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Jon Hunter, Robert Maunder, Paul Kurdyak,
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Mental health follow-up after deliberate self-harm and risk for repeat self-harm and death

Jon Hunter^{*a}, Robert Maunder^a, Paul Kurdyak^{a,b}, Andrew S. Wilton^b, Andrea Gruneir^c,

Simone Vigod^{a,b}

a - University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

b - Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

c - University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Corresponding author contact information:***Jon Hunter:**

Jon.Hunter@sinahealthsystem.ca 416 586 4800 x4557
600 University Ave Toronto, ON M5G 1X5

Abstract

Morbidity and mortality after deliberate self-harm (DSH) are high, so mental health care shortly after DSH is recommended. Using population-level health data we determined the association between a mental health visit and risk for repeat DSH with or without intensive care unit (ICU) admission or all-cause death. Over two years, 23,140 individuals had emergency department treatment for DSH. Within 30 days, 10.7% had a family physician mental health visit, 17.1% visited a psychiatrist, 3.6% visited both and 68.6% neither. Individuals who received mental health follow-up had more chronic and severe mental illness and higher acuity DSH. Over five years, repeat DSH occurred in 4,792 (20.7%). Repeat DSH was more common in those who had a mental health visit within 30 days. Adjusting for baseline characteristics attenuated these differences. Similar results were found for DSH with ICU admission (5.0%) and death (7.6%). More frequent follow-up was not associated with better outcome. Timely access to mental health

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