

Weekly Ethicacy

Algorithms that Identify Suicide Risk: Worth the Risk Themselves?



Rosane Weiss
Huan Wang
Alex Torres

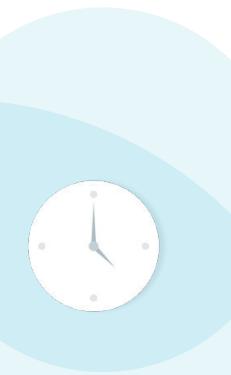
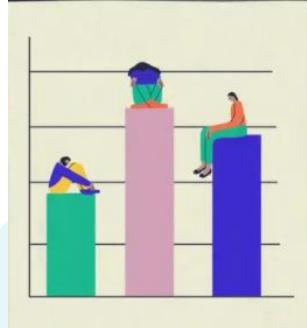


Where do you stand?

- 1) Go to this Padlet: [Suicide](#)

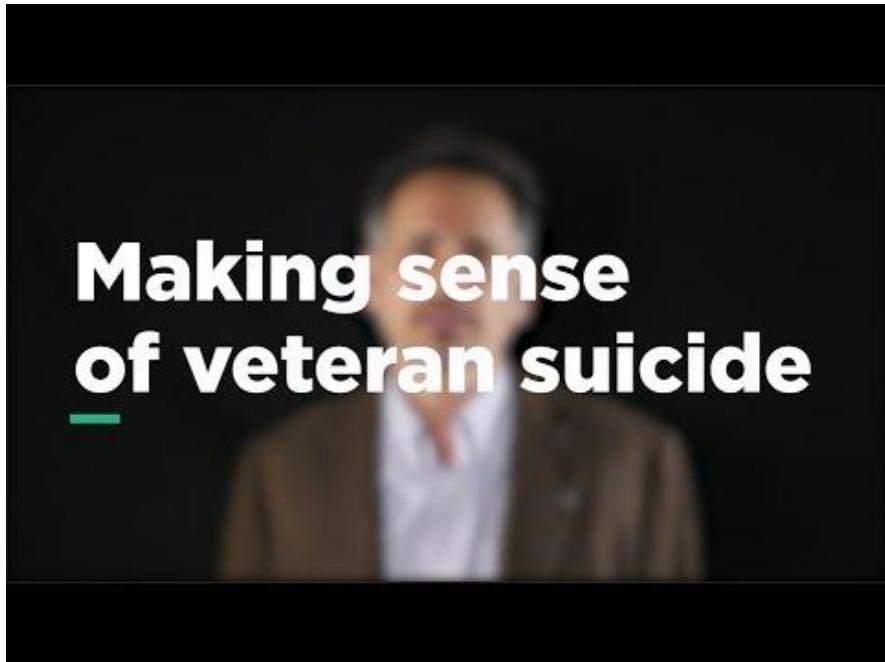
Algorithm - Is it ethical? Are you
FOR or AGAINST?

- 2) Take a stand on this question: Should we use algorithms to identify individuals that have a high potential of suicide risk for possible interventions?

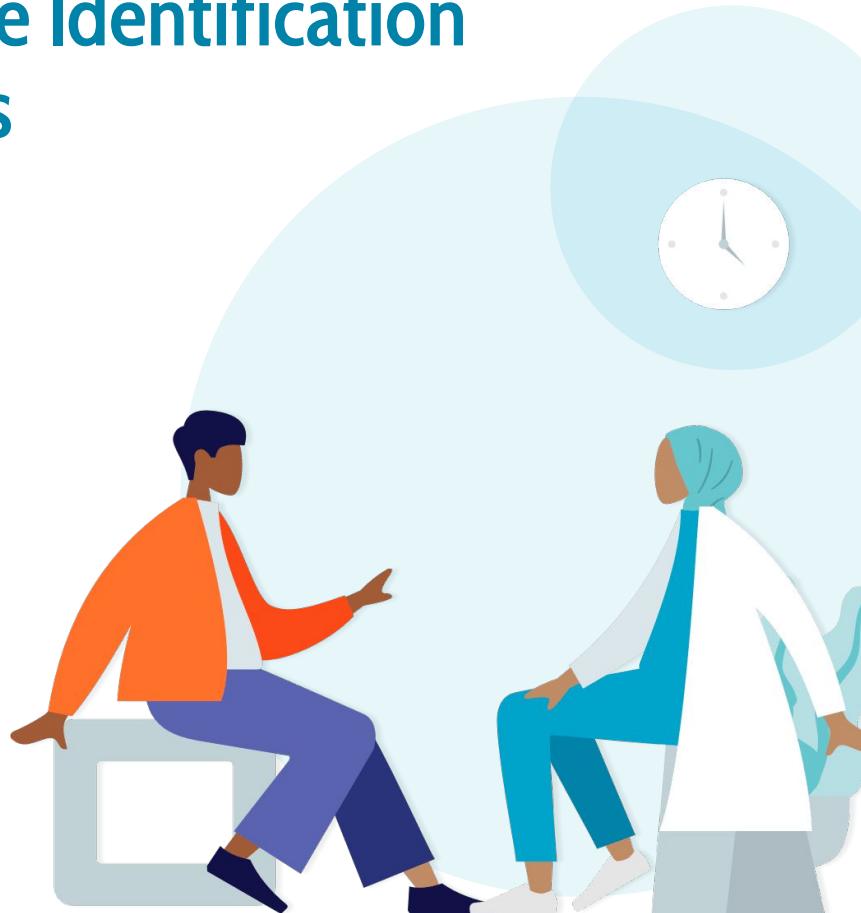




Veteran's Affairs



Facebook's Use of Suicide Identification Algorithms





For

- Humans, even trained professionals, have not had much success in identifying those at risk of suicide (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/suicide-risk-assessment-doesnt-work/>).
- Can help increase awareness of mental health issues even for individuals that might not be aware of their own risk factors
- Algorithms might be able to look past the "brave face act" of those who might need help
- Those identified can receive services and potentially be saved



Against



- Potentially ethical issues with machines “learning” at the expense of people actually killing themselves to collect efficacy data
- Violation of HIPPA?
- Moral hazard of becoming over-reliant on algorithms
- False positives marks a lot of people at high risk who are not.
- The analysis did not detect a difference in suicides
- The decision to keep a person under forced health care, for their own protection but potentially against their will, is extremely ethically sensitive, removing personal autonomy.
- Who has access to the data? The stigma associated with that could be harmful downstream.
- How well-protected is the data? What could potentially happen if the data falls into the wrong hands?
- Those who are considering suicide might start policing their own speech more carefully to overcome algorithms



Where do you stand now?

- 1) Go back to the Padlet: [Suicide Algorithm - Is it ethical? Are you FOR or AGAINST?](#)
- 2) Consider your original stance and revise it if applicable: Should we use algorithms to identify individuals that have a high potential of suicide risk for possible interventions?

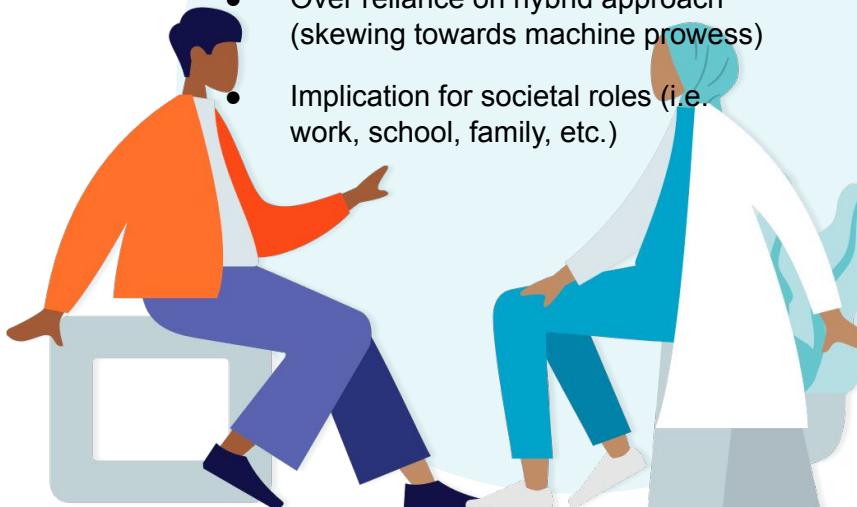


The Likely Path & Resulting Ethical Issues



Likely Path

- Employ AI & ML to mine big data to reveal insights that will aid in prevention & detection—while reducing false-positives & stigmatization. Impact areas:
 - Human Training
 - Influence institutional policies
 - Software development & enhancement
 - Refinement of AI & ML algorithms (i.e. NLP, search, analysis, etc.)
- Develop technology inside of common physical devices to supplement the work of AI & ML applications.
- Facial recognition to catalog and analyze micro-expressions in specific (including non-crisis) contexts.
- Virtual reality coupled with brain scanning technology to improve diagnosis and prevention (specifically identifying ideation/subtle indicators).
- Wearable tech to identify subtle changes in biometrics



Ethical Concerns

- Massive data collection with necessary intrusion
- Managing access & privacy
- Facility of stigmatization
- Over reliance on hybrid approach (skewing towards machine prowess)
- Implication for societal roles (i.e. work, school, family, etc.)