
ANALYSIS OF MEDICAL, PSYCHOSOCIAL BACKGROUND AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AMONG PERSONS REFERRED TO PSYCHIATRIC UNIT OF TEACHING HOSPITAL, KARAPITIYA, SRI LANKA AFTER DELIBERATE SELF HARM

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Introduction

Deliberate self-harm is non-fatal self-poisoning or self-injury. It occurs much more frequently than suicide. It is a common presentation among the patients referred to psychiatric unit, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya, Sri Lanka from medical units.

Aims

To determine common methods used for deliberate self harm, to determine the medical and psychosocial factors associated and to assess psychopathology among persons presented with deliberate self harm

Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study. Sample was drawn from patients referred to psychiatric unit Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya following attempt of deliberate self harm. All Patients referred on every other day of the week for consecutive 2 months selected using systematic sampling. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to asses.

Results

Seventeen (53.1%) were females. Mean age was 29.3 years. Leading precipitant was acute conflict with a family member (n=15, 46.8%) followed by conflicts in relationships (n=5, 15.6%). Majority (n=18, 56.2%) had the intention to die seven (21.8%) had intention to change others behaviour. Majority (n=24, 75%) contemplated act for period less than 24 hours. Poisoning was used by majority (n=19, 59.3%) followed by overdosing of medication (n=10, 31.2%). Poison was available at home in 46.8% persons who used poison. Six (18.7%) had previous suicidal attempts. Six (18.7%) were previously diagnosed to have a psychiatric disorder. Nine (28.1%) each met the criteria for major depressive disorder and impulsive act.

Conclusions

The commonest method was poisoning. Leading precipitant was acute conflict with a family member. Majority had the intention of dying. Leading diagnosis was major depressive disorder.