Patterns and Predictors of Re-Admission to the Emergency Department with Deliberate Self Harm

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BACKGROUND
- UK – highest deliberate self harm (DSH) rates in Europe at 400 per 100,000 population.
- Only a small proportion of acts of DSH results in hospital attendance.
- There are about 150,000 acts of DSH per annum.
- Self-harm is one of the top five causes of acute medical admission.
- The death rate by suicide of people who self-harm is known to be between 50 and 100 times higher than the general population.
- In the first year, recurrence rates for non-fatal DSH range from 6%–30% and long-term rates approach 40% but previous studies have been hampered by cases lost to follow-up and out of area cases.

PROJECT AIMS
We aimed to investigate recurrence rates and characteristics of those who re-present to the A&E department at Leicester Royal Infirmary (UK). Our sample has the advantage of only one large A&E for the county with a high chance of local re-attendance.

STUDY DESIGN
- Setting: ED at Leicester Royal Infirmary.
- Retrospective review of 903 adults presenting with DSH.
- Follow up completed: September 2013.
- Mean follow up: 5.6 years (3.9 years, 8.2 years).
- Data obtained from EDIS and “10 step DSH referral form”.
- Demographic, clinical and social factors recorded.

PATIENT CHARACTERISTICS
- 903 cases.
- Mean age: 36 years (16 – 88 years).
- Index episode was first presentation: 52.4%.

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

General results

- Proportion of repeat DSH attendances in 903 individuals with 5.6 years follow up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to 3 months</th>
<th>Up to 6 months</th>
<th>Up to 1 year</th>
<th>Up to 2 years</th>
<th>Up to 3 years</th>
<th>Up to 4 years</th>
<th>5 years or more</th>
<th>Did not repeat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
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Self-poisoning was the most common method of DSH.

Risk factors associated with DSH recurrence were:
- Female gender,
- Previous DSH,
- Personality disorders,
- Illicit substance or alcohol misuse.

Subgroup analyses

Proportion of repeat DSH attendances in first time presenters

- 473 cases.
- Average follow up: 5.4 years.
- 152 repeated (32.1%).
- Average time to repeat: 1.4 years.
- Median time: **8.4 months**.

Proportion of repeat DSH attendances in non-first time presenters

- 426 cases.
- Average follow up: 5.75 years.
- 297 repeated (69.1%).
- Average time to repeat: 1 year.
- Median time: **3.5 months**.

CONCLUSIONS

In this sample with robust local follow-up, the DSH recurrence rate is much higher than previously published data suggesting a much higher risk sample in Leicestershire or, more likely, a more complete data capture. The major risk factor for DSH was a previous history of DSH.

Identifying the active risk factors for DSH recurrence may help to inform future interventions.

CITATIONS

1. Self-poisoning and self-injury in adults, Clinical Medicine, 2002

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