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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND SUICIDE RISK: A STUDY OF MALE PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENTS

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Abstract. *The aim of the study is to ascertain the suicide risk associated with some socio-demographic factors in male psychiatric inpatients – a population at a high risk of suicidal behaviour.*

164 hospitalized psychiatric patients were evaluated according to certain clinical characteristics, socio-demographic indicators and results from psychometric scales. Bivariate and multi-factor analyses were applied.

According to the obtained results patients, who don't cohabit with a partner, show a higher level of suicide risk (total score from the A. Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation – SSI) and have attempted suicide more often. The lack of a partner is an independent predictor in both multi-factor models. Those living in a large town are more hopeless (total score from the A. Beck Hopelessness Scale – BHS) and with a higher suicide risk (SSI) than those living in a village. As the examined patients' age increases so does the depression's severity (total score from the Montgomery – Åsberg Depression Rating Scale – MADRS), but not the suicide risk. These results may be useful when assessing suicide risk.

Keywords: suicide risk; suicide; social factors; psychiatric patients; depression; hopelessness.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a real progress in terms of efficient treatment in a variety of psychiatry areas; however this does not apply to the case of suicidal behaviour (Liu et al 2014: 181-192). Actually, despite the significant rise in the intervention efforts to tackle suicidal behaviour over the last few decades no corresponding decrease in the frequencies of these phenomena has been observed (Kessler et al 2005: 2487-2495; Nock et al, 2008: 133-154). Thus, suicide has remained a significant public health issue and one of the leading causes of death globally (Nock et al 2008: 133-154).

Suicide is a major cause of death in different populations varying in age, nationality and clinical severity. It goes across nosological boundaries and crosses psychiatric diagnoses simultaneously describing non-psychiatric populations. Furthermore, non-fatal suicidal behaviour is also associated with huge suffering and risk. Although suicidal behaviour has been thoroughly studied, the fundamental issues still remain unsolved.

Suicide is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon stemming from the interaction of a variety of factors, including socio-demographic.

AIM OF THIS STUDY

With regards to suicide risk assessment, the aim of this study is to ascertain the suicide risk associated with some socio-demographic factors in male psychiatric inpatients: a population at a high risk of suicidal behaviour.

In order to achieve the aim, the following **tasks** were set:

1. To compare the levels of suicide risk [Beck's Scale for suicide ideation – SSI (Beck et al., 1979: 343-352)] in patients by defined socio-demographic indicators.
2. To compare the levels of hopelessness [Beck Hopelessness Scale – BHS (Beck et al., 1974: 861-865)] in patients by some socio-demographic indicators.
3. To compare the levels of depression [Montgomery–Åsberg Depression Rating Scale – MADRS (Montgomery and Åsberg 1979: 382-389)] in patients by defined socio-demographic indicators.
4. To study and compare some socio-demographic factors along the suicide continuum in studied patients (non-suicidal–ideation–plan–recent suicide attempt).
5. To compare patients with a prior suicide attempt with patients who have never attempted a suicide according to certain socio-demographic indicators.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

The object of this study is a subpopulation of male psychiatric inpatients. The studied group consists of a random sample of adult male patients who were consecutively hospitalised on a voluntary basis at the men's ward in the Clinic of Psychiatry at the h niveksity Hospital "St. George" in Plovdiv for the period