

Suicidality and depression among adult patients admitted in general medical facilities in Kenya

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Abstract

Aim: To document Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) II suicidal symptoms among patients admitted to Kenyan non-psychiatric general medical facilities **Methods** All consenting adults admitted within a period of 4 weeks at 10 general medical facilities in Kenya were interviewed for suicidal symptoms and depression using the BDI-II. **Results** In all, 2,780 patients responded to item 9 (suicidal symptoms of the BDI-II). The prevalence of all BDI-II suicidal symptoms combined was 10.5%. Thoughts of 'killing oneself but have not carried them out' accounted for 9% of the suicidal symptoms. The younger age group had the highest prevalence of suicidal symptoms and the oldest age group had the least prevalence of suicidal symptoms. The more depressed the patients were on the overall BDI-II score, the higher the prevalence of suicidal symptoms. **Conclusion** On average 1 out of 10 of the patients had suicidal symptoms, more so in younger than the older people and in the more depressed. These symptoms had not been clinically recognised and therefore not managed. This calls for clinical practice that routinely enquires for suicidal symptoms in general medical wards.