Suicidal Adolescents: Examining self-poisonings within the pediatric population

Lynn A Farrugia, Katherine L Boyle, Jennifer L Carey
On Behalf of the Toxicology Investigators Consortium
Division of Medical Toxicology, Department of Emergency Medicine
University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA

@umasstox

Background

✧ Suicide is the third-leading cause of death in 10-24 year-olds.
✧ Adolescents lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempt is 12.1% and 4.1%, respectively.
✧ Poisonings are a common method of self-harm encountered in the Emergency Department.

Objective

✧ To characterize ingestions and outcomes in adolescents with self-harm attempts reported in the Toxicology Investigators Consortium (ToxIC) database.

Methods

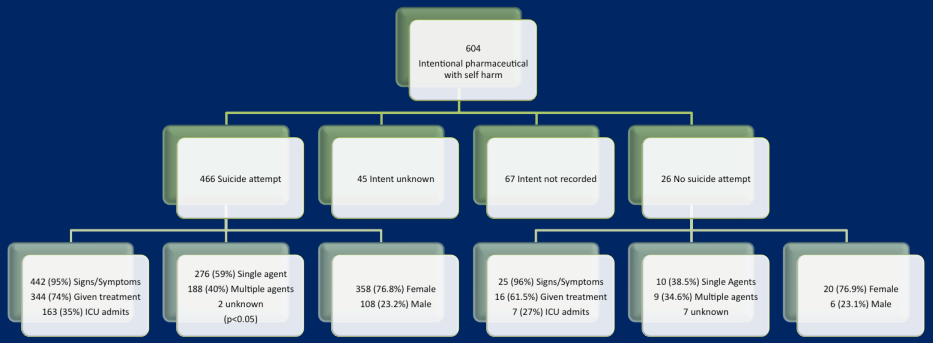
✧ A retrospective review of the ToxIC database from 1/1/10 through 11/1/14 was performed.
✧ Cases categorized as "Intentional Self-Harm" among 13-18 year-olds were identified.
✧ Cases reported as "Unlikely tox related" were excluded.

Results

✧ 2226 cases of toxicologic exposures in ages 13-18 reported in ToxIC.
✧ Patients presenting with suicide attempt were predominantly female (76.8% vs 23.2%, $p<0.05$).
✧ A single agent was ingested in 276 (59.2%) of attempts.
✧ 188 (40.3%) cases involved multiple agents compared to a single agent in 276 (59%) cases ($P<0.05$, data missing in two cases).

Top three most common ingestions by pharmaceutical class:

	Suicide Attempt	No suicide intent
Analgesics	201	18
Antidepressants	161	4
Anticholinergics/antihistamines	119	7



Results: Suicide intent compared to no intent

Discussion

✧ Female patients presented after attempted suicide more frequently than male patients.
✧ There was similar illness severity in the suicidal intent and no suicidal intent groups.
✧ Classes of agents ingested were not different between the suicide intent and no intent groups.

Conclusion

✧ This study describes characteristics of adolescents with toxicologic exposures. Continued research is needed to prevent pharmaceutical overdose in this population.