

# Suicide attempt in people with mental disorders: literature review

Tentativa de suicídio em pessoas com transtornos mentais: revisão de literatura

Intentos de suicidio en personas con trastornos mentales: revisión de la literatura

## RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo identificar o que vem sendo produzido sobre tentativa de suicídio em pessoas com transtornos mentais. Trata-se de uma revisão de literatura realizada nas bases de dados Literatura Latino-Americano e do Caribe em Ciências da Saúde (LILACS) Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) e Biblioteca Nacional de Medicina dos Estados Unidos (PUBMED). A busca ocorreu no mês de agosto de 2021. Para as estratégias de busca se utilizou descritores "tentativa de suicídio" e "transtornos mentais". Foram selecionados para essa revisão 10 artigos. Os resultados possibilitou a identificação do perfil de pessoas que tentam suicídio e associação com transtornos mentais. Concluíram-se então pelas evidências que as tentativas de suicídio estão associadas a alguns dos diferentes transtornos mentais.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Suicídio, Tentativa de Suicídio e Transtornos Mentais.

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify what has been produced about attempted suicide in people with mental disorders. This is a literature review carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean Literatures in Health Sciences (LILACS) Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and the National Library of Medicine of the United States (PUBMED) databases. month of August 2021. For the search strategies, the descriptors "suicide attempt" and "mental disorders" were used. 10 articles were selected for this review. The results allowed the identification of the profile of people who attempt suicide and association with mental disorders. They were then concluded by the evidence that suicide attempts are associated with some of the different mental disorders.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Suicide, Attempted Suicide and Mental Disorders.

## RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar lo que se ha producido acerca de los intentos de suicidio en personas con trastornos mentales. Esta es una revisión bibliográfica realizada en las bases de datos Literatura Latin American and Caribbean in Health Sciences (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) y National Library of Medicine of the United States (PUBMED), agosto de 2021. Para las estrategias de búsqueda, se utilizaron los descriptores "intento de suicidio" y "trastorno mental". Diez artículos fueron seleccionados para esta revisión. Los resultados permitieron identificar el perfil de las personas que intentan suicidarse y la asociación con los trastornos mentales. Luego se concluyó por la evidencia de que los intentos de suicidio están asociados con algunos de los diferentes trastornos mentales.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Suicidio, Intento de Suicidio y Trastornos Mentales.

RECEBIDO EM: 13/01/22 APROVADO EM: 22/02/22

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## INTRODUCTION

**S**uicide is a complex phenomenon, which is increasing more and more. It is estimated that every 40 seconds a suicide occurs.<sup>1</sup> Suicide attempts, in addition to being an important warning sign, are also one of the predictors for the consummated act, and this brings a serious consequence such as individual and collective disability. The recurrence of the act should be a cause for concern on the part of health professionals and society.<sup>2</sup>

One of the main prevalent factors is the identification of the behavior and suicidal ideation of those who suffer from mental disorders. Thus, identifying the profile and factors related to the suicide attempt becomes essential for the development of prevention strategies, as it helps to detect and delineate the type and nature of the necessary intervention, indicating the circumstances in which the person takes this act.<sup>3</sup>

It is important and necessary to develop studies on the subject of suicide attempts, so that they are carried out cautiously by

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professionals, in order to avoid the dissemination of this idea.<sup>1</sup> Given the importance of the above topic, this article aims to identify what has been produced about suicide attempts in people with mental disorders.

## METHOD

This is a study of the type of narrative literature review, which was carried out through a survey of scientific productions that appeared in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and the United States National Library of Medicine (PUB-MED). The guiding question of this study is based on the following question: What has been produced about suicide attempts in people with mental disorders?

For the survey of scientific productions, the following descriptors were used: "suicide attempt" and "mental disorders". Furthermore, the search was refined by language, which includes English, Portuguese or Spanish. A time frame of the last five (5)

years was also used. The search was carried out in August 2021.

As inclusion criteria, we opted for original articles that responded to the proposed

objective, online, free and in full. And, as exclusion criteria, review articles, theses,

### Tabela

Código do artigo/ Base de dados	Referência
A1 LILACS	Castillo YAA, Rodríguez AMB, Torres NC. High Prevalence of Two or More Suicide Attempts Associated with Suicidal Ideation and Mental Disease in Colombia 2016. <i>Revista colombiana de psiquiatria</i> , 2020 v.49(2): 96-101.
A2 LILACS	Costa ALS, Souza MLP. Narrativas de familiares sobre o suicídio de idosos em uma metrópole amazônica. <i>Revista de saúde pública</i> , v.51, e.121, 2017.
A3 LILACS	Acka SO, Yuncu O, Aidyn Z. Mental status and suicide probability of young people: A cross-sectional study. <i>Revista da Associação Médica Brasileira</i> , 2018 64(1):32-40.
A4 LILACS	Sánchez-Teruel D, Muela-Martinéz J-A, González-Cabrera M, Herrera M-R F-A y, García-León A. Variables related to suicide attempt in a Spanish province over a three-year period (2009-2011), <i>Revista Ciência e saúde coletiva</i> , 2018 23(1):277-86.
A5 LILACS	Borba LO, Ferreira ACZ, Capistrano FC, Kalinke LP, Maftum MA, Maftum GJ. Fatores associados à tentativa de suicídio por pessoas com transtorno mental. <i>Revista mineira de Enfermagem</i> , 2020 24:, e.1284.
A6 SCIELO	Oliveira JWT, Magalhães APN, Barros AC, Monteiro EKR, Souza CDF, Alves V de M. Características das tentativas de suicídio atendidas pelo serviço de emergência pré-hospitalar: um estudo epidemiológico de corte transversal. <i>Jornal Brasileiro de Psiquiatria</i> , 2020 69(4):239-246.
A7 PUBMED	Baek JY, Kim K, Hong JP, Cho MJ, Fava M, Mischoulon D et al . Binge eating, trauma, and suicide attempt in community adults with major depressive disorder. <i>Public Library of Science one</i> , 2018.13(6):e.0198192.
A8 PUBMED	Kuehn KS, King KM, Linehan MM, Harned MS. Modeling the suicidal behavior cycle: Understanding repeated suicide attempts among individuals with borderline personality disorder and a history of attempting suicide. <i>J Consult Clin Psychol</i> , 2020. 88(6):570-581
A9 PUBMED	Ma Y, Wang D-F, Yuan M, Zhang X-J, Long J, Chen S-B et al. The prevalence, metabolic disturbances and clinical correlates of recent suicide attempts in Chinese inpatients with major depressive disorder. <i>BioMed Central psychiatry</i> , 2019. 10;19(1):144.
A10 PUBMED	Park CHK, Lee JW, Lee SY, Moon J-J, Jeon D-W, Shim SH. The Korean Cohort for the Model Predicting a Suicide and Suicide-related Behavior: Study rationale, methodology, and baseline sample characteristics of a long-term, large-scale, multi-center, prospective, naturalistic, observational cohort study. <i>Comprehensive Psychiatry</i> , 2019. 88:29-38.

dissertations, conference abstracts and ministerial manuals. The search in SCIELO resulted in four studies. After reading, three articles were excluded because they did not respond to the proposed objective, so an article was selected in this database. In turn, in LILACS, it resulted in ten, in which four articles were used, as one of them was repeated in the two searched databases. Finally, at PUBMED, the search resulted in fourteen studies, of which five were used. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of ten articles were used, which were read and analyzed in full and are described in the following table:

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, two categories were elaborated: Profile of people who attempt suicide and Association between mental disorders and suicide attempts.

### Profile of people who attempt suicide

As for the profile of people who attempt suicide, studies show that females are those who have more attempts (A1, A5). It also shows us the predominance of more than one suicide attempt in women, aged approximately 25 years (A5). The risk of attempted suicide also increases with age, with a higher frequency among women aged between 34 and 53 years (A4).

Suicide attempts have been growing in recent years, as well as the number of cases of people who manage to commit suicide. 4 Although women attempt suicide more often, men are the ones who are most likely to commit suicide. Some studies point out that men predominate in cases of suicide. 5

On the other hand, a study points out that attempts occur with similar frequency between men and women. However, the presence of mental disorder was more common among men when compared to women (A6). The suicide attempt is related to problems such as abuse, social isolation, psychological violence, trauma, physical illness, drug and alcohol dependence, among others. 4

One of the studies points out that the number of suicide attempts in the elderly

is also on the rise. The motivation of the elderly is related to family social losses, followed by psychopathological disorders (A2). People who commit suicide who are over 75 years old have extreme financial

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conditions, being either very rich or very poor; are unemployed or retired, do not have a religion, marital status is single or divorced, and have low adherence to treatments. 6

The intense suffering and the difficulty

in expressing themselves about their state of health makes older people more likely to attempt suicide. 7 The family context, socioeconomic conditions, losses and depression are the main reasons that lead people to attempt suicide, according to information from the 2021 Epidemiological Bulletin. 8

### Association between mental disorders and suicide attempts

Suicide attempts are usually associated with some mental disorder (A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, A9). The risk of suicide is higher in people with symptoms of depression, anxiety, negative self-perception and hostility (A3), as well as a prevalence of mental disorder and persistent ideation (A1, A2, A4).

Depression and suicidal ideation should be considered a priority in public health care policies. 9

People with addictions to psychoactive substances are more prone to the risk of suicide attempt (A4, A10), as well as those who have experienced some trauma, may have eating disorders (A7), develop chronic diseases, and thus increase the risk of attempting suicide (A9).

The difficulty of adhering to drug treatment, in the face of a mental disorder, drives the risk of suicide (A2, A5). There are studies that show that non-adherence to drug treatment is one of the factors correlated with suicide attempt in the time interval between diagnosis and treatment of the mental disorder. 10

## CONCLUSION

Suicide attempts are related to different types of mental disorders. These are: depression, anxiety, age group, problems related to drug and alcohol use, medication in excess, and extrinsic and intrinsic factors as well. It also made it possible to identify the profile of people who attempt suicide.

In this sense, understanding the relationship of suicide attempts in people with mental disorders allows health professionals to intervene in these cases. Suicide is a complex subject, and one that requires many reflections.

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