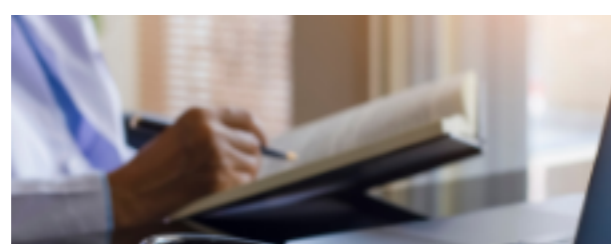


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Review Article

Addiction and suicide: A review

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Abstract

Background

Addiction specialists frequently find themselves faced with suicidal behavior in their addiction patients. Although many addiction treatment programs will not accept clients with recent suicidal behavior, up to 40% of patients seeking treatment for substance dependence report a history of suicide attempt(s).¹⁻³ Risk factors for suicide have been studied in the general population and among people with mental illness, less is known about risk factors in those with substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.

Methods

Studies, psychological autopsies and recent reviews on risk factors for suicide and suicide attempts in patients with alcohol and drug use disorders and the relationship with co-occurring mental illness were examined.

Results and Conclusions

Suicidal behavior is a significant problem for people with co-occurring disorders seeking addiction treatment. Several predisposing and precipitating risk factors such as marital and interpersonal relationship disruption, occupational and financial stressors, recent heavy substance use and intoxication as well as a history of previous suicide attempts and sexual abuse combine in an additive fashion with personality traits and mental illnesses to intensify risk for suicidal behavior in addiction patients. Major depression, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder are especially associated with suicidal behavior in people with addictive disorders.

Discussion and Scientific Significance

Treatment implications of these findings are discussed. Addiction treatment providers should routinely gather information about client's suicidal histories, thoughts, and plans in order to assess risk and develop treatment plans for suicidality at various points in treatment. (Am J Addict 2015;24:98-104)

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