THE FINNO-UGRIAN SUICIDE HYPOTHESIS: VARIATION IN EUROPEAN SUICIDE RATES BY LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE

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Summary.—The marked variation regarding the suicide rate in 34 European countries is well described by regressing the national suicide rate on the capital cities' latitudes and on an interaction term of squared latitude multiplied with longitude. The interaction term explains 40.8% and 29.1% of men's and women's suicide rate, respectively, and latitude explains a further significant increment of 10.9% and 10.6% variance of men's and women's suicide rate, respectively. This regression model quantifies the Finno-Ugrian suicide hypothesis of Kondrichin and of Marušič and Farmer. The European countries highest in suicide rate constitute a contiguous, J-shaped belt, spanning from Finland to Austria. This area maps onto the second principal component identified for European gene distribution, representing ancestral adaptation to cold climates and the Uralic language dispersion. Thus, population differences in genetic risk factors may account for the spatial pattern in European suicide rates.