

Assessment of Suicidal Patients Admitted to the Emergency and Critical Care Center of Fukuoka University Hospital Consultation–Liaison Service (April 2006 to March 2007)

Nobuaki ETO¹⁾, Taisuke KITAMURA²⁾, Keiichi TANAKA²⁾
and Ryoji NISHIMURA¹⁾

¹⁾ Department of Psychiatry, Fukuoka University Faculty of Medicine

²⁾ Department of Emergency and Critical Care Medicine, Fukuoka University Faculty of Medicine

Abstract : The authors conducted studies of suicide attempts among the patients admitted to the emergency and critical care center of Fukuoka University Hospital. From April 2006 we started a thorough investigation of these patients, especially regarding their psychiatric diagnoses. There were 73 suicidal patients admitted to the emergency unit during a one-year (from April 2006 to March 2007), of those 22 died as a result of each suicidal attempt, and 51 survived at the point of discharge from the emergency unit. Regarding the methods of suicide employed, poisoning (including ingestion of drugs and CO poisoning) was the most prevalent (28 patients), followed by hanging (22), jumping from a high place (11), cutting or piercing themselves with a sharp instrument (7) in order of frequency. The psychiatric diagnoses (ICD–10 criteria) of all suicidal patients included 35% of F3, 18% of F4, 11% of F6, and 10% of F2. To investigate these patients, we identified some issues when assessing them psychiatrically ; they include the difference of methodological approaches between patients who actually committed suicide and those who attempted suicide but survived, the problems resulting from the environment where their physical conditions (and/or) therapies should be the first consideration. We also found some tendencies of suicidal patients which make them difficult to assess ; including their psycho–social isolation and psychiatric symptoms (e.g. psychosis, dissociation, emotional instability). The role of psychiatrists in assessing suicidal patients in the emergency unit may be important for promoting suicide prevention.

Key words : Suicide Attempt, Consultation – Liaison Service, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatric Diagnosis