

**The Fourth Qualitative Research on Mental Health Conference  
University of Nottingham, UK., July 3-5, 2012**

**Abstract Submission**

**Presentation Title**

Historical Analysis of Suicide in Guam During the Spanish Colonial Period, 1521-1898

**Abstract**

The Pacific Island of Guam has seen a significant rise in suicide rates among youth and young adults, beginning in the 1970s and reaching epidemic proportions by the 1990s. Competing explanatory models have attributed suicide in Guam to biomedical factors (e.g., mental illness), psychosocial variables (e.g., family violence, interpersonal conflict), and broader sociocultural influences (e.g., westernization, modernization). While each of these perspectives makes an important contribution to our understanding of the high suicide rates observed in Guam over the past four decades, historical documents suggest that suicide in Guam may have a historical legacy that can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This paper presents a historical analysis of suicides in Guam documented during the Spanish colonial period from 1521 to 1898. Historical records suggest that suicide during this time may have represented both an indigenous cultural style for responding to various forms of distress, such as illness and interpersonal conflict, and also an act of resistance to Spanish colonial rule. Discussion focuses on the implications of this historical data for suicide prevention efforts in Guam and other indigenous communities, highlighting the need for prevention programs that promote self-determination and the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages and cultures.

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**Preferred Method of Presentation:** Oral Presentation

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(1) Iain K. B. Twaddle, (2) Camarin G. Meno, (3) Eunice Joy Perez

Dear Iain

Very many thanks for submitting your abstract titled "Historical Analysis of Suicide in Guam During the Spanish Colonial Period, 1521-1898" for consideration.

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal has been accepted as Oral presentation and we look forward to receiving your registration.

Kind regards

Colette Pickford  
On Behalf of Hugh Middleton

Email Contact: [ORMH@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ORMH@nottingham.ac.uk)

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