

RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE AMONG DRUG DEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS

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Introduction: Suicide is a major global social and public health problem. Drug abuse is considered a significant risk factor for suicidal behavior. Research evidence suggests that some drug addicts may be more likely to engage in suicidal behavior.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to describe the characteristics of drug-dependent individuals who committed suicide.

Methods: The social and demographic profiles of drug-dependent individuals who committed suicide in Belarus between 1995 and 2010 were investigated.

Results: The use of illicit drugs has increased dramatically during last two decades in Belarus. Suicide is the fifth leading cause of death among drug-dependent population in this country. 92 suicide cases (84 males, mean age 34.9 ± 1.2 and 8 females, mean age 35.6 ± 1.4) among drug addicts in Belarus from 1995 to 2010 were registered. 92.4% of suicide victims used opiates. 53.3% of drug addicts had a criminal record. The majority of suicide victims (68%) suffered comorbid disorders. The most common disorders were viral hepatitis (30%), HIV (20%) and alcohol dependence (18%). 95.7% of drug addicts have committed suicide by hanging.

Conclusions: A number of risk factors for suicide such as opiates use, comorbid disorders and criminal activity among drug-dependent individuals have been identified. It is important to identify those individuals with drug dependence that might be at particularly high risk for suicide.