



MANILA ISSUES GUIDELINES ON ETHICAL SUICIDE REPORTING

Traditional, new media play crucial role in preventing suicidal behaviour, says WHO official

MANILA

IN an effort to curb the increasing prevalence of suicide, the Philippine Health Department has issued guidelines on ethical and responsible news reporting to media entities, online portal Philstar.com reported.

"It is important that those at risk are not exposed to articles or movies that encourage or give instructions on suicide," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said on Thursday.

"These guidelines are one of our interventions for suicide prevention as the department continues to develop and implement its National Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention and Control."

Vergeire said suicide content in the media and the risk of death by suicide were somewhat related

according to certain evidence.

She said the media was also an effective tool in responsibly reporting suicide, as well as a powerful means to transmit information and influence its audience.

Acting World Health Organisation (WHO) country representative Dr Rajendra Yadav said traditional and new media played a crucial role in preventing suicidal behaviour.

"We encourage media practitioners and content producers to focus on suicide prevention strategies and promote general mental health interventions instead of suicide events alone."

Australia and the Philippines had a shared interest in fostering Filipinos' mental health and wellbeing through Project Brave (Building Covid-Safe Responses and Voices for Equity).

On March 2, the Philippine Health Department came up with an administrative order following consultations with

media practitioners, mental health professionals, the Australian government and WHO.

The guidelines were released in support of the rules and regulations of the Philippines' Mental Health Act.



Maria Rosario Vergeire