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Background

Knowing the factors that can predict the occurrence of suicidal ideation in mental health patients assessed in Emergency Rooms (ERs) will enhance patient risk assessments.

Aim

To examine the factors that can predict the likelihood that a patient presenting to the Emergency Room will have suicidal ideation

Methods

Twenty-four independent demographic and clinical factors contained on a data assessment tool for 337 patients assessed by the crisis team in the ER over 6 months were compiled. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 20 with univariate analyses and logistic regression.

Results

Only two (reason for presenting to the ER and Global Assessment of Function (GAF) score) of the seven-predictor variables on univariate analysis made unique statistically significant contributions to a logistic regression model. The odds ratio for 'reason for presenting to the ER' was 7.53, which suggests that patients who presented with a complaint of 'low mood' were seven and a half times more likely to report suicidal ideation compared with those presenting with other complaints, controlling for other factors in the model. Also the odds ratio for 'GAF score' was 9.92, which suggests that those who had GAF scores of 50 or less were ten times more likely to present with suicidal ideation compared with those who had GAF scores of more than 50, controlling for other factors.

Conclusion

Patients presenting to the ER with 'low mood' and those with a GAF score of less than 50 should be properly assessed for the presence of suicidal ideation.