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Gender Difference in Self-injurious Behaviour. a Study Between 1983 and 2007 in Trieste

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Introduction:

A review of the literature shows that the self-injurious behaviours are more common among females, and suicides among male subjects. A significant difference between the two genders is also reflected in the choice of means used to commit the act of self-injuring, considering the male gender predilection for more violent means.

Some recent studies indicate trends that deviate from the above data in the literature or indicate a tendency to an attenuation of these differences.

Objectives:

Reasons for engaging in self-harm behaviours include to regulate emotion and to elicit attention. Correlates of these practices include a history of sexual abuse, depression, anxiety, alexithymia, hostility, smoking, dissociation, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behaviors.

Aims:

the aim of this study is to evaluate the gender difference in self-injurious behaviour.

Methods:

Our retrospective study was conducted making a comparison between a period of time before and after the start of an articulated program of prevention of suicidal behaviors in Trieste, from 1983 to 2007.

Results:

In the '80, the self-injurious behavior were more common among males; after 2000 years this difference has continuously attenuated. This trend is in contrast with findings in the international literature.

Even the repeated acts of self-harm were more common among males.

Regarding the data on suicides, they were more frequent in male subjects, and this fact has remained stable over time, in accordance with international data.

Conclusions:

More studies are necessary to evaluate gender difference in self-injurious behaviour.