

”Extension of the Register for Suicide Attempts – Why do people try to commit suicide?”

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Introduction

Knowledge of the extent of attempted suicides in Denmark can be found in the Register for Suicide Attempts. The purpose of this study is to extend the data collection area from the former County of Funen to cover nationwide in time. The Register for Suicide Attempts includes the variable “Circumstances” and thus we are able to gain greater knowledge of the potential triggering and underlying factors for the individual's suicide attempt that allows us to elucidate why people try to commit suicide. The results of this study presented below are based on 1,143 registered suicide attempts (women $n=737$) (men $n=406$) during 2012 & 2013 collected from various Regions of Denmark -not the entire country.

Methods

We received transcripts of all civil registration numbers that had been in contact with an emergency ward (somatic) due to a suicide attempt in 2012 & 2013. From each registered patient's medical record, we registered the following variables: time, date, age, gender, place of registration, code for cause of contact 4 (suicide attempt), method, medicine, circumstances in relation to the attempt: proximal- and distal factors defined in various triggering and underlying causes.

Results

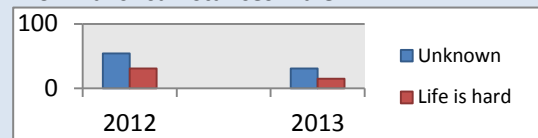
The most frequent proximal and distal circumstances in relation to registered suicide attempts by gender in 2012 & 2013:

Proximal circumstances: The most frequent proximal factor is “Unknown” for both women ($n=161$) and men ($n=117$) in 2012 & 2013. This includes cases where the patient's medical record has been insufficient to collect data on the circumstances of the suicide attempt.

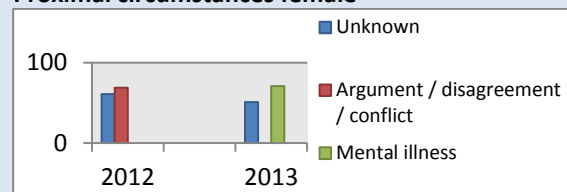
The following most frequent proximal factors for women in 2012 was “Argument / disagreement / conflict with a close relation” ($n=69$). In 2013 it was “Mental illness” ($n=71$). For men in 2012 & 2013 it was “Life is hard” ($n=65$).

Distal circumstances: For women ($n=437$) and men ($n=195$) in 2012 & 2013, we found that “Mental illness” was the most frequent distal factor. The second most frequent distal factor for men ($n=101$) and women ($n=157$) in 2012 & 2013 is “Unknown”.

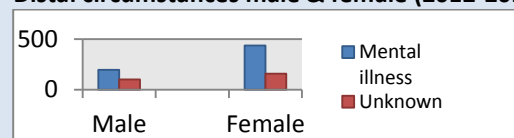
Proximal circumstances male



Proximal circumstances female



Distal circumstances male & female (2012-2013)



Discussion

The number of registered attempted suicides is only the tip of the iceberg as not all suicide attempters have subsequent contact with somatic emergency wards. The information in the patient's medical record depends on what information the attending doctor is able to gather, sometimes the patients are hesitant about sharing information about the circumstances of the suicide attempt, which affects the results of this study. Thus conclusions based on the registered circumstances must be made with caution and reservations.

Conclusion

The answer of why people try to commit suicide is complex as there are often several circumstances that influence on that decision. Results are consistent with existing research in this field. The variables proximal- and distal factors must be further investigated during the ongoing data collection for the Register for Suicide Attempts.