coroners from different nations with the same set of documented deaths and found wide variation in the number categorised as suicide by the coroners from different nations.

On the other hand, Sainsbury and Barraclough (1968) correlated the suicide rates in eleven industrialized nations with the suicide rates of immigrants to the United States from these eleven countries. The correlation was 0.87, indicating that nations with high official suicide rates have emigrants who continue to have high suicide rates after they have emigrated to the United States, even though the criteria used by coroners in the United States may be different from those in the home nations. Sainsbury and Barraclough concluded that official suicide rates for different nations may be relatively comparable.

Some recent data lend support to the conclusions of Sainsbury and Barraclough. Kramer *et al* (1972) have reported suicide rates by sex for immigrant groups to the United States. The Spearman rank correlation coefficients between the suicide rate of the immigrants and the suicide rate of the home nations were 0.89 (n = 12) for the total population, 0.92 (n = 12) for males, and 0.75 (n = 12) for females. Thus, the relative comparability of official suicide rates may be reasonably accurate for the suicide rates of each sex.

This conclusion is confirmed by analysis of data from immigrants to Australia. Whitlock (1971) reported suicide rates by sex of immigrants from 16 nations to Australia for 1965 to 1967 and Burvill *et al* (1973) for immigrants from 12 nations for 1962 to 1966. The Spearman rank correlation coefficients between the suicide rates for the immigrant groups and the suicide rates of the home nations are again quite high: for males 0.79 (n = 16) and 0.91 (n = 12) and for females 0.79 (n = 16) and 0.84 (n = 12).

Finally, Dublin (1963) reported suicide rates by sex and age for immigrant groups to the United States in 1959. He noted that many of the rates were based on less than twenty cases and so not very reliable. Nevertheless, the suicide rates by age and sex of these immigrant groups were correlated with the suicide rates by age and sex for the home nations for 1962 (WHO, 1965). The data are shown in the Table, from which it can be seen that 16 of the 18 correlation coefficients are positive and all nine of the statistically significant correlations are positive. In addition, the correlations that are low tend to be for those groups in which the suicide rate is lowest (namely the younger groups and females).

Although doubts have been raised about the validity of official suicide rates reported by nations, the stability of the rankings of the suicide rates of these nations and immigrants from these nations to the United States and Australia suggests that national suicide rates may be comparable. It should be noted that these data are based on immigrants from industrialized nations. Data from other nations of the world may not be as reliable.

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TABLE I

Correlations between the suicide rates by age and sex in ten nations with the suicide rates of immigrants from those nations to the USA

Age	Both sexes	Males	Females
15–24	0.53	0.15	0.15
25–34	0.33	0.52	0.02
35–44	−0.28	0.07	−0.05
45–54	0.84*	0.79*	0.59*
55–64	0.48	0.77*	0.52
65–74	0.90*	0.94*	0.57*
75+	0.84*	0.85*	0.38
All ages	0.92*	0.95*	0.71*

* Statistically significant at (at least) the 5 per cent level.

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CORRECTION

In Dr Kenyon's review of **Bisexuality: A Study** by CHARLOTTE WOLFF (*Journal*, October 1979, **135**, 378) line 8 'bio-physical' should be 'bio-psychical'.

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