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## Cultural responses towards the aftermath of suicide among the Acholi in Northern Uganda

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### Abstract

#### Background:

Suicide is a public health problem in Uganda among indigenous societies, and different societies manage its aftermath differently.

#### Aim:

To explore how the Acholi in Northern Uganda manage the aftermath of suicide.

#### Methods:

We conducted a qualitative study in Gulu district, a post-conflict area in Northern Uganda. We conducted a total of four focus group discussions (FGDs) and 12 key informant (KI) interviews. KI interviews were conducted with community leaders, while the FGDs were conducted with members of the general population. We analysed the data by means of Grounded Theory.

#### Results:

Our findings indicate that rituals form a large part in managing suicide among the Acholi. Study communities practised distancing (symbolically and physically) as a way of dealing with the threat of suicide.

#### Conclusion:

Distancing was organized into two broad themes: affect regulation and securing future generations. It is recommended that public health interventions should utilize cultural institutions in the prevention of suicide.

#### Keywords

Distancing, suicide, Northern Uganda

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