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PREVALENCE OF SUICIDAL IDEATION AND DESIRE FOR DEATH IN A GROUP OF FEMALE MUSLIM STUDENTS ONE YEAR AFTER EXPOSURE TO SUICIDE BOMB ATTACK IN PAKISTAN

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**Introduction:** Psychological distress and suicide are known to be associated with exposure to traumatic life events. No literature is available on prevalence of suicidal ideation in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

**Objectives:** To study suicidal ideation and desire for death in trauma exposed population in Pakistan.

**Aims:** To estimate the prevalence of suicidal ideation and desire for death one year after exposure to extreme trauma in a well-defined and accessible group in Pakistan.

**Methods:** Subjects were examined 1 year after exposure to a bomb blast in Islamabad, Pakistan. A semi-structured interview schedule and Beck Scale for Suicidal Ideation were used to assess a group of female University students. Assessment record of 50 consecutive study participants were evaluated to estimate point prevalence of suicidal ideation and desire for death in the study population.

**Results:** All subjects were enrolled in full time university education at the time of assessment. 17 subjects (34%) presented with weak desire for death whilst 5 subjects (10%) presented with moderate to severe desire for death. 15 Subjects (30%) presented with active suicidal ideation at the time of assessment. However, only 3 subjects (6%) presented with moderate to severe suicidal ideation. The subjects presenting with suicidal ideation described family ties, religious beliefs, fear of irreversible injury as protective factors against their suicidal thoughts. Only 2 subjects (4%) had engaged in some degree of planning towards committing suicide.

**Conclusions:** This study provides the first structured estimate of prevalence of suicidal ideation in trauma exposed population of Pakistan.