

Poster presentation

Hospitalizations after suicide attempts on the psychiatric clinic of a general hospital

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Background

Suicide attempts are the commonest reason for referral for psychiatric evaluation and therefore one of the commonest reasons for admittance to psychiatric clinics through consultation – liaison services. The aim of this study was to assess demographics and psychopathology of patients that attempted suicide and were admitted to the psychiatric clinic of our hospital, as well as the specific features of those suicide attempts.

Material and Methods

We retrospectively assessed medical records of patients that were hospitalized between 1989–1999 due to suicide attempts. These data were statistically analyzed and compared to the homologous data of all other patients admitted to our clinic through consultation-liaison psychiatry services during that period.

Results

During the aforementioned period, 294 patients were admitted to the psychiatric clinic through consultation – liaison psychiatry services. Of those, 146 (49.6%) were admitted after committing a suicide attempt (56.1% females). Mean age of those patients was 45.46 ± 17.38 years. Patients that attempted suicide with drug overdose (103) had a mean age of 48.36 ± 16.40 years, while patients that attempted with other methods (43) had a mean age of 40.04 ± 17.20 years ($t = 2.70$, $p < 0.01$). Mean hospital stay for all suicide attempters was 26.57 ± 20.44 days, not differing significantly from that of all other patients (23.59 ± 21.68). Mean hospital stay for patients that attempted suicide with drug overdose was 20.46 ± 13.51 days; for those who attempted with other methods

it rose to 38.8 ± 26.35 ($t = 4.17$, $p < 0.001$). The latter was significantly longer than mean hospital stay for other patients (148) admitted through consultation-liaison services (23.59 ± 21.68 , $t = 3.35$, $p < 0.01$).

Commonest others methods, except overdose (43), were jumping (20 patients – 46.5%), followed by ingestion of caustic substances (7 patients – 16.2%).

For 72 attempters, this was their first admission to a psychiatric clinic, while the remaining 74 had been admitted at least once in the past. The respective ratio for other patients admitted through consultation – liaison services was 96:52 ($\times 2 = 7.25$, $p < 0.01$). Attempters were more commonly diagnosed with mood disorders (34.9%). Other common diagnoses, in descending order, were schizophrenic and other psychotic disorders (23.9%) and personality disorders (15%).

Discussion

Suicide attempts are the commonest reason for admission to the psychiatric clinic of our hospital through consultation-liaison psychiatry services. Suicide attempters admitted have a significantly higher number of prior psychiatric hospitalizations, compared to other patients admitted through consultation-liaison services. Attempts with other methods than overdose, amount to 33% of all attempts and have a much longer hospital stay. Jumping from heights is the commonest form of them.