

Why suicide is falling around the world

At a global level, suicide is down by 29% since 2000. As a result, 2.8m lives have been saved in that time—three times as many as have been killed in battle.

Why are people now less likely to take their own lives? Urbanization and greater freedom have helped. Accounts of those who attempt suicide, and of the relatives of those who succeed, suggest that many young Asian women were driven to despair by violent husbands and overbearing *in-laws*. As people move to cities and the *grip* of tradition loosens, women have more choice about whom they marry or live with, making life more bearable. Leaving the village helps in another way, too. Because farming involves killing things, rural folk are likelier to have the means to kill themselves—guns, pesticides—to hand.

in-laws 姻亲

grip 紧握

Suicide is surprisingly *impulsive*. A study of young Chinese women who had tried to kill themselves showed that three-fifths had been contemplating suicide for less than two hours, and one in ten for less than a minute. Of 515 people who had survived the *leap* from San Francisco's Golden Gate bridge between 1937 and 1971, 94% were still alive in 1978—which suggests that a suicide postponed is likely to be a suicide prevented.

Impulsive 冲动的

leap 跳跃