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INCIDENCE OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS IN MADRID: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ATTEMPTS AND RESPONSE OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM

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Background: Suicide is a serious public health problem. In 2005, 793 people were hospitalized in Madrid due to suicide attempt. However, most of the attempts do not require hospitalization and patients are discharged after the intervention in the emergency units. With the aim to implement local policies to prevent suicide, it is important to know the whole spectrum of suicide attempts that contact emergency units in Madrid.

Aims: To explore the incidence of suicide attempts assisted in the public health system in Madrid and to analyze their characteristics and the response of the health system.

Method: Clinical reports of all patients attempting suicide were analyzed during 4 months in 4 general public hospitals (covering 44.7% of the whole population) in the Community of Madrid.

Results: 1009 suicide attempts committed by 921 people (66.2% women) were collected, with an incidence of 34.3 people per 100.000 in 4 months. 57 people (6.2%) committed more than one attempt (range 2 to 10, mean=2.5 ± 1.3). After the emergency intervention 71.9% of the patients were discharged, 25.3% hospitalized, 2.6% fled, and 0.2% died. Regarding suicidal ideation, 7.5% presented very high levels during evaluation, while 13.1% had high levels, 20.3% moderate and 47.3% had no suicidal ideation.

Conclusion: Compared with other European countries, our findings show moderate incidence of suicide attempts, most of which were mild, treated in the emergency units and derived to outpatient psychiatric follow-up. These results suggest places to develop and implement prevention measures.