Major international sporting events like World Cup (WC) football could impact on suicidality. Win and loss of a team in WC football were found to be associated with reduced and increased suicidal incidence rate in the respective population of the participating countries (Hassanian-Moghaddam et al., 2018; Encrenaz et al., 2012). Here we report the impact of WC football on suicidality in countries whose national teams have not been participated in the major events.

Previous studies revealed that engagement in games, as a viewer and/or a supporter, may affect suicidality, however the participation in sport and participation in cultural activities are usually studied separately. However, since both activities dominate the leisure time of the population, the relationship between them is of interest. The study investigates media representations of Croatian nationalism in the weeks surrounding the country’s third place victory in the 1998 FIFA World Cup. Sociological theories alongside more contemporary theories of sport and nation construction are considered. Croatian newspapers were analyzed for elements of national identity construction. The study concludes that the 1998 World Cup played an important role in Croatia’s on-going construction of nationhood and invention of nationalist traditions. This research further demonstrates sport’s ability to evoke strong emotions that are difficult to witness in other areas of social life and the direct role of sport in garnering nationalism.