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Psychiatric and socio-demographic characteristics of young suicide attempters: a better identification for a better prevention

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Within the framework of a longitudinal research project (FNRS grant No. 32-32198.91 and Jacobs Foundation), we have collected psychiatric and socio-demographic data concerning all adolescents 15-20 years old admitted to the emergency room of the Geneva's University Hospital after a suicide attempt. In this paper, we shall present the most outstanding characteristics of these data.

The psychologic functioning and the life-events of the cohort of 149 adolescents who have been assessed after attempting suicide will be analysed and, whenever possible, compared to those of Swiss adolescents within a general population. We shall concentrate on psychiatric diagnoses (DSM III-R), as well as on life-events, socio-demographic features and sex ratio.

We are convinced that a better identification of psychiatric and socio-demographic characteristics are useful in working out efficient primary and secondary prevention programs.

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BEING AN ADOLESCENT IN A VIOLENT HOME IN CAMPINAS-SP AND THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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The aim study was to identify and analyse the social representations of domestic violence on adolescents living in Campinas-SP. The problems leading to violence in the family particularly in childhood were assessed, and the association of this with delinquency, social maladjustment, rebelliousness, aggression and marginal behaviour in adolescence. For the study design two mixed-sex groups of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 were identified. The first comprised 50 youngsters who had experienced child abuse according to the Crami-Campinas (regional registration centre for mistreated children). The second group was a control group of the same number, sex, age and social conditions of those in group one but without evidence of child abuse syndrome.

Based on the literature this research involves 3 theories: - domestic violence, adolescence and social representation. The methodological investigation included the application of research devices, e.g., interview-based in a structured anamnesis. To analyse the data qualitative methods were used to identify the social representation of domestic violence by the adolescents. The quantitative method was also used to describe social representation and economic conditions in both groups. The results are a comparison between the groups plus theoretic discussion base on the literature review particularly for the psycho-social approach.

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LITHUANIAN PSYCHIATRY - A NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

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Democratic changes in Lithuanian society and the adoption of the Mental Health Act by the Lithuanian Parliament in 1995 have led to positive changes in the development in the field of mental health. General psychiatry has gradually and reluctantly moved from the traditions of totalitarian Soviet psychiatry towards acceptance of international standards in all aspects of mental health. Three sub-specialities: psychotherapy, child psychiatry and drug and alcohol abuse - have made great progress in accepting approaches based on human rights, community and family involvement, teamwork and de-medicalization of mental health problems. Despite this progress the different approaches may have a negative influence on mental health funding policy under the new National Health Insurance System which will start in 1997.

The rapid development of psychotherapy as an independent speciality with high standards of training in psychodynamic therapy is discussed as well as an emphasis on the need for a broad coalition between professional groups, mental health institutions and NGOs.

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WPA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND THE CZECH PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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The Czech Psychiatric Association comprises about 1000 members and meets regularly 10 times a year at the Psychiatric Department of Charles University, Prague. Each meeting is attended by approximately 200 psychiatrists. National conferences are held every two years. One of the main activities of the Society is the participation in postgraduate and continuing psychiatric training for which WPA educational programmes are a useful tool. Translations into Czech have been made for programmes on dysthymia, schizophrenia, social phobia and OCD. The programme on schizophrenia has been used for lectures in 3 modules and about 40 psychiatrists participated in these parts. Social phobia was the most successful programme which was carried out in 3 steps including weekend training in CBT methods. To date about 20 psychiatrists have received certificates and another 30 will receive them in the near future. The OCD programme was presented several times during various psychiatric conferences. In the second half of the year the depression programme will be presented. WPA educational programmes have proved to be popular in the Czech Republic and are useful teaching aids in the training of psychiatrists as well as the education of medical students.