

## **Abstract**

**Objective:** This study was to understand the socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of deliberate self-harm (DSH) patients in Tseung Kwan O and rural Sai Kung districts in Hong Kong and to examine the difference between DSH repeaters and those who did not repeat.

**Methodology:** This was a prospective study. It described the socioeconomic and clinical features of a cohort of DSH attempters. Subjects included DSH attempters attending the only acute general hospital (TKOH) serving Tseung Kwan O and rural Sai Kung. The follow-up study compared the profiles of those who repeated DSH and attended hospital within 12 months and those who did not.

**Result:** There were a total of 471 DSH attempters who attended TKOH during the research period. Of these 76 (16.1%) repeated the act within 12 months. Among them, 4 (0.85%) were completed suicides. The male to female ratios of DSH attempters and repeaters were 1:1.9 and 1:1.5 respectively. For the repeaters the median duration of re-attempt was 70 days after the index attempt. The repeaters and non-repeaters differed significantly in the following aspects: the re-attempters had higher prevalence of mental illness, past psychiatric history and past DSH

history. Using logistic regression, DSH repetition was independently associated with past DSH episodes, psychiatric disorder diagnosed in the index admission, Suicidal Intent Scale score 4 or above and missing after attendance at hospital (AED and wards). Clinical factors seemed to be a more powerful explanatory factor for DSH repeaters than socioeconomic factors

**Conclusion:** There were significant differences in the clinical profiles between the DSH repeaters and non-repeaters. The findings would be useful in the management of DSH attempters.