



RISK FACTORS FOR DELIBERATE SELF-HARM IN PATIENTS PRESENTING TO PSYCHIATRIC UNITS AT COLOMBO SOUTH TEACHING HOSPITAL AND HOMAGAMA BASE HOSPITAL: A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS- SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

DSH is one of the leading psychiatric conditions referred to mental health units in Sri Lanka. This study was conducted to describe the risk factors for DSH in patients presented to psychiatric units at Colombo South Teaching Hospital and Homagama Base Hospital. A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out of patients aged above 18 years who attempted DSH for 3 months period from December 2017. Ethical clearance was obtained. Data collected from Interviewer-administered questionnaire based on preventing Suicide, WHO guideline 2017. Questionnaire pretested. The anonymous data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 19. Out of 121 patients referred, 89 were included in the study. Female preponderance (71%) was noted. Mean age was 19.4. Loneliness (9%), lack of partner (20%), unemployment (42%), employment related problems (21%), economic difficulties (30%) were less prevalent among study group. Poor educational attainment (46%), poor relationship with family (46%), friends (35%), and neighbours (24%), lack of interest on community (16%) and leisure (21%) activities, lack of sharing problems (45%) had high prevalence. Medicinal overdose was commonest DSH (93%), 24% had previous attempts and 66% were impulsive acts. Break up of love affairs was the commonest trigger (35%), weak personality the commonest belief (67%) and 78% wanted to escape from unbearable thoughts. Sadness (23%) was commonly felt at the time of the event. Majority were aggressive (71%), solving problems by themselves (65%) as coping. Youth who didn't get considerable educational attainment and poor integration with domestic society and interpersonal relationships are vulnerable. Sadness, inability to face stresses, weak personalities and poor coping abilities were identified as risk factors.

Keywords: Coping strategies, Deliberate self-harm, DSH, Motivations, Risk factors