia suicide is the leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds [1]. However, the under-reporting and misclassification of suicide as a cause of death in LMICs mean that suicide rates are likely higher than reported [1, 2]. Every suicide death is a tragedy for families, friends and communities and suicide presents huge psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals, communities and countries as a whole [1].

The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and the WHO suggest that for each adult that dies from suicide there may be 20 more suicide attempts [1]. Suicide attempts and suicide are types of self-harm that are distinct from non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) in terms of intent, however NSSI has also been found to be a robust predictor of suicidal behaviour [3, 4, 5]. A review of

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3 the literature on the links between NSSI and suicidal behaviour found that people who engaged in
4 NSSI were significantly more likely to report suicidal ideation and to have attempted suicide than
5 those who did not [3]. Furthermore, the link between NSSI and suicidal behaviour remained after
6 controlling for age, gender, and ethnicity and NSSI was a stronger predictor of suicidal behaviour than
7 depression, hopelessness, post-traumatic stress, borderline personality disorder, family functioning
8 and child abuse [3].
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18 Suicide and self-harm are the result of complex interactions between genetic, psychological,
19 biological, cultural, sociodemographic and social factors [1, 6, 7]. Although the healthcare sector
20 clearly has a vital role to play in tackling suicide and self-harm, an approach that brings together
21 multiple sectors including education, labour, business, law, politics and the media is crucial [1, 8].
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28 The knowledge, attitudes and experiences stakeholders from various sectors have of suicide and self-
29 harm are likely to influence suicide and self-harm prevention and intervention strategies. A recent
30 review by the WHO [8] highlights that evaluations of the knowledge and attitudes that priority
31 groups, for example policy makers and community groups, not only healthcare staff, have of mental
32 health and suicidal behaviour are key to the collection of high quality surveillance data and prevention
33 strategies. Reviews to date have focused on the knowledge, attitudes and experiences that healthcare
34 professionals have towards self-harm and suicide [9, 10, 11, 12]. The aim of this systematic review is
35 to examine various stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and suicide. This
36 systematic review is being undertaken as part of the South Asia Self Harm Initiative (SASHI) project,
37 which aims to help to find effective responses to self-harm and suicide in South Asia by building
38 capability and capacity in research infrastructure and expertise in the region. Findings from this
39 systematic review will be used to inform the development of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and
40 well-being in South Asia. Thus, we are particularly interested in studies conducted in South Asia and
41 countries with comparable healthcare systems or cultural backgrounds.
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Research question

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3 The SPICE (Setting, Perspective, phenomena of Interest, Comparison, Evaluation) framework was
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5 used to generate the research question that will be addressed by this systematic review [13]:
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- 8 • What are stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and suicide in
9 LMICs?
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15 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

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17 This protocol conforms to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
18 Protocols (PRISMA-P) checklist (see Supplementary File 1) [14]. We will conform to the PRISMA
19 statement and to the Cochrane systematic review literature guidelines when reporting the results [15,
20 16]. This systematic review has been registered on PROSPERO [17].
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28 **Search strategy**

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30 A Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) librarian with expertise in systematic reviews
31 has assisted the authors in the development of the search strategy (see Appendix 1). We will search
32 Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane library. We will not apply
33 any language restrictions to the search criteria. EndNote and Microsoft Word will be used to manage
34 initial search results, screening and data throughout the review. We will update the searches prior to
35 publication to ensure the latest papers are included. Reference lists from included studies and any
36 identified systematic or literature reviews will also be searched by hand. Study authors will be
37 contacted in instances when it has not been possible to retrieve full text articles and when clarification
38 regarding inclusion criteria e.g. participant age, is required.
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51 **Study selection criteria**

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53 Inclusion criteria are empirical studies conducted in LMICs, as defined by the Organisation for
54 Economic Co-operation and Development [18], irrespective of the study design, whose focus is on the
55 knowledge, attitudes or experiences of stakeholders towards self-harm and/or suicide, where
56 participants are aged 16 years and above. Stakeholders are people who have experienced self-harm
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3 and/or have attempted suicide themselves, relatives, friends, co-workers, and healthcare workers of
4 those who have self-harmed, attempted or committed suicide and people in the social, healthcare,
5 government, and criminal justice sectors. Exclusion criteria are studies conducted in high income
6 countries (HICs) and studies whose participants are not aged 16 years and above. Studies whose main
7 focus is on the prevalence and/or predictors of self-harm and/or suicide, relationships between state
8 and/or trait characteristics and self-harm and/or suicide, euthanasia, terrorism, or epidemiology will
9 also be excluded. Systematic and literature reviews will be consulted for relevant references but will
10 not be included in the review. Opinion pieces, editorials, book reviews, and conference and poster
11 abstracts will not be included in the review.
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24 The selection of studies for inclusion will adhere to the Cochrane guidelines and the process of
25 selection of eligible studies will be illustrated via a PRISMA diagram [16]. Following deduplication
26 of search results in EndNote, the following screening process will be undertaken in order to select
27 studies for inclusion in the systematic review:
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35 1) Titles and abstracts will be read by two reviewers independently, and relevance and fit with
36 the inclusion criteria will be assessed. Those of no obvious relevance will be excluded and
37 any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
38 necessary).
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46 2) Full text articles of remaining studies will be retrieved and read by two reviewers
47 independently to assess their suitability for inclusion in the final review, disagreements will
48 be resolved by discussion with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if necessary).
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52 Both reviewers will populate a piloted pro-forma for each full text paper read (see Appendix
53 2).
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58 **Data extraction**

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3 Data will be extracted from selected studies by one reviewer, and a second reviewer will check for
4 accuracy. Extracted data will be recorded on a piloted pro-forma (see Appendix 2), and will reflect the
5 inclusion criteria and the designated aims of the review, derived from the article as a whole.
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9 Discrepancies will be resolved through discussion (with the wider expert group if necessary).
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11 Additional data will be requested from study authors when necessary. Data extraction of qualitative
12 studies (and for qualitative components in studies with mixed methods) will adhere to the same
13 methods and will be reviewed independently.
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20 **Outcomes**

21 Outcomes of interest include:
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- 23 • The identification of relevant information on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and
24 experiences of self-harm and suicide, particularly in South Asia and in countries with
25 comparable healthcare systems and cultural backgrounds
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- 28 • The quantitative methods and measures that have been used to investigate stakeholders'
29 attitudes towards and knowledge about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric
30 properties
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- 33 • The qualitative methods that have been used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards,
34 knowledge about, and experiences of self-harm and suicide.
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42 The identified outcomes will inform the development of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and well-
43 being in South Asia as part of the SASHI project.
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49 **Quality assessment**

50 All eligible studies will be subject to quality appraisal. The quality of included quantitative studies
51 will be appraised using the STROBE checklist [19]. The STROBE Statement consists of a checklist of
52 22 items, which relate to the title, abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion sections of
53 articles. Eighteen items are common to cohort studies, case-control studies and cross-sectional studies
54 and four are specific to each of the three study designs. The quality of included qualitative studies will
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3 be appraised using the CASP checklist [20]. The 10-item CASP tool was considered to be the most
4 suitable tool to consider the quality parameters of qualitative work, and is a well-validated and
5 accepted tool [15]. Both the STROBE and CASP checklists will be applied independently by two
6 reviewers and any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
7 necessary).

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16 Studies will not be excluded on the basis of poor quality alone, rather we will discuss the implications
17 of including studies rated as being of poor quality and place them within context of the wider
18 literature. This low threshold for inclusion will be applied so that the review can benefit from
19 researcher insight and theoretical as well as empirical contributions. The relative quality of included
20 studies will be critically considered during the analysis and in reference to the developed synthesis
21 and we will attempt to assess the trustworthiness of the evidence in terms of transparency in reporting,
22 consensus and expertise of the team and relevant stakeholders, and draw on common sense and
23 expertise as well as evidence.

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 **Descriptive analysis and data synthesis**

36 We anticipate that the quantitative studies included in the review will be heterogenous and this will
37 prevent meta-analysis. We will provide a narrative synthesis of quantitative studies, structured around
38 population characteristics and the geographical region of studies. We will provide summaries of the
39 quantitative methods and measures used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards and knowledge
40 about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric properties.

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Meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative studies [21]. Initially reciprocal translation
will be performed by comparing the concepts presented in different studies. A chronological approach
will be taken to reciprocal translation; studies will be arranged chronologically, concepts from papers
one and two will be compared, and the synthesis of papers one and two will then be compared with
paper three, and so forth, as is described elsewhere [22]. When contradictions between studies are
identified, we will perform refutational synthesis by exploring and explaining these. A 'lines-of-

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3 argument' synthesis, that links and explains concepts presented by different studies, will be conducted
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5 so that an interpretation of all included studies can be presented.
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9 Two reviewers will lead data synthesis. Emergent analysis, and any discrepancies, will be discussed
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11 with other members of the review team. Microsoft Office software will be used to facilitate data
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13 synthesis.
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17 **Patient and public involvement**

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19 No patients or members of the public were involved in the design of this study.
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23 **Amendments**

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25 An amendment has been made to the initial registration of this systematic review in PROSPERO,
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27 which details that only studies from LMICs will be included in this review, and studies from HICs
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29 will be excluded from this review. Any further amendments to this protocol will be documented in the
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31 full review.
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37 **ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION**

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39 Ethics approval is not required as this is a protocol for the systematic review of previously published
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41 data. In addition to a report to the funding body, we intend to submit the systematic review for
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43 publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal. We will select an open access journal to ensure
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45 free access to undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, academics and research groups.
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47 Results will also be disseminated at conferences seminars, congresses and symposia and to relevant
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49 stakeholders.
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53 **Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to thank Mrs Nia Morris (NM) from BCUHB library for
54
55 her contribution to the development of the search strategy.
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3 **Contributions:** CR, RM, PH, AK, MK conceived the research idea. SN led the development of the
4 search strategy, with input from NM, RM, AK, PH. RM, SN, MK, AK, PH, CR conceived the
5 manuscript. RM lead the drafting of the manuscript with contributions from SN, AE, SB, MK, AK,
6 PH, NC, CR. All authors approved the final manuscript.
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13 **Funding:** This manuscript was funded by UK Research and Innovation Global Challenge Research
14 Fund (ref: MR/P028144/1). The funder did not have any role in developing this protocol.
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20 **Competing interests:** None declared
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For peer review only

Supplementary file 1: PRISMA-P (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols) 2015 checklist: recommended items to address in a systematic review protocol*

Section and topic	Item No	Checklist item	Complete
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION			
Title:			
Identification	1a	Identify the report as a protocol of a systematic review	X
Update	1b	If the protocol is for an update of a previous systematic review, identify as such	N/A
Registration	2	If registered, provide the name of the registry (such as PROSPERO) and registration number	X
Authors:			
Contact	3a	Provide name, institutional affiliation, e-mail address of all protocol authors; provide physical mailing address of corresponding author	X
Contributions	3b	Describe contributions of protocol authors and identify the guarantor of the review	X
Amendments	4	If the protocol represents an amendment of a previously completed or published protocol, identify as such and list changes; otherwise, state plan for documenting important protocol amendments	X
Support:			
Sources	5a	Indicate sources of financial or other support for the review	X
Sponsor	5b	Provide name for the review funder and/or sponsor	X
Role of sponsor or funder	5c	Describe roles of funder(s), sponsor(s), and/or institution(s), if any, in developing the protocol	X
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	6	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known	X
Objectives	7	Provide an explicit statement of the question(s) the review will address with reference to participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes (PICO)	X
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	8	Specify the study characteristics (such as PICO, study design, setting, time frame) and report characteristics (such as years considered, language, publication	X

		status) to be used as criteria for eligibility for the review	
Information sources	9	Describe all intended information sources (such as electronic databases, contact with study authors, trial registers or other grey literature sources) with planned dates of coverage	X
Search strategy	10	Present draft of search strategy to be used for at least one electronic database, including planned limits, such that it could be repeated	X
Study records:			
Data management	11a	Describe the mechanism(s) that will be used to manage records and data throughout the review	X
Selection process	11b	State the process that will be used for selecting studies (such as two independent reviewers) through each phase of the review (that is, screening, eligibility and inclusion in meta-analysis)	X
Data collection process	11c	Describe planned method of extracting data from reports (such as piloting forms, done independently, in duplicate), any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigator	X
Data items	12	List and define all variables for which data will be sought (such as PICO items, funding sources), any pre-planned data assumptions and simplifications	X
Outcomes and prioritization	13	List and define all outcomes for which data will be sought, including prioritization of main and additional outcomes, with rationale	X
Risk of bias in individual studies	14	Describe anticipated methods for assessing risk of bias of individual studies, including whether this will be done at the outcome or study level, or both; state how this information will be used in data synthesis	X
Data synthesis	15a	Describe criteria under which study data will be quantitatively synthesised	X
	15b	If data are appropriate for quantitative synthesis, describe planned summary measures, methods of handling data and methods of combining data from studies, including any planned exploration of consistency (such as I^2 , Kendall's τ)	N/A
	15c	Describe any proposed additional analyses (such as sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression)	X
	15d	If quantitative synthesis is not appropriate, describe the type of summary planned	X
Meta-bias(es)	16	Specify any planned assessment of meta-bias(es) (such as publication bias across studies, selective reporting within studies)	N/A
Confidence in cumulative evidence	17	Describe how the strength of the body of evidence will be assessed (such as GRADE)	N/A

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*** It is strongly recommended that this checklist be read in conjunction with the PRISMA-P Explanation and Elaboration (cite when available) for important clarification on the items. Amendments to a review protocol should be tracked and dated. The copyright for PRISMA-P (including checklist) is held by the PRISMA-P Group and is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence 4.0.**

From: Shamseer L, Moher D, Clarke M, Ghersi D, Liberati A, Petticrew M, Shekelle P, Stewart L, PRISMA-P Group. Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015: elaboration and explanation. BMJ. 2015 Jan 2;349(jan02 1):g7647.

For peer review only

Appendix 1: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: Medline search strategy

Self-harm and suicide terms

- 1 Suicide/
- 2 Suicide.mp
- 3 Suicide, Attempted/
- 4 Suicide, Attempted.mp
- 5 Self-Injurious Behavior/
- 6 Self-Injurious Behavior.mp
- 7 Self-Mutilation/
- 8 Self-Mutilation.mp
- 9 Suicidal Ideation/
- 10 Suicidal Ideation.mp
- 11 Attempted Suicide/
- 12 Attempted Suicide.mp
- 13 Drug Overdose/
- 14 Drug Overdose.mp
- 15 ((Self adj2 cut\$) or (para adj suicid\$) or (attempt\$ adj suicide\$) or (suicid\$ adj behavio\$)).mp.
- 16 (auto?mutilat\$ or cutt\$ or over?dos\$ or self?destruct\$ or self?harm\$ or self?immolat\$ or self?inflict\$ or self?injur\$ or self?mutilat\$ or self?poison\$ or suicide\$ or self?burn\$).mp.
- 17 Or/1-16

Stakeholder terms

- 18 exp Health Personnel/
- 19 Health Personnel.mp
- 20 exp PHYSICIANS/
- 21 PHYSICIANS.mp
- 22 exp Personnel, Hospital/
- 23 Personnel, Hospital.mp
- 24 Social Workers/
- 25 Social Workers.mp
- 26 ((doctor\$ or physician\$ or hosp\$ or medic\$ or health?care or social or wel?fare) adj (profession\$ or staff\$ or officer\$ or person\$ or worker\$)).mp
- 27 Family/
- 28 Famil\$.mp
- 29 Friends/
- 30 Friend\$.mp
- 31 Caregivers/
- 32 Caregiver\$.mp
- 33 Criminals/
- 34 Criminal\$.mp
- 35 Prisoners/
- 36 Prison\$.mp
- 37 Social Justice/
- 38 Soci\$ adj Just\$.mp
- 39 (partner\$ or parent\$ or grandparent\$ or children or sibling\$ or famil\$ or friend\$ or relative\$).mp.
- 40 (communit\$ or societ\$ or government\$).mp.
- 41 (criminal\$ or offender\$ or prisoner\$ or in?mate\$).mp.
- 42 (justice adj system\$).mp.

1
2
3 **43** or/18-42

4 **Knowledge and attitude terms**

5 **44** Attitude/

6 **45** Attitude of Health Personnel/

7 **46** Attitude to Death/

8 **47** Knowledge/

9 **48** Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice/

10 **49** Awareness/

11 **50** Education/

12 **51** Health Education/

13 **52** ((train\$ or trainer\$ or experienc\$ or perspectiv\$ or knowledg\$ or attitud\$ or awaren\$ or
14 educat\$) adj health).mp.

15 **53** social behavior/ or help-seeking behavior/ or self-control/ or shyness/ or social
16 adjustment/ or social isolation/ or social marginalization/ or social skills/ or social
17 stigma/ or social exclusion/ or social inclusion

18 **54** Prejudice/

19 **55** Taboo/

20 **56** exp Shame/

21 **57** (tabo\$ or sham\$ or stigma\$ or prejudice\$ or help?seek\$ behavior\$ or self?control\$ or
22 shy\$ or (social adj adjust\$ or behavio\$ or isolate\$ or margin\$ or Stigm\$ or skil\$)).mp

23 **58** or/44-57

24 **LMIC terms**

25 **59** Developing Countries/

26 **60** "low and middle income countr\$".ab,ti.

27 **61** LMIC.mp.

28 **62** india/ or sikkim/ or pakistan/

29 **63** exp Asia/

30 **64** or/59-63

31 **Self-harm and suicide, stakeholders, knowledge and attitude and LMIC combined (with
32 limits)**

33 **65** 17 and 43 and 58 and 64

34 **66** limit 65 to humans

35 **67** limit 66 (adolescent <13 to 17 years> or adult <18 to 64 years> or aged <65+ years>)
36 (aged or "aged, 80 and over" or "frail elderly" or "middle aged" or "young adult" or
37 adults or "teenager" or adolescent).mp

Appendix 2: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries systematic review: data extraction form

Notes for reviewers

Record any missing information as unclear or not described to ensure it is clear that the information was not found in the paper, not that you forgot to extract it

General information		
Date form completed		
Reviewer extracting data		
Study title		
Study authors		
Journal		
Year of publication		
Study author contact details		
Notes		
Study eligibility for inclusion in review		
Main focus on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and/or suicide (excluding euthanasia or terrorism)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Study population aged 16 and above (or can data from those aged 16 and above only can be extracted?)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Low-middle income country	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Include or exclude	Include/Exclude	
Reason for exclusion	Reasons for exclusion 1) Knowledge, attitudes and experience of self-harm/suicide not main concern of study (including terrorism and euthanasia) include main phenomenon being studied in notes – to be reviewed after 25 studies 1a) Completely irrelevant topic e.g. paper on depression, no mention of self-harm/suicide 1b) Focus on prevalence of suicide/self-harm 1c) Focus on risk factors of suicide/self-harm 1d) Focus on intervention only 1e) Mention of self-harm/suicide however topic not relevant to attitudes, knowledge and experiences of self-harm/suicide 2) Research not conducted in LMICs 3) Research population not 16 and over 4) Literature review 5) Commentary, book review, editorial	
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Participants		

	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Study location (Country and state/city/area) e.g. India, Bangalore		
Study setting e.g. hospital, community		
Study population e.g. nurses, community members		
Informed consent obtained	<i>Yes, No, Unclear</i>	
Total number of participants		
Exclusions and withdrawals		
Participant demographics e.g. Age Sex Race/Ethnicity Religious beliefs Mental illness diagnosis Physical illness diagnosis Other demographics		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Methods		
	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Aim of study/Research question(s) (implicit or explicit in text?)		
Study methodology (or methodologies)		
Quantitative measures used e.g. Acceptability of Suicide Scale and information on whether measure is validated (if applicable)		
Quantitative analysis methods and procedure		
Qualitative methods used e.g. focus group, one-to-one interviews, vignettes (if applicable)		
Theoretical/epistemological perspectives underpinning qualitative research (explicit or reviewer's interpretation)		
Qualitative data analysis methods and procedure		
Start date and end date		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Results		
	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Qualitative results – direct quotes from participants (first order)		
Qualitative results – study		

author's interpretations of data (second order)		
Quantitative results		
Indicators of acceptability to users (if applicable)		
Suggested mechanisms of intervention action (if applicable)		
Characteristics of included studies: Other information		
	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Key conclusions of authors		
References to other relevant studies		
Correspondence required by reviewers for further information (who, when, what requested)		
Notes		

BMJ Open

Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2020-041645.R1
Article Type:	Protocol
Date Submitted by the Author:	09-Jan-2021
Complete List of Authors:	McPhillips, Rebecca; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Nafees, Sadia; Bangor University, North Wales Centre for Primary Care Research Elahi, Anam ; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Batool, Saqba; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Krishna, Murali; Bangor University Kraye, Anne; Bangor University Huxley, Peter; Bangor University Robinson, Catherine; The University of Manchester
Primary Subject Heading:	Global health
Secondary Subject Heading:	Mental health
Keywords:	Suicide & self-harm < PSYCHIATRY, PUBLIC HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH

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3 **1 Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and**
4 **2 middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review**

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36
37 17 **Word count: 2241**

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1 1 **ABSTRACT**

2 2 **Introduction:** Over 800,000 people die due to suicide each year and suicide presents huge
3 3 psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals, communities and countries as a whole.
4 4 Low and middle income countries (LMICs) are disproportionately affected by suicide. The strongest
5 5 risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and other types of self-harm have been found to
6 6 be robust predictors of suicidal behaviour. An approach that brings together multiple sectors including
7 7 education, labour, business, law, politics and the media is crucial to tackling suicide and self-harm.
8 8 The World Health Organization highlights that evaluations of the knowledge and attitudes that
9 9 priority groups, not only healthcare staff, have of mental health and suicidal behaviour are key to
10 10 suicide prevention strategies. The aim of this systematic review is to examine the knowledge, attitudes
11 11 and experiences different stakeholders in LMICs have of self-harm and suicide.

12 12 **Methods and analysis:** Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane
13 13 library will be searched. Reviewers working independently of each other will screen search results,
14 14 select studies for inclusion, extract and check extracted data, and rate the quality of the studies using
15 15 the STROBE and CASP checklists. In anticipation of heterogeneity, a narrative synthesis of
16 16 quantitative studies will be provided and meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative
17 17 studies.

18 18 **Ethics and dissemination:** Ethical approval is not required. A report will be provided for the funding
19 19 body, and the systematic review will be submitted for publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed,
20 20 open access journal. Results will also be disseminated at conferences, seminars, congresses and
21 21 symposia and to relevant stakeholders.

22
23 23 **PROSPERO registration number:** CRD42019135323

24
25 25 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

- 1 • A strength of this systematic review protocol is that it has been written according to the
2 Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA-P) 2015
3 checklist.
- 4 • A strength of the review is that it will conform to the PRISMA statement and to the Cochrane
5 systematic review literature guidelines when results are reported
- 6 • A strength of this review is that both quantitative and qualitative evidence will be assessed.
- 7 • A limitation of the review is the inclusion of peer reviewed studies only, however language
8 restrictions will not be applied
- 9 • We anticipate that the quantitative studies included in the review will be heterogenous,
10 therefore a limitation will be the lack of meta-analysis

12 **Keywords**

13 Self-harm; suicide; attitudes; knowledge; experience; quantitative; qualitative; low and middle
14 income countries, LMICs

16 **INTRODUCTION**

17 The World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that over 800,000 people die due to suicide each
18 year; 1 person every 40 seconds [1]. Suicide disproportionately affects low and middle income
19 countries (LMICs), in 2014 the WHO reported that 75.5% of suicides globally occur in LMICs, and in
20 South East Asia suicide is the leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds [1]. However, the under-
21 reporting and misclassification of suicide as a cause of death in LMICs mean that suicide rates are
22 likely higher than reported [1, 2]. Every suicide death is a tragedy for families, friends and
23 communities and suicide presents huge psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals,
24 communities and countries as a whole [1]. Reducing suicide is a key indicator for the United Nations
25 sustainable development goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being at all ages globally [3].
26 However, much of the published literature on suicide relates to high income countries (HICs), and to
27 effect change a better understanding of suicide within the cultural, political and socio-economic

1
2
3 1 context of LMICs is needed. Patient profiles, suicide rates, aetiology and methods differ between
4
5 2 LMICs and HICs [4]. For example, research to date indicates that the ratio of women to men who die
6
7 3 by suicide in LMICs is much lower than in HICs [5]. Furthermore, where marriage is considered to be
8
9 4 a protective factor for women in HICs, it is less so for women in some LMICs, and self-immolation
10
11 5 and the consumption of pesticides are far more common methods in LMICs than in HICs [6-9].
12
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14 6

15
16 7 The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and the WHO suggest that for each
17
18 8 adult who dies from suicide there may be 20 others attempting suicide [1]. Suicide attempts and
19
20 9 suicide are types of self-harm that are often differentiated from non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) in
21
22 10 terms of intent, frequency, methods, lethality and cognitions [10]. While the intent of suicidal
23
24 11 behaviours is to kill oneself, the intent of NSSI is not. NSSI behaviours are more frequent than suicide
25
26 12 and suicide attempts, with individuals employing more varying and less lethal methods and it is
27
28 13 suggested that the cognitions related to NSSI concern temporary relief while those related to suicidal
29
30 14 behaviour concern permanent relief [10-13]. Similarly to the literature on suicide, much of that
31
32 15 concerning self-harm is focussed on HICs [14-16], where self-harm has been found to be a robust
33
34 16 predictor of suicidal behaviour, with this link remaining after controlling for age, gender, and
35
36 17 ethnicity [12, 17-18]. A systematic review of the limited empirical research on self-harm in LMICs
37
38 18 found that the prevalence of NSSI and suicide attempts in LMICs was comparable to HICs and that
39
40 19 the most common methods of NSSI in LMICs were hitting, cutting, wound picking and biting and
41
42 20 these findings were similar to evidence from HICs [16] Risk factors identified for self-harm in LMICs
43
44 21 were often family related, for example family conflict, divorced parents and childhood abuse, and
45
46 22 protective factors were high family functioning and understanding parents, which were attributed to
47
48 23 greater reliance on family in LMICs compared to many Western HICs [16].
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53
54 25 Suicide and self-harm in both LMICs and HICs are the result of complex interactions between
55
56 26 genetic, psychological, biological, cultural, sociodemographic and social factors [1, 19-20]. Although
57
58 27 the healthcare sector clearly has a vital role to play in tackling suicide and self-harm in LMICs, an
59
60 28 approach that brings together multiple sectors including education, labour, business, law, politics and

1
2
3 1 the media is crucial [1, 21]. The knowledge, attitudes and experiences stakeholders from various
4
5 2 sectors have of suicide and self-harm are likely to influence suicide and self-harm prevention and
6
7 3 intervention strategies. A recent review by the WHO [21] highlights that evaluations of the knowledge
8
9 4 and attitudes that priority groups, for example policy makers and community groups, not only
10
11 5 healthcare staff, have of mental health and suicidal behaviour are key to the collection of high quality
12
13 6 surveillance data and prevention strategies. Reviews to date have focused on the knowledge, attitudes
14
15 7 and experiences that healthcare professionals have towards self-harm and suicide [22-25]. The aim of
16
17 8 this systematic review is to examine various stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of
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19 9 self-harm and suicide. Therefore, in addition to stakeholders from the healthcare sector, other
20
21 10 stakeholders who will be included in this review are people who have experienced self-harm and/or
22
23 11 have attempted suicide themselves, and their relatives, friends, and co-workers, and stakeholders from
24
25 12 the social, healthcare, government, and criminal justice sectors. We are interested in exploring the
26
27 13 range of publications on the broad spectrum of knowledge, attitudes and experiences that these
28
29 14 various stakeholders may have concerning suicide and self-harm, including for example, knowledge
30
31 15 stakeholders may have on prevalence and risk and protective factors for suicide and self-harm,
32
33 16 stigmatising or empathetic attitudes towards those who self-harm, and experiences such as providing
34
35 17 or receiving medical treatment for self-harm. This systematic review is being undertaken as part of the
36
37 18 South Asia Self Harm Initiative (SASHI) project, which aims to help to find effective responses to
38
39 19 self-harm and suicide in South Asia by building capability and capacity in research infrastructure and
40
41 20 expertise in the region. Findings from this systematic review will be used to inform the development
42
43 21 of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and well-being in South Asia. Thus, we are particularly interested
44
45 22 in studies conducted in South Asia and countries with comparable healthcare systems or cultural
46
47 23 backgrounds.
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54 **Research question**

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56 26 The SPICE (Setting, Perspective, phenomena of Interest, Comparison, Evaluation) framework was
57
58 27 used to generate the research question that will be addressed by this systematic review [26]:
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- 1 • What are stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and suicide in
 - 2 LMICs?

4 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

5 This protocol conforms to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
6 Protocols (PRISMA-P) checklist (see Supplementary File 1) [27]. We will conform to the PRISMA
7 statement and to the Cochrane systematic review literature guidelines when reporting the results [28-
8 29]. This systematic review has been registered on PROSPERO [30].

10 **Search strategy**

11 A Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) librarian with expertise in systematic reviews
12 has assisted the authors in the development of the search strategy (see Appendix 1). We will search
13 Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane library. We will not apply
14 any language restrictions to the search criteria. EndNote and Microsoft Word will be used to manage
15 initial search results, screening and data throughout the review. We will update the searches prior to
16 publication to ensure the latest papers are included. Reference lists from included studies and any
17 identified systematic or literature reviews will also be searched by hand. Study authors will be
18 contacted in instances when it has not been possible to retrieve full text articles and when clarification
19 regarding inclusion criteria e.g. participant age, is required.

21 **Study selection criteria**

22 Inclusion criteria are empirical studies conducted in LMICs, as defined by the Organisation for
23 Economic Co-operation and Development [31], irrespective of the study design, whose focus is on the
24 knowledge, attitudes or experiences of stakeholders towards self-harm and/or suicide, where
25 participants are aged 16 years and above. Studies that include stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and
26 experiences of suicide and self-harm related to those under 16 will be included. Stakeholders are
27 people who have experienced self-harm and/or have attempted suicide themselves, relatives, friends,

1 co-workers, and healthcare workers of those who have self-harmed, attempted or completed suicide
2 and people in the social, healthcare, government, and criminal justice sectors. Exclusion criteria are
3 studies conducted in high income countries (HICs) and studies whose participants are not aged 16
4 years and above. Studies whose main focus is on the prevalence and/or predictors of self-harm and/or
5 suicide, relationships between state and/or trait characteristics and self-harm and/or suicide,
6 euthanasia, terrorism, or epidemiology will also be excluded. Systematic and literature reviews will be
7 consulted for relevant references but will not be included in the review. Opinion pieces, editorials,
8 book reviews, and conference and poster abstracts will not be included in the review.

9
10 The selection of studies for inclusion will adhere to the Cochrane guidelines and the process of
11 selection of eligible studies will be illustrated via a PRISMA diagram [29]. Following deduplication
12 of search results in EndNote, the following screening process will be undertaken in order to select
13 studies for inclusion in the systematic review:

14
15 1) Titles and abstracts will be read by two reviewers independently, and relevance and fit with
16 the inclusion criteria will be assessed. Those of no obvious relevance will be excluded and
17 any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
18 necessary).

19
20 2) Full text articles of remaining studies will be retrieved and read by two reviewers
21 independently to assess their suitability for inclusion in the final review, disagreements will
22 be resolved by discussion with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if necessary).

23 Both reviewers will populate a piloted pro-forma for each full text paper read (see Appendix
24 2).

25 26 **Data extraction**

1
2
3 1 Data will be extracted from selected studies by one reviewer, and a second reviewer will check for
4
5 2 accuracy. Extracted data will be recorded on a piloted pro-forma (see Appendix 2), and will reflect the
6
7 3 inclusion criteria and the designated aims of the review, derived from the article as a whole.
8
9 4 Discrepancies will be resolved through discussion (with the wider expert group if necessary).
10
11 5 Additional data will be requested from study authors when necessary. Data extraction of qualitative
12
13 6 studies (and for qualitative components in studies with mixed methods) will adhere to the same
14
15 7 methods and will be reviewed independently.
16
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20 9 **Outcomes**

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22 10 Outcomes of interest include:

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25 11 • The identification of relevant information on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and
26
27 12 experiences of self-harm and suicide, particularly in South Asia and in countries with
28
29 13 comparable healthcare systems and cultural backgrounds
- 30
31 14 • The quantitative methods and measures that have been used to investigate stakeholders'
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33 15 attitudes towards and knowledge about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric
34
35 16 properties
- 36
37 17 • The qualitative methods that have been used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards,
38
39 18 knowledge about, and experiences of self-harm and suicide.

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42
43 19 The identified outcomes will inform the development of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and well-
44
45 20 being in South Asia as part of the SASHI project.
46
47
48

49 22 **Quality assessment**

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51 23 All eligible studies will be subject to quality appraisal. The quality of included quantitative studies
52
53 24 will be appraised using the STROBE checklist [32]. The STROBE Statement consists of a checklist of
54
55 25 22 items, which relate to the title, abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion sections of
56
57 26 articles. Eighteen items are common to cohort studies, case-control studies and cross-sectional studies
58
59 27 and four are specific to each of the three study designs. The quality of included qualitative studies will
60

1
2
3 1 be appraised using the CASP checklist [33]. The 10-item CASP tool was considered to be the most
4
5 2 suitable tool to consider the quality parameters of qualitative work, and is a well-validated and
6
7 3 accepted tool [28]. Both the STROBE and CASP checklists will be applied independently by two
8
9 4 reviewers and any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
10
11 5 necessary).
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14 6

15
16 7 Studies will not be excluded on the basis of poor quality alone, rather all studies that meet the
17
18 8 inclusion criteria will be included in the review. This low threshold for inclusion will be applied so
19
20 9 that the review can benefit from researcher insight and theoretical as well as empirical contributions.
21
22 10 The relative quality of included studies will be critically considered and discussed in the review.
23
24 11

26 12 **Descriptive analysis and data synthesis**

27
28 13 We anticipate that the quantitative studies included in the review will be heterogenous and this will
29
30 14 prevent meta-analysis. We will provide a narrative synthesis of quantitative studies, structured around
31
32 15 population characteristics and the geographical region of studies. We will provide summaries of the
33
34 16 quantitative methods and measures used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards and knowledge
35
36 17 about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric properties.
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41 19 Meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative studies [34]. Initially reciprocal translation
42
43 20 will be performed by comparing the concepts presented in different studies. A chronological approach
44
45 21 will be taken to reciprocal translation; studies will be arranged chronologically, concepts from papers
46
47 22 one and two will be compared, and the synthesis of papers one and two will then be compared with
48
49 23 paper three, and so forth, as is described elsewhere [35]. When contradictions between studies are
50
51 24 identified, we will perform refutational synthesis by exploring and explaining these. A 'lines-of-
52
53 25 argument' synthesis, that links and explains concepts presented by different studies, will be conducted
54
55 26 so that an interpretation of all included studies can be presented.
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3 1 Two reviewers will lead data synthesis. Emergent analysis, and any discrepancies, will be discussed
4
5 2 with other members of the review team. Microsoft Office software will be used to facilitate data
6
7 3 synthesis.
8
9 4

11 5 **Patient and public involvement**

13 6 No patients or members of the public were involved in the design of this study.
14
15 7

17 8 **Amendments**

19 9 An amendment has been made to the initial registration of this systematic review in PROSPERO,
20
21 10 which details that only studies from LMICs will be included in this review, and studies from HICs
22
23 11 will be excluded from this review. Any further amendments to this protocol will be documented in the
24
25 12 full review.
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27 13

30 14 **ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION**

32 15 Ethics approval is not required as this is a protocol for the systematic review of previously published
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34 16 data. In addition to a report to the funding body, we intend to submit the systematic review for
35
36 17 publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal. We will select an open access journal to ensure
37
38 18 free access to undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, academics and research groups.
39
40 19 Results will also be disseminated at conferences seminars, congresses and symposia and to relevant
41
42 20 stakeholders.
43
44 21

47 22 **Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to thank Mrs Nia Morris (NM) from BCUHB library for
48
49 23 her contribution to the development of the search strategy.
50
51 24

53 25 **Contributions:** CR, RM, PH, AK, MK conceived the research idea. SN led the development of the
54
55 26 search strategy, with input from NM, RM, AK, PH. RM, SN, MK, AK, PH, CR conceived the
56
57 27 manuscript. RM lead the drafting of the manuscript with contributions from SN, AE, SB, MK, AK,
58
59 28 PH, NC, CR. All authors approved the final manuscript.

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5 2 **Funding:** This manuscript was funded by UK Research and Innovation Global Challenge Research
6
7 3 Fund (ref: MR/P028144/1). The funder did not have any role in developing this protocol.
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11 5 **Competing interests:** None declared
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13 6

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22 11 [F6255CAAD6496DA078DE41FAB0C5CCBF?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/131056/9789241564779_eng.pdf;jsessionid=F6255CAAD6496DA078DE41FAB0C5CCBF?sequence=1) . [Accessed 04 May 2020].
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For peer review only

Appendix 1: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: Medline search strategy

Self-harm and suicide terms

- 1 Suicide/
- 2 Suicide.mp
- 3 Suicide, Attempted/
- 4 Suicide, Attempted.mp
- 5 Self-Injurious Behavior/
- 6 Self-Injurious Behavior.mp
- 7 Self-Mutilation/
- 8 Self-Mutilation.mp
- 9 Suicidal Ideation/
- 10 Suicidal Ideation.mp
- 11 Attempted Suicide/
- 12 Attempted Suicide.mp
- 13 Drug Overdose/
- 14 Drug Overdose.mp
- 15 ((Self adj2 cut\$) or (para adj suicid\$) or (attempt\$ adj suicide\$) or (suicid\$ adj behavio\$)).mp.
- 16 (auto?mutilat\$ or cutt\$ or over?dos\$ or self?destruct\$ or self?harm\$ or self?immolat\$ or self?inflict\$ or self?injur\$ or self?mutilat\$ or self?poison\$ or suicide\$ or self?burn\$).mp.
- 17 Or/1-16

Stakeholder terms

- 18 exp Health Personnel/
- 19 Health Personnel.mp
- 20 exp PHYSICIANS/
- 21 PHYSICIANS.mp
- 22 exp Personnel, Hospital/
- 23 Personnel, Hospital.mp
- 24 Social Workers/
- 25 Social Workers.mp
- 26 ((doctor\$ or physician\$ or hosp\$ or medic\$ or health?care or social or wel?fare) adj (profession\$ or staff\$ or officer\$ or person\$ or worker\$)).mp
- 27 Family/
- 28 Famil\$.mp
- 29 Friends/
- 30 Friend\$.mp
- 31 Caregivers/
- 32 Caregiver\$.mp
- 33 Criminals/
- 34 Criminal\$.mp
- 35 Prisoners/
- 36 Prison\$.mp
- 37 Social Justice/
- 38 Soci\$ adj Just\$.mp
- 39 (partner\$ or parent\$ or grandparent\$ or children or sibling\$ or famil\$ or friend\$ or relative\$).mp.
- 40 (communit\$ or societ\$ or government\$).mp.
- 41 (criminal\$ or offender\$ or prisoner\$ or in?mate\$).mp.
- 42 (justice adj system\$).mp.

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3 **43** or/18-42

4 **Knowledge and attitude terms**

5 **44** Attitude/

6 **45** Attitude of Health Personnel/

7 **46** Attitude to Death/

8 **47** Knowledge/

9 **48** Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice/

10 **49** Awareness/

11 **50** Education/

12 **51** Health Education/

13 **52** ((train\$ or trainer\$ or experienc\$ or perspectiv\$ or knowledg\$ or attitud\$ or awaren\$ or
14 educat\$) adj health).mp.

15 **53** social behavior/ or help-seeking behavior/ or self-control/ or shyness/ or social
16 adjustment/ or social isolation/ or social marginalization/ or social skills/ or social
17 stigma/ or social exclusion/ or social inclusion

18 **54** Prejudice/

19 **55** Taboo/

20 **56** exp Shame/

21 **57** (tabo\$ or sham\$ or stigma\$ or prejudice\$ or help?seek\$ behavior\$ or self?control\$ or
22 shy\$ or (social adj adjust\$ or behavio\$ or isolate\$ or margin\$ or Stigm\$ or skil\$)).mp

23 **58** or/44-57

24 **LMIC terms**

25 **59** Developing Countries/

26 **60** "low and middle income countr\$".ab,ti.

27 **61** LMIC.mp.

28 **62** india/ or sikkim/ or pakistan/

29 **63** exp Asia/

30 **64** or/59-63

31 **Self-harm and suicide, stakeholders, knowledge and attitude and LMIC combined (with
32 limits)**

33 **65** 17 and 43 and 58 and 64

34 **66** limit 65 to humans

35 **67** limit 66 (adolescent <13 to 17 years> or adult <18 to 64 years> or aged <65+ years>)
36 (aged or "aged, 80 and over" or "frail elderly" or "middle aged" or "young adult" or
37 adults or "teenager" or adolescent).mp
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Appendix 2: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries systematic review: data extraction form

Notes for reviewers

Record any missing information as unclear or not described to ensure it is clear that the information was not found in the paper, not that you forgot to extract it

General information		
Date form completed		
Reviewer extracting data		
Study title		
Study authors		
Journal		
Year of publication		
Study author contact details		
Notes		
Study eligibility for inclusion in review		
Main focus on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and/or suicide (excluding euthanasia or terrorism)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Study population aged 16 and above (or can data from those aged 16 and above only can be extracted?)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Low-middle income country	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Include or exclude	Include/Exclude	
Reason for exclusion	Reasons for exclusion 1) Knowledge, attitudes and experience of self-harm/suicide not main concern of study (including terrorism and euthanasia) include main phenomenon being studied in notes – to be reviewed after 25 studies 1a) Completely irrelevant topic e.g. paper on depression, no mention of self-harm/suicide 1b) Focus on prevalence of suicide/self-harm 1c) Focus on risk factors of suicide/self-harm 1d) Focus on intervention only 1e) Mention of self-harm/suicide however topic not relevant to attitudes, knowledge and experiences of self-harm/suicide 2) Research not conducted in LMICs 3) Research population not 16 and over 4) Literature review 5) Commentary, book review, editorial	
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Participants		

	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Study location (Country and state/city/area) e.g. India, Bangalore		
Study setting e.g. hospital, community		
Study population e.g. nurses, community members		
Informed consent obtained	<i>Yes, No, Unclear</i>	
Total number of participants		
Exclusions and withdrawals		
Participant demographics e.g. Age Sex Race/Ethnicity Religious beliefs Mental illness diagnosis Physical illness diagnosis Other demographics		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Methods		
	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Aim of study/Research question(s) (implicit or explicit in text?)		
Study methodology (or methodologies)		
Quantitative measures used e.g. Acceptability of Suicide Scale and information on whether measure is validated (if applicable)		
Quantitative analysis methods and procedure		
Qualitative methods used e.g. focus group, one-to-one interviews, vignettes (if applicable)		
Theoretical/epistemological perspectives underpinning qualitative research (explicit or reviewer's interpretation)		
Qualitative data analysis methods and procedure		
Start date and end date		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Results		
	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Qualitative results – direct quotes from participants (first order)		

Qualitative results – study author’s interpretations of data (second order)		
Quantitative results		
Indicators of acceptability to users (if applicable)		
Suggested mechanisms of intervention action (if applicable)		
Characteristics of included studies: Other information		
	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Key conclusions of authors		
References to other relevant studies		
Correspondence required by reviewers for further information (who, when, what requested)		
Notes		

Supplementary file 1: PRISMA-P (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols) 2015 checklist: recommended items to address in a systematic review protocol*

Section and topic	Item No	Checklist item	Complete
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION			
Title:			
Identification	1a	Identify the report as a protocol of a systematic review	X
Update	1b	If the protocol is for an update of a previous systematic review, identify as such	N/A
Registration	2	If registered, provide the name of the registry (such as PROSPERO) and registration number	X
Authors:			
Contact	3a	Provide name, institutional affiliation, e-mail address of all protocol authors; provide physical mailing address of corresponding author	X
Contributions	3b	Describe contributions of protocol authors and identify the guarantor of the review	X
Amendments	4	If the protocol represents an amendment of a previously completed or published protocol, identify as such and list changes; otherwise, state plan for documenting important protocol amendments	X
Support:			
Sources	5a	Indicate sources of financial or other support for the review	X
Sponsor	5b	Provide name for the review funder and/or sponsor	X
Role of sponsor or funder	5c	Describe roles of funder(s), sponsor(s), and/or institution(s), if any, in developing the protocol	X
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	6	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known	X
Objectives	7	Provide an explicit statement of the question(s) the review will address with reference to participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes (PICO)	X
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	8	Specify the study characteristics (such as PICO, study design, setting, time frame) and report characteristics (such as years considered, language, publication	X

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		status) to be used as criteria for eligibility for the review	
Information sources	9	Describe all intended information sources (such as electronic databases, contact with study authors, trial registers or other grey literature sources) with planned dates of coverage	X
Search strategy	10	Present draft of search strategy to be used for at least one electronic database, including planned limits, such that it could be repeated	X
Study records:			
Data management	11a	Describe the mechanism(s) that will be used to manage records and data throughout the review	X
Selection process	11b	State the process that will be used for selecting studies (such as two independent reviewers) through each phase of the review (that is, screening, eligibility and inclusion in meta-analysis)	X
Data collection process	11c	Describe planned method of extracting data from reports (such as piloting forms, done independently, in duplicate), any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigator	X
Data items	12	List and define all variables for which data will be sought (such as PICO items, funding sources), any pre-planned data assumptions and simplifications	X
Outcomes and prioritization	13	List and define all outcomes for which data will be sought, including prioritization of main and additional outcomes, with rationale	X
Risk of bias in individual studies	14	Describe anticipated methods for assessing risk of bias of individual studies, including whether this will be done at the outcome or study level, or both; state how this information will be used in data synthesis	X
Data synthesis	15a	Describe criteria under which study data will be quantitatively synthesised	X
	15b	If data are appropriate for quantitative synthesis, describe planned summary measures, methods of handling data and methods of combining data from studies, including any planned exploration of consistency (such as I ² , Kendall's τ)	N/A
	15c	Describe any proposed additional analyses (such as sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression)	X
	15d	If quantitative synthesis is not appropriate, describe the type of summary planned	X
Meta-bias(es)	16	Specify any planned assessment of meta-bias(es) (such as publication bias across studies, selective reporting within studies)	N/A
Confidence in cumulative evidence	17	Describe how the strength of the body of evidence will be assessed (such as GRADE)	N/A

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3 *** It is strongly recommended that this checklist be read in conjunction with the PRISMA-P Explanation and Elaboration (cite when available) for important**
4 **clarification on the items. Amendments to a review protocol should be tracked and dated. The copyright for PRISMA-P (including checklist) is held by the**
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6

7 *From: Shamseer L, Moher D, Clarke M, Ghersi D, Liberati A, Petticrew M, Shekelle P, Stewart L, PRISMA-P Group. Preferred reporting items for systematic review and*
8 *meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015: elaboration and explanation. BMJ. 2015 Jan 2;349(jan02 1):g7647.*
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For peer review only

BMJ Open

Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2020-041645.R2
Article Type:	Protocol
Date Submitted by the Author:	10-Mar-2021
Complete List of Authors:	McPhillips, Rebecca; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Nafees, Sadia; Bangor University, North Wales Centre for Primary Care Research Elahi, Anam ; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Batool, Saqba; The University of Manchester, Social Care and Society Krishna, Murali; Bangor University Kraye, Anne; Bangor University Huxley, Peter; Bangor University Chaudhry, Nasim ; Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning Robinson, Catherine; The University of Manchester
Primary Subject Heading:	Global health
Secondary Subject Heading:	Mental health
Keywords:	Suicide & self-harm < PSYCHIATRY, PUBLIC HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH

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3 **1 Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and**
4 **2 middle income countries: protocol for a systematic review**

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39 19 **Word count: 2241**

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1 **ABSTRACT**

2 **Introduction:** Over 800,000 people die due to suicide each year and suicide presents huge
3 psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals, communities and countries as a whole.
4 Low and middle income countries (LMICs) are disproportionately affected by suicide. The strongest
5 risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and other types of self-harm have been found to
6 be robust predictors of suicidal behaviour. An approach that brings together multiple sectors including
7 education, labour, business, law, politics and the media is crucial to tackling suicide and self-harm.
8 The World Health Organization highlights that evaluations of the knowledge and attitudes that
9 priority groups, not only healthcare staff, have of mental health and suicidal behaviour are key to
10 suicide prevention strategies. The aim of this systematic review is to examine the knowledge, attitudes
11 and experiences different stakeholders in LMICs have of self-harm and suicide.

12 **Methods and analysis:** Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane
13 library will be searched. Reviewers working independently of each other will screen search results,
14 select studies for inclusion, extract and check extracted data, and rate the quality of the studies using
15 the STROBE and CASP checklists. In anticipation of heterogeneity, a narrative synthesis of
16 quantitative studies will be provided and meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative
17 studies.

18 **Ethics and dissemination:** Ethical approval is not required. A report will be provided for the funding
19 body, and the systematic review will be submitted for publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed,
20 open access journal. Results will also be disseminated at conferences, seminars, congresses and
21 symposia and to relevant stakeholders.

22
23 **PROSPERO registration number:** CRD42019135323

24
25 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

- 1 • A strength of this systematic review protocol is that it has been written according to the
2 Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA-P) 2015
3 checklist.
- 4 • A strength of the review is that it will conform to the PRISMA statement and to the Cochrane
5 systematic review literature guidelines when results are reported
- 6 • A strength of this review is that both quantitative and qualitative evidence will be assessed.
- 7 • A limitation of the review is the inclusion of peer reviewed studies only, however language
8 restrictions will not be applied
- 9 • As it is likely that the quantitative studies included in the review will be heterogenous,
10 therefore a limitation will be the lack of meta-analysis

12 **Keywords**

13 Self-harm; suicide; attitudes; knowledge; experience; quantitative; qualitative; low and middle
14 income countries, LMICs

16 **INTRODUCTION**

17 The World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that over 800,000 people die due to suicide each
18 year; 1 person every 40 seconds [1]. Suicide disproportionately affects low and middle income
19 countries (LMICs), in 2014 the WHO reported that 75.5% of suicides globally occur in LMICs, and in
20 South East Asia suicide is the leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds [1]. However, the under-
21 reporting and misclassification of suicide as a cause of death in LMICs mean that suicide rates are
22 likely higher than reported [1, 2]. Every suicide death is a tragedy for families, friends and
23 communities and suicide presents huge psychological, economic and social burdens for individuals,
24 communities and countries as a whole [1]. Reducing suicide is a key indicator for the United Nations
25 sustainable development goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being at all ages globally [3].
26 However, much of the published literature on suicide relates to high income countries (HICs), and to
27 effect change a better understanding of suicide within the cultural, political and socio-economic

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3 1 context of LMICs is needed. Patient profiles, suicide rates, aetiology and methods differ between
4
5 2 LMICs and HICs [4]. For example, research to date indicates that the ratio of women to men who die
6
7 3 by suicide in LMICs is much lower than in HICs [5]. Furthermore, while marriage is considered to be
8
9 4 a protective factor for women in HICs, it is less so for women in some LMICs, and self-immolation
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11 5 and the consumption of pesticides are far more common methods in LMICs than in HICs [6-9].
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16 7 The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt, and the WHO suggest that for each
17
18 8 adult who dies from suicide there may be 20 others attempting suicide [1]. Harm arising from
19
20 9 suicidal behaviour, suicide attempts and suicide are types of self-harm that are often differentiated
21
22 10 from non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) in terms of intent, frequency, methods, lethality and cognitions
23
24 11 [10]. The motivation for suicidal behaviours is often to remove suffering and the intent of suicidal
25
26 12 behaviours is to end one's life, whereas the intent of NSSI is not. NSSI behaviours are more frequent
27
28 13 than suicide and suicide attempts, with individuals employing more varying and less lethal methods,
29
30 14 and it is suggested that the cognitions related to NSSI concern temporary relief while those related to
31
32 15 suicidal behaviour concern permanent relief [10-13]. Similarly to the literature on suicide, much of
33
34 16 that concerning NSSI is focussed on HICs [14-16], where NSSI has been found to be a robust
35
36 17 predictor of suicidal behaviour, with this link remaining after controlling for age, gender, and
37
38 18 ethnicity [12, 17-18]. A systematic review of the limited empirical research on self-harm, including
39
40 19 suicidal self-harm and NSSI, in LMICs found that the prevalence of NSSI and suicide attempts in
41
42 20 LMICs was comparable to HICs, that the most common methods of NSSI in LMICs were hitting,
43
44 21 cutting, wound picking and biting and these findings were similar to evidence from HICs [16] Risk
45
46 22 factors identified for suicidal self-harm and NSSI in LMICs were often family related, for example
47
48 23 family conflict, divorced parents and childhood abuse, and protective factors were high family
49
50 24 functioning and understanding parents, which were attributed to greater reliance on family in LMICs
51
52 25 compared to many Western HICs [16].
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58 27 Suicide and self-harm in both LMICs and HICs are the result of complex interactions between
59
60 28 genetic, psychological, biological, cultural, sociodemographic and social factors [1, 19-20]. Although

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3 1 the healthcare sector clearly has a vital role to play in tackling suicide and self-harm in LMICs, an
4
5 2 approach that brings together multiple sectors including education, labour, business, law, politics and
6
7 3 the media is crucial [1, 21]. The knowledge, attitudes and experiences stakeholders from various
8
9 4 sectors have of suicide and self-harm are likely to influence suicide and self-harm prevention and
10
11 5 intervention strategies. A recent review by the WHO [21] highlights that evaluations of the knowledge
12
13 6 and attitudes that priority groups, for example policy makers and community groups, not only
14
15 7 healthcare staff, have of mental health and suicidal behaviour are key to the collection of high quality
16
17 8 surveillance data and prevention strategies. Reviews to date have focused on the knowledge, attitudes
18
19 9 and experiences that healthcare professionals have towards self-harm and suicide [22-25]. The aim of
20
21 10 this systematic review is to examine various stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of
22
23 11 self-harm and suicide. Therefore, in addition to stakeholders from the healthcare sector, other
24
25 12 stakeholders who will be included in this review are people who have experienced self-harm and/or
26
27 13 have attempted suicide themselves, and their relatives, friends, and co-workers, and stakeholders from
28
29 14 the social, healthcare, government, and criminal justice sectors. We are interested in exploring the
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31 15 range of publications on the broad spectrum of knowledge, attitudes and experiences that these
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33 16 various stakeholders may have concerning suicide and self-harm, including for example, knowledge
34
35 17 stakeholders may have on prevalence and risk and protective factors for suicide and self-harm,
36
37 18 stigmatising or empathetic attitudes towards those who self-harm, and experiences such as providing
38
39 19 or receiving medical treatment for self-harm. This systematic review is being undertaken as part of the
40
41 20 South Asia Self Harm Initiative (SASHI) project, which aims to help to find effective responses to
42
43 21 self-harm and suicide in South Asia by building capability and capacity in research infrastructure and
44
45 22 expertise in the region. Findings from this systematic review will be used to inform the development
46
47 23 of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and well-being in South Asia. Thus, we are particularly interested
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49 24 in studies conducted in South Asia and countries with comparable healthcare systems or cultural
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51 25 backgrounds.

52 53 54 55 56 57 58 **Research question** 59 60

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3 1 The SPICE (Setting, Perspective, phenomena of Interest, Comparison, Evaluation) framework was
4
5 2 used to generate the research question that will be addressed by this systematic review [26]:
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- 8 3 • What are stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and suicide in
9
10 4 LMICs?
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15 6 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

17 7 This protocol conforms to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
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19 8 Protocols (PRISMA-P) checklist (see Supplementary File 1) [27]. We will conform to the PRISMA
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21 9 statement and to the Cochrane systematic review literature guidelines when reporting the results [28-
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23 10 29]. This systematic review has been registered on PROSPERO [30].
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27 12 **Search strategy**

29 13 A Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) librarian with expertise in systematic reviews
30
31 14 has assisted the authors in the development of the search strategy (see Appendix 1). We will search
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33 15 Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL, BNI, Social Sciences and Cochrane library. We will not apply
34
35 16 any language restrictions to the search criteria. EndNote and Microsoft Word will be used to manage
36
37 17 initial search results, screening and data throughout the review. We will update the searches prior to
38
39 18 publication to ensure the latest papers are included. Reference lists from included studies and any
40
41 19 identified systematic or literature reviews will also be searched by hand. Study authors will be
42
43 20 contacted in instances when it has not been possible to retrieve full text articles and when clarification
44
45 21 regarding inclusion criteria e.g. participant age, is required.
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51 23 **Study selection criteria**

53 24 Inclusion criteria are empirical studies conducted in LMICs, as defined by the Organisation for
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55 25 Economic Co-operation and Development [31], irrespective of the study design, whose focus is on the
56
57 26 knowledge, attitudes or experiences of stakeholders towards self-harm and/or suicide, where
58
59 27 participants are aged 16 years and above. Studies that include stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and
60

1 experiences of suicide and self-harm related to those under 16 will be included. Stakeholders are
2 people who have experienced self-harm and/or have attempted suicide themselves, relatives, friends,
3 co-workers, and healthcare workers of those who have self-harmed, attempted or completed suicide
4 and people in the social, healthcare, government, and criminal justice sectors. Exclusion criteria are
5 studies conducted in high income countries (HICs) and studies whose participants are not aged 16
6 years and above. Studies whose main focus is on the prevalence and/or predictors of self-harm and/or
7 suicide, relationships between state and/or trait characteristics and self-harm and/or suicide,
8 euthanasia, terrorism, or epidemiology will also be excluded. Systematic and literature reviews will be
9 consulted for relevant references but will not be included in the review. Opinion pieces, editorials,
10 book reviews, and conference and poster abstracts will not be included in the review.

11
12 The selection of studies for inclusion will adhere to the Cochrane guidelines and the process of
13 selection of eligible studies will be illustrated via a PRISMA diagram [29]. Following deduplication
14 of search results in EndNote, the following screening process will be undertaken in order to select
15 studies for inclusion in the systematic review:

16
17 1) Titles and abstracts will be read by two reviewers independently, and relevance and fit with
18 the inclusion criteria will be assessed. Those of no obvious relevance will be excluded and
19 any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
20 necessary).

21
22 2) Full text articles of remaining studies will be retrieved and read by two reviewers
23 independently to assess their suitability for inclusion in the final review, disagreements will
24 be resolved by discussion with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if necessary).
25 Both reviewers will populate a piloted pro-forma for each full text paper read (see Appendix
26 2).

27

1 **Data extraction**

2 Data will be extracted from selected studies by one reviewer, and a second reviewer will check for
3 accuracy. Extracted data will be recorded on a piloted pro-forma (see Appendix 2), and will reflect the
4 inclusion criteria and the designated aims of the review, derived from the article as a whole.
5 Discrepancies will be resolved through discussion (with the wider expert group if necessary).
6 Additional data will be requested from study authors when necessary. Data extraction of qualitative
7 studies (and for qualitative components in studies with mixed methods) will adhere to the same
8 methods and will be reviewed independently.

9 **Outcomes**

10 Outcomes of interest include:

- 11 • The identification of relevant information on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and
12 experiences of self-harm and suicide, particularly in South Asia and in countries with
13 comparable healthcare systems and cultural backgrounds
- 14 • The quantitative methods and measures that have been used to investigate stakeholders'
15 attitudes towards and knowledge about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric
16 properties
- 17 • The qualitative methods that have been used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards,
18 knowledge about, and experiences of self-harm and suicide.

19 The identified outcomes will inform the development of a survey on knowledge, attitudes and well-
20 being in South Asia as part of the SASHI project.

21 **Quality assessment**

22 All eligible studies will be subject to quality appraisal. The quality of included quantitative studies
23 will be appraised using the STROBE checklist [32]. The STROBE Statement consists of a checklist of
24 22 items, which relate to the title, abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion sections of
25 articles. Eighteen items are common to cohort studies, case-control studies and cross-sectional studies
26
27

1 and four are specific to each of the three study designs. The quality of included qualitative studies will
2 be appraised using the CASP checklist [33]. The 10-item CASP tool was considered to be the most
3 suitable tool to consider the quality parameters of qualitative work, and is a well-validated and
4 accepted tool [28]. Both the STROBE and CASP checklists will be applied independently by two
5 reviewers and any disagreements will be resolved with a third reviewer (and the wider expert group if
6 necessary).

7
8 Studies will not be excluded on the basis of poor quality alone, rather all studies that meet the
9 inclusion criteria will be included in the review. This low threshold for inclusion will be applied so
10 that the review can benefit from researcher insight and theoretical as well as empirical contributions.

11 The relative quality of included studies will be critically considered and discussed in the review.

12 13 **Descriptive analysis and data synthesis**

14 We anticipate that the quantitative studies included in the review will be heterogenous and this will
15 prevent meta-analysis. We will provide a narrative synthesis of quantitative studies, structured around
16 population characteristics and the geographical region of studies. We will provide summaries of the
17 quantitative methods and measures used to investigate stakeholders' attitudes towards and knowledge
18 about self-harm and suicide and their psychometric properties.

19
20 Meta-ethnography will be used to synthesise qualitative studies [34]. Initially reciprocal translation
21 will be performed by comparing the concepts presented in different studies. A chronological approach
22 will be taken to reciprocal translation; studies will be arranged chronologically, concepts from papers
23 one and two will be compared, and the synthesis of papers one and two will then be compared with
24 paper three, and so forth, as is described elsewhere [35]. When contradictions between studies are
25 identified, we will perform refutational synthesis by exploring and explaining these. A 'lines-of-
26 argument' synthesis, that links and explains concepts presented by different studies, will be conducted
27 so that an interpretation of all included studies can be presented.

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3 1 Two reviewers will lead data synthesis. Emergent analysis, and any discrepancies, will be discussed
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5 2 with other members of the review team. Microsoft Office software will be used to facilitate data
6
7 3 synthesis.
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11 **Patient and public involvement**

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13 6 No patients or members of the public were involved in the design of this study.
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18 **Amendments**

19
20 9 An amendment has been made to the initial registration of this systematic review in PROSPERO,
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22 10 which originally stated that studies from both HICs and LMICs would be included in the review. The
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24 11 PROSPERO record was amended to state that only studies from LMICs will be included in this
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26 12 review, and studies from HICs will be excluded from this review. Any further amendments to this
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28 13 protocol will be documented in the full review.
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32 **ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION**

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34 16 Ethics approval is not required as this is a protocol for the systematic review of previously published
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36 17 data. In addition to a report to the funding body, we intend to submit the systematic review for
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38 18 publication in a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal. We will select an open access journal to ensure
39
40 19 free access to undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, academics and research groups.
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43 20 Results will also be disseminated at conferences seminars, congresses and symposia and to relevant
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45 21 stakeholders.
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48
49 23 **Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to thank Mrs Nia Morris (NM) from BCUHB library for
50
51 24 her contribution to the development of the search strategy.
52
53 25

54
55 26 **Contributions:** CR, RM, PH, AK, MK conceived the research idea. SN led the development of the
56
57 27 search strategy, with input from NM, RM, AK, PH. RM, SN, MK, AK, PH, CR conceived the
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59
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1 manuscript. RM lead the drafting of the manuscript with contributions from SN, AE, SB, MK, AK,
2 PH, NC, CR. All authors approved the final manuscript.

3
4 **Funding:** This manuscript was funded by UK Research and Innovation Global Challenge Research
5 Fund (ref: MR/P028144/1). The funder did not have any role in developing this protocol.

6
7 **Competing interests:** None declared

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For peer review only

Supplementary file 1: PRISMA-P (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols) 2015 checklist: recommended items to address in a systematic review protocol*

Section and topic	Item No	Checklist item	Complete
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION			
Title:			
Identification	1a	Identify the report as a protocol of a systematic review	X
Update	1b	If the protocol is for an update of a previous systematic review, identify as such	N/A
Registration	2	If registered, provide the name of the registry (such as PROSPERO) and registration number	X
Authors:			
Contact	3a	Provide name, institutional affiliation, e-mail address of all protocol authors; provide physical mailing address of corresponding author	X
Contributions	3b	Describe contributions of protocol authors and identify the guarantor of the review	X
Amendments	4	If the protocol represents an amendment of a previously completed or published protocol, identify as such and list changes; otherwise, state plan for documenting important protocol amendments	X
Support:			
Sources	5a	Indicate sources of financial or other support for the review	X
Sponsor	5b	Provide name for the review funder and/or sponsor	X
Role of sponsor or funder	5c	Describe roles of funder(s), sponsor(s), and/or institution(s), if any, in developing the protocol	X
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	6	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known	X
Objectives	7	Provide an explicit statement of the question(s) the review will address with reference to participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes (PICO)	X
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	8	Specify the study characteristics (such as PICO, study design, setting, time frame) and report characteristics (such as years considered, language, publication	X

		status) to be used as criteria for eligibility for the review	
Information sources	9	Describe all intended information sources (such as electronic databases, contact with study authors, trial registers or other grey literature sources) with planned dates of coverage	X
Search strategy	10	Present draft of search strategy to be used for at least one electronic database, including planned limits, such that it could be repeated	X
Study records:			
Data management	11a	Describe the mechanism(s) that will be used to manage records and data throughout the review	X
Selection process	11b	State the process that will be used for selecting studies (such as two independent reviewers) through each phase of the review (that is, screening, eligibility and inclusion in meta-analysis)	X
Data collection process	11c	Describe planned method of extracting data from reports (such as piloting forms, done independently, in duplicate), any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigator	X
Data items	12	List and define all variables for which data will be sought (such as PICO items, funding sources), any pre-planned data assumptions and simplifications	X
Outcomes and prioritization	13	List and define all outcomes for which data will be sought, including prioritization of main and additional outcomes, with rationale	X
Risk of bias in individual studies	14	Describe anticipated methods for assessing risk of bias of individual studies, including whether this will be done at the outcome or study level, or both; state how this information will be used in data synthesis	X
Data synthesis	15a	Describe criteria under which study data will be quantitatively synthesised	X
	15b	If data are appropriate for quantitative synthesis, describe planned summary measures, methods of handling data and methods of combining data from studies, including any planned exploration of consistency (such as I^2 , Kendall's τ)	N/A
	15c	Describe any proposed additional analyses (such as sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression)	X
	15d	If quantitative synthesis is not appropriate, describe the type of summary planned	X
Meta-bias(es)	16	Specify any planned assessment of meta-bias(es) (such as publication bias across studies, selective reporting within studies)	N/A
Confidence in cumulative evidence	17	Describe how the strength of the body of evidence will be assessed (such as GRADE)	N/A

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*** It is strongly recommended that this checklist be read in conjunction with the PRISMA-P Explanation and Elaboration (cite when available) for important clarification on the items. Amendments to a review protocol should be tracked and dated. The copyright for PRISMA-P (including checklist) is held by the PRISMA-P Group and is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence 4.0.**

From: Shamseer L, Moher D, Clarke M, Ghersi D, Liberati A, Petticrew M, Shekelle P, Stewart L, PRISMA-P Group. Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015: elaboration and explanation. BMJ. 2015 Jan 2;349(jan02 1):g7647.

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Appendix 1: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries: Medline search strategy

Self-harm and suicide terms

- 1 Suicide/
- 2 Suicide.mp
- 3 Suicide, Attempted/
- 4 Suicide, Attempted.mp
- 5 Self-Injurious Behavior/
- 6 Self-Injurious Behavior.mp
- 7 Self-Mutilation/
- 8 Self-Mutilation.mp
- 9 Suicidal Ideation/
- 10 Suicidal Ideation.mp
- 11 Attempted Suicide/
- 12 Attempted Suicide.mp
- 13 Drug Overdose/
- 14 Drug Overdose.mp
- 15 ((Self adj2 cut\$) or (para adj suicid\$) or (attempt\$ adj suicide\$) or (suicid\$ adj behavio\$)).mp.
- 16 (auto?mutilat\$ or cutt\$ or over?dos\$ or self?destruct\$ or self?harm\$ or self?immolat\$ or self?inflict\$ or self?injur\$ or self?mutilat\$ or self?poison\$ or suicide\$ or self?burn\$).mp.
- 17 Or/1-16

Stakeholder terms

- 18 exp Health Personnel/
- 19 Health Personnel.mp
- 20 exp PHYSICIANS/
- 21 PHYSICIANS.mp
- 22 exp Personnel, Hospital/
- 23 Personnel, Hospital.mp
- 24 Social Workers/
- 25 Social Workers.mp
- 26 ((doctor\$ or physician\$ or hosp\$ or medic\$ or health?care or social or wel?fare) adj (profession\$ or staff\$ or officer\$ or person\$ or worker\$)).mp
- 27 Family/
- 28 Famil\$.mp
- 29 Friends/
- 30 Friend\$.mp
- 31 Caregivers/
- 32 Caregiver\$.mp
- 33 Criminals/
- 34 Criminal\$.mp
- 35 Prisoners/
- 36 Prison\$.mp
- 37 Social Justice/
- 38 Soci\$ adj Just\$.mp
- 39 (partner\$ or parent\$ or grandparent\$ or children or sibling\$ or famil\$ or friend\$ or relative\$).mp.
- 40 (communit\$ or societ\$ or government\$).mp.
- 41 (criminal\$ or offender\$ or prisoner\$ or in?mate\$).mp.
- 42 (justice adj system\$).mp.

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3 **43** or/18-42

4 **Knowledge and attitude terms**

5 **44** Attitude/

6 **45** Attitude of Health Personnel/

7 **46** Attitude to Death/

8 **47** Knowledge/

9 **48** Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice/

10 **49** Awareness/

11 **50** Education/

12 **51** Health Education/

13 **52** ((train\$ or trainer\$ or experienc\$ or perspectiv\$ or knowledg\$ or attitud\$ or awaren\$ or
14 educat\$) adj health).mp.

15 **53** social behavior/ or help-seeking behavior/ or self-control/ or shyness/ or social
16 adjustment/ or social isolation/ or social marginalization/ or social skills/ or social
17 stigma/ or social exclusion/ or social inclusion

18 **54** Prejudice/

19 **55** Taboo/

20 **56** exp Shame/

21 **57** (tabo\$ or sham\$ or stigma\$ or prejudice\$ or help?seek\$ behavior\$ or self?control\$ or
22 shy\$ or (social adj adjust\$ or behavio\$ or isolate\$ or margin\$ or Stigm\$ or skil\$)).mp

23 **58** or/44-57

24 **LMIC terms**

25 **59** Developing Countries/

26 **60** "low and middle income countr\$".ab,ti.

27 **61** LMIC.mp.

28 **62** india/ or sikkim/ or pakistan/

29 **63** exp Asia/

30 **64** or/59-63

31 **Self-harm and suicide, stakeholders, knowledge and attitude and LMIC combined (with
32 limits)**

33 **65** 17 and 43 and 58 and 64

34 **66** limit 65 to humans

35 **67** limit 66 (adolescent <13 to 17 years> or adult <18 to 64 years> or aged <65+ years>)
36 (aged or "aged, 80 and over" or "frail elderly" or "middle aged" or "young adult" or
37 adults or "teenager" or adolescent).mp
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Appendix 2: Knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of self-harm and suicide in low and middle income countries systematic review: data extraction form

Notes for reviewers

Record any missing information as unclear or not described to ensure it is clear that the information was not found in the paper, not that you forgot to extract it

General information		
Date form completed		
Reviewer extracting data		
Study title		
Study authors		
Journal		
Year of publication		
Study author contact details		
Notes		
Study eligibility for inclusion in review		
Main focus on stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes and experiences of self-harm and/or suicide (excluding euthanasia or terrorism)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Study population aged 16 and above (or can data from those aged 16 and above only can be extracted?)	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Low-middle income country	Yes/No	Location in text (pg. #)
Include or exclude	Include/Exclude	
Reason for exclusion	Reasons for exclusion 1) Knowledge, attitudes and experience of self-harm/suicide not main concern of study (including terrorism and euthanasia) include main phenomenon being studied in notes – to be reviewed after 25 studies 1a) Completely irrelevant topic e.g. paper on depression, no mention of self-harm/suicide 1b) Focus on prevalence of suicide/self-harm 1c) Focus on risk factors of suicide/self-harm 1d) Focus on intervention only 1e) Mention of self-harm/suicide however topic not relevant to attitudes, knowledge and experiences of self-harm/suicide 2) Research not conducted in LMICs 3) Research population not 16 and over 4) Literature review 5) Commentary, book review, editorial	
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Participants		

	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Study location (Country and state/city/area) e.g. India, Bangalore		
Study setting e.g. hospital, community		
Study population e.g. nurses, community members		
Informed consent obtained	<i>Yes, No, Unclear</i>	
Total number of participants		
Exclusions and withdrawals		
Participant demographics e.g. Age Sex Race/Ethnicity Religious beliefs Mental illness diagnosis Physical illness diagnosis Other demographics		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Methods		
	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Aim of study/Research question(s) (implicit or explicit in text?)		
Study methodology (or methodologies)		
Quantitative measures used e.g. Acceptability of Suicide Scale and information on whether measure is validated (if applicable)		
Quantitative analysis methods and procedure		
Qualitative methods used e.g. focus group, one-to-one interviews, vignettes (if applicable)		
Theoretical/epistemological perspectives underpinning qualitative research (explicit or reviewer's interpretation)		
Qualitative data analysis methods and procedure		
Start date and end date		
Notes		
Characteristics of included studies: Results		
	Description as stated in paper	Location in text (pg. #)
Qualitative results – direct quotes from participants (first order)		

Qualitative results – study author’s interpretations of data (second order)		
Quantitative results		
Indicators of acceptability to users (if applicable)		
Suggested mechanisms of intervention action (if applicable)		
Characteristics of included studies: Other information		
	Description as stated in paper	<i>Location in text (pg. #)</i>
Key conclusions of authors		
References to other relevant studies		
Correspondence required by reviewers for further information (who, when, what requested)		
Notes		