

The impact of patient suicide on psychiatric unit teams (pp. 543-556)

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Suicide attempts and suicides are fifty times more frequent at psychiatric hospitals. The aim of this work was to evaluate the impact of a lethal suicide attempt on both mental health professionals and patients attending a psychiatric centre. An opportunity study was made by means of opinion questionnaires, a brief suicide risk evaluation, and with both Beck's suicide ideation and hopelessness scales. Results show that mental health professionals informed a medium training level to cope with this kind of events; those who observed a suicide attempt were more affected personally than those who did not; and their main needs were related to job security and a specific training to act when a suicide attempt occurs. Although patients showed a significant improvement fifteen days later, a clinical and statistical increase of hopelessness was also reported (7.3 ± 5.74 vs. 14.88 ± 2.26 ; $t=4.20$, $gI=8$, $p=.003$). We can conclude that work organization plays a crucial role in the impact of suicide attempts, which is usually negative and affects both patients and mental health professionals.