

Suicide Risk Factors in Patients with Depression

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Introduction:

Major depression is associated with high risk of suicide. But it remains controversial whether the risk is higher in bipolar depression or unipolar one.

Objectives:

1. To identify social, clinical and temperamental factors associated with high suicide risk among patients with unipolar or bipolar depression.
2. To compare suicide risk in the two groups.

Methods:

This cross-sectional study, in progress, is conducted on psychiatric outpatients in the University Hospital, in Sfax (Tunisia). We include subjects with major depressive episode in the context of bipolar disorder or major depressive disorder.

We use the Arabic version of the full-scale TEMPS-A auto-questionnaire and the suicidal risk assessment scale (RSD).

Preliminary Results:

A total of 28 depressive patients were included. Compared to unipolar patients (20), bipolar patients (8) had more frequent previous suicide attempts (25% vs 10%) and had a higher suicide risk (50% vs 25%).

Among high-risk suicidal patients (16/28), 62.5% were males. The main stressful life events were: school failure (66.7%), early grief (55.6%) and family violence (44.4%). Psychotic and atypical features were found in 33.3% and 55.6%, respectively. Comorbidity with personality disorder was noted in 44.4% and with anxiety disorders in 22.2%. Cyclothymic (44.4%) and irritable (33.3%) temperaments were the most common.

Conclusion:

Our results meet those of the literature. Suicide risk is associated with male gender and traumatic events in childhood. Bipolar depression, psychotic features, affective temperaments, as well as personality disorders, and anxiety increase this risk. Attention should be paid to all these factors in depressed patients.