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Psychiatric evaluation of patients admitted with self-poisoning

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Objective: Identification and treatment of mental disorders is one of the WHO recommendation for suicide prevention. Objective of our study is to find out any underlying psychiatric illness in patients admitted with self-poisoning.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study evaluating all patients admitted with self-poisoning in medical wards for a period of 3 months from April 2018 for underlying psychiatric illness. The patients were assessed by a psychiatry consultant after recovery and any underlying mental illness was identified. The demographic characteristics of patients and types of agents used were also noted. Poisoning cases with fatal outcome were excluded from the study.

Results: Total of 135 patients were assessed, 79 females and 56 males. Mean age of study population was 30.96 ± 14.52 years. Median age of males was higher than females (35.5 Vs 22 years). There were 58 pesticide poisoning (out of which 16 were cholinergic pesticides), 21 plant poisoning, 35 drug overdose, and 21 miscellaneous poisoning. There were 3 accidental ingestions of poison. 59 (43.7%) patients attempted self-poisoning as an impulsive act out of which 9 had borderline personality trait. 55 (40.7%) patients were diagnosed to have adjustment disorder, 6 (4.44%) had depression and 3 (2.22%) had schizophrenia. Alcohol dependence was seen in 7. Three patients had behavioural disorder with subnormal intelligence and one had anxiety disorder. Majority of patients attempting suicide as impulsive act (median age 24 years) or diagnosed with adjustment disorder (median age 26 years) belonged to young age group. Majority of patients diagnosed with depression belonged to middle age (median age 46.5 years). Females outnumbered males in all types of poisoning except in cholinergic pesticide poisoning.

Discussion & conclusion: Suicide attempt due to an impulsive act was common in our study. Adjustment disorder was identified as the commonest underlying disorder. Major psychiatric illnesses like schizophrenia or depression was less common in the study population.

Reference: Eddleston, Michael Phillips, Michael R. Self-poisoning with pesticides. [BMJ](#). 2004 Jan 3; 328(7430): 42–44