

ATTEMPTS OF SUICIDE IN CHILDREN. A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY

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Aim: To study the epidemiological and clinical characteristics in attempts of suicide in childhood and adolescence.

Materials and Methods: We conducted a retrospective study of attempts of suicide in hospitalised children in Paediatric Clinic from 1/1/1991-31/12/2001.

Results: There were listed 164 incidents of attempted suicide, 151 girls (92%) and 13 boys (8%), (age 8-16 years, mean 14.36 years). No difference was observed in the number of incidents per year as well as the seasonal distribution. Higher frequency was observed during March and June (24 and 19 incidents respectively). The patients were from urban regions (69.4%), semi-urban (17%) and rural (13.5%). Patients received more frequently paracetamol, salicylic acid in different combination: each one separately or both together, or with other drugs or domestic chemical substances. Potential lethal doses were received in 57.3% of the patients. Patients were admitted in the hospital within 1 to 48 hours after the drug was received (mean 6.8h) and 81% of them were in good general condition (65% of patients showed no pathological signs), whereas only 2% were in severe general condition. No lethal incidence was reported. Second incident of attempted suicide was noted in 3 of the patients. Mood disorders and disruptive behavior were the most frequent findings during the paedopsychiatric assessment.

Conclusions. The majority of suicide attempts were carried out using drugs and do not constitute important therapeutic problem but a big social and domestic one. Systematic psychological follow up of the children is necessary as well as social support for their families.

