

Abstract

Objectives: To identify risk factors of suicide attempt in young people in Hong Kong

Methods: This is a case-control study. 55 consecutive suicide attempters aged between 15 and 34 admitted to a regional hospital in Hong Kong were compared with 62 non-suicide attempters matched for sex and age. Each participant was assessed with a semi-structured interview, Chinese versions of the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (CHDS), Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (CBSS), Beck Hopelessness Scale (CBHS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (CRSS), SAD PERSONS scale and Risk-Rescue scale.

Results: Suicide attempters had elevated odds ratios on lower educational level, unemployment and tattooing. Poor interpersonal relationships and history of child abuse were also found to be risk factors. Attempters also had higher level of hopelessness and suicide ideation. 65.5% of suicide attempters had a psychiatric diagnosis, and among those with mental health problems, half had depression. The majority of cases reported recent psychosocial stressors before the attempts. Most attempters overdosed themselves, with about one half using paracetamol.

Conclusions: Recognising the risk factors for attempted suicide in young people can help develop appropriate preventive strategies. The present study provided preliminary information on attempted suicide in Hong Kong and may act as a starting point for further studies.