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## Mind on the Money: The Cost of Mental Health Care

Increasing suicide rates and recent mass shootings have many Americans worrying about the mental health care system. Increasing mental health care funding is one solution that has gained popularity. However, this solution is based off of the assumption that increasing funding will automatically correlate to less suicides and homicides. There are many other factors which can influence homicide and suicide rates, such as societal stigmas, economic status, and current events. In this study, four tests were conducted to determine whether or not increasing funding for mental health care could result in decreasing murder and suicide rates.<sup>[4]</sup>

The first test found that there was no linear correlation between the number of psychiatrists in a country and the murder rate in that country. It is likely that the number of murders caused by the mentally ill was too small to have a significant impact on the murder rate. The second test concluded that there was no negative linear correlation between the number of psychiatrists and the number of suicides in a country. Many high-income countries which demonstrated high numbers of psychiatrists also had high suicide rates, which points to the fact that cultural influences may have a greater impact on suicide rates than mental health care opportunities. The other two tests proved that although European countries spend more on average on mental health care than the United States, the suicide rates in those countries are not significantly lower than the American suicide rate.

These tests show that simply increasing the number of mental health care opportunities is not enough to prevent murder or help a suicidal person. Getting the mentally ill to seek help may not be just a matter of acquiring more psychiatrists. Instead, changing cultural stigma and helping to increase mental health awareness could have a greater impact on the mental health of future generations.