

An Analysis of the Profile of Deliberate Self-Harm Cases in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Deliberate self-harm (DSH) which includes self-poisoning or self-injurious behavior regardless of intent is a global public health concern. Little is known about the profile of patients admitted following DSH at Dr George Mukhari Tertiary Hospital (DGMTH) in the north region of Gauteng, South Africa. This study aimed to determine the profile of patients and reasons for DSH. In a retrospective chart review study, data was collected on all the patients referred to the Clinical Psychology Unit at DGMTH between January 2018 and January 2019 following DSH. The results showed that the cases of DSH were mostly young, single African females, unemployed with at least a secondary-level education. Females chose less lethal methods such as poisoning, specifically non-prescriptive drug overdose, while males chose highly lethal methods such as hanging. For females, relationship and family problems remained the main reason for DSH, while males reported financial problems.