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SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS ASSOCIATED WITH A HIGHER RISK OF SUICIDE

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Introduction: Suicide is a major and preventable public health problem. Risk factors may vary with age, gender, or ethnic group, being substance abuse one of the most frequent.

Objectives: To investigate the relation of substance related disorder and suicide attempt.

Methods: Review of the suicidal attempts of patients with personal history of substance related disorder attended during the year 2010.

Results: We identified 85 cases.

Alcohol (64''3%) and cocaine (47''7%) were the two most identified substances. Cannabis (17''2%) and heroin (23''06%) were less consumed. Benzodiazepines abuse was very frequent among the patients attended (38''2%).

Previous attempts were found in 43''8% of the patients.

Drug overdose was the most commonly method used (98''4%), especially with benzodiazepines and antidepressants, but non psychiatric drugs were also frequent.

Substance overdose or intoxication was the second most frequent method used (23%), and poisoning the third (9%). Most of times these methods were presented with concomitant drug overdose.

Defenestration threats were very rare (2''34%), and always associated with hospitalization request by the patient.

We did find significant differences when studying triggers (family, partnership, economical or others) compared with non substance abusers suicidal attempts.

Conclusions:

- Chronic substance misuse and acute substance abuse is associated with a higher risk of suicide, what may be explained by the disinhibiting effects of psychoactive substances.
- As benzodiazepine misuse is associated with suicide, special care must be taken when prescribing to at risk patients such as substance abusers