Abstract

The literature provides support for the hypothesis that some major repeaters (individuals with 5 lifetime suicide attempts) are addicted to suicidal behavior (SB). This study explores whether major repeaters are addicted to SB or not using 7 criteria: tolerance (Criterion 1), withdrawal (Criterion 2), loss of control (Criterion 3), problems in quitting/cutting down (Criterion 4), much time spent using (Criterion 5), substantial reduction in activities (Criterion 6), and adverse physiological/physical consequences (Criterion 7). Total dependence on SB was indicated by the presence of 3 or more of the 7 criteria in the last 12 months. This cross-sectional study at Puerta de Hierro University Hospital (Madrid, Spain) recruited 118 suicide attempters including 8 major repeaters (7%, 8/118), who were all females. The association between each SB addiction criterion, physiological dependence and total dependence with major repeater status was tested for significance and for effect size with odds ratios (ORs) and their 95% confidence intervals. As hypothesized, major repeaters met significantly higher frequency of criteria for total dependence on SB, OR=62.9 (6.4-615). A backward stepwise logistic regression model was used to provide an OR between major repeater status and total dependence status corrected by confounding variables. Age, panic disorder without agoraphobia, borderline personality disorder, history of psychiatric inpatient admission, and total dependence on SB were introduced as independent variables with major repeater status as the dependent variable. The model selected total dependence and age as the remaining significant variables in the last step. Accordingly, major repeaters appear to be addicted to SB.

Keywords

major repeaters, suicidal behavior, addiction, borderline personality disorder.