
TREATMENT-ENGAGEMENT IN A COHORT OF EMERGENCY ROOM ATTENDEES WITH SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

I. Adeosun¹, R. Lawal¹, O. Ogun¹, A. Adegbohun¹, O. Oyekunle¹, G. Babalola¹

¹Psychiatry, Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria

Introduction: Suicide is a major public health problem with escalating global trends, and high rates of recidivism. Patients with suicidal behavior have frequent contacts with Emergency Departments (ED). Therefore, the ED has been recognized as a strategic site for initiating interventions targeted at engaging suicidal patients in treatment. However, there is dearth of baseline data to guide such interventions in Nigeria.

Aim/Objective: This study determined the rates of treatment-engagement (compliance with follow-up appointment) among patients with suicidal behaviour after discharge from a psychiatric ED in Lagos, Nigeria.

Method: The clinical database of 225 consecutive patients discharged from the ED of the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital Yaba between January and June 2012 were retrieved from the out-patient clinics/mental health service they were referred to. Data were abstracted regarding their adherence with recommended follow-up appointments over a period of six months.

Results: The mean age of the service users was $35.9 \pm (14.2)$ years and 62% were females. At one week post-discharge from the ED, 71.5% attended their appointments. By the end of the fourth week, third month and sixth month, engagement in treatment declined to 54%, 35.5% and 23% respectively.

Conclusion: There is a low rate of engagement in treatment among suicidal patients in Nigeria. This finding highlights an urgent need to develop local ED-based interventions targeted at engaging suicidal patients in treatment, with the view of reducing the risk of recidivism.