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**Aligning Evidence with Policy and Practice: Implementing a Zero Suicide Approach in the US Military**

**Presenting Author**

Mr. Kyle R. Hawkey, and Dr. Daniel F. Perkins

**Affiliation**   
Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State University, United States

**Country of residence**

United States of America

**Objectives/aims**

The Zero Suicide Systems Approach (ZSSA) is a set of evidence-based policies, interventions, and practices designed as a public health approach to suicide prevention. ZSSA closes common healthcare gaps through which those who die by suicide often fall. The USAF recently became the first US Military branch to pilot an implementation of ZSSA. From an implementation perspective, ZSSA in a military context presents a number of complex challenges.This presentation will describe the implementation approach, challenges encountered, early successes, lessons learned, and initial evaluation results.

**Methods**

Both qualitative (e.g., results from structured interviews and site visits) and quantitative data (e.g., Airmen being identified at risk, number of suicide deaths/attempts) analyses are being conducted on an ongoing basis. Analysis of training feedback from 2,000 trained professionals was also conducted. In addition, implementation and program fidelity is being measured using adherence to protocols and policies, dosage of interventions, quality delivery, and participant responsiveness.

**Main findings**

Implementing a system-wide suicide prevention approach in a military context is an ambitious and complex undertaking. Although early in the process, there are several indicators that ZSSA is already yielding positive results. Policies and protocols have undergone large-scale changes to align with best evidence-based practices. Staff report higher degrees of confidence in identifying and treating at-risk Airmen and leadership support for the project has increased. Preliminary results also show an increase in the number of suicidal Airmen being identified and receiving the proper treatment.