

Factors Related to Suicide Attempts by Poisoning in Iranian Children

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Suicide is a major health problem especially in children. Even a large proportion of healthy children have thought about suicide attempt. Some factors are suggested as risk factors for suicide attempt among children such as prior suicide attempt as the most important risk factor. This study was designed to find out why children attempt suicide.

Methods: In a descriptive study we assessed all the 6-15 years old children with suicide attempt referred to Loghman Hakim Poison Centre. For each child a questionnaire consisted of demographic information, family information and Children's Suicide Questionnaire were completed by 2 psychiatrists and 2 psychologists.

Finding: 292 children were evaluated with the mean age of 12±1.46 years old ranging from 6 to 15 years old . 81.8% of subjects were female and 18.2% were male. It demonstrates that a higher proportion of the cases reported a history of mental illness in the family (41%). The survey of CSQ information indicated that 28% of the cases suffered from depression and 27.1% had an epileptic seizure. Family argument was present in 36.6% of the cases. 85.4% of the children attempted suicide by using pharmaceutical drugs and 55.5% of suicide attempts were at 6 p.m. to 12 p.m.

Conclusion: Mental or physical illness, living with a mentally ill family member, residing in an economically deprived neighborhoods and lack of access to proper psychiatric care in combination can induce a suicidal attempt so a multidisciplinary approach is necessary in evaluating a suicide attempt in a child.

Keywords: Children, Suicide, Iran. Children's Suicide Questionnaire. (CSQ).

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 45 years, mortality due to suicide has increased in some developed and developing countries among both children and adults varying according to age, gender, and area of residence. Suicide attempts are 10-40 times more frequent than completed suicide ¹. Suicidal tendencies and attempts mainly occur among children suffering from psychological disorders, even

mild types; however these attempts are rarely fatal. Few studies have been carried out in Iran on suicide among children. Even in Western Europe and the United States, systematic studies on suicide among children were few up to the late 70's. Jackson and Nuttall indicated Pfeffer to be the main researcher on suicidal behavior among children, throughout the 1980's ². A problem in identifying suicide is the fact that it is still a taboo in most societies and particularly Islamic ones. As a result, lots of deaths are described as accidental rather suicidal. Psychological assessments are rare resulting in difficulties in early detection of behaviors leading to suicide ³. In the United States, in a study on a group of randomly selected healthy children it was found that 13% of children occasionally thought about suicide or had the intention of suicide. However for many, these thoughts do not translate themselves into action, as

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