

# **Does religiousness prevent suicide?**

**Presenter: Prof Steven Stack**

**Monday 14 May 2018, 12.30-1.30pm,  
Room 410, Level 4,  
207 Bouverie Street, Carlton**

This talk is built around two interrelated studies conducted in the USA and Europe, which examined the impact of religiousness on suicide.

STUDY 1 is the first study to explore the gendered association of religiousness and suicide at the individual level, using psychological autopsy data on 16,795 deaths, including 1,385 suicides in the USA. Study findings indicate that religiousness provides equal protection for both men and women in relation to suicide. With most previous work based in the USA, a nation relatively low in secularization, it remains unclear if religiousness prevents suicides in secularized regions of the world, such as Europe.

STUDY 2 therefore moved on to use ecological data for 162 regions in more secularized societies, 22 nations in Europe. In both studies religiousness was found to act as a protective factor against suicide.



Professor Steven Stack is the author of 335 articles and chapters, and 4 books with a focus on the social risk and protective factors for suicide. His work has been supported by grants from NIMH & the Guggenheim Foundation. He ranks in the top 13 suicide researchers of 500 world suicide specialists ranked in the Web of Science. He has served on over 20 federal Grant Review Panels, and on the editorial boards of Archives of Suicide Research, Crisis, Suicide and Life Threatening Behaviour, and Sociology. Prof Stack has helped shape the future directions of suicide research.

He currently serves on the Advisory Boards of the Michigan National Violent Death Reporting System and the Michigan Association for Suicide Prevention.

He is the 2017 recipient of the Stengel Award, given by the International Association for Suicide Prevention for outstanding research and international prestige.