



HKU Study on Suicidal Ideation in Early Psychosis Youth

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BACKGROUND

- **In psychotic disorders, suicide rate is substantially increased**
 - Completed suicides: 5-10% in all psychosis patients
 - This is over 50 times the risk in the general population
- **Early stages of psychotic disorder is a particularly high-risk period**
 - In Hong Kong before the EASY service, suicide rate for psychosis patient in the first 3 years is around 3.4%
 - After the introduction of the EASY service, suicide rate reduced to 1.1%
 - EASY service started in 2001 and serve first episode psychosis patients aged between 15 and 25



BACKGROUND

- High risk situations from clinical experience:
 - Specific symptoms: command hallucinations, action on delusions, future event delusions
 - Returning to work or school
 - Relapse
 - Change of keyworkers
- Most suicides are preceded by suicidal ideations
- The study aims to estimate the level of suicidal ideations in early psychosis patients, and to identify their correlates



THE STUDY

Collaborative study between

- **HKU PSI Unit (Psychosis Intervention and Studies)**
- **HA EASY Services (Kwai Chung Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital)**

Patient Sample

- First-episode psychosis - 89 inpatients or outpatients with first episode psychosis in Early Assessment Service for Young People with Psychosis (EASY), Hospital Authority
- Normal control - 71 health volunteers *matched* for gender, age, and education level



FACTORS STUDIED

Demographic and history variables

- Delay before treatment
- Stressful life events
- History of suicide attempt

Clinical factors

- Symptoms
- Medication side effects
- Treatment satisfaction
- Drug attitude

Psychological factors

- Hopelessness
- Locus of control
- Reasons for living
- Future outlook
- Insight
- Impulsivity
- Cognitive rigidity
- Problem solving



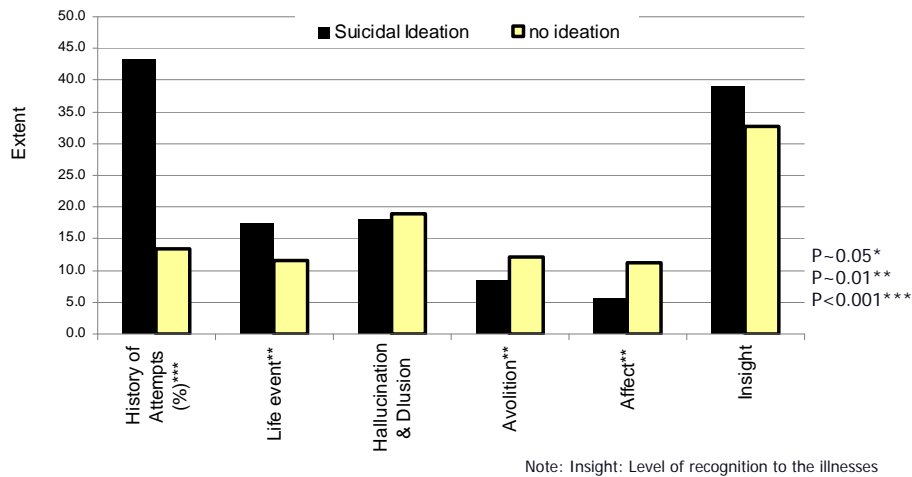
DEMOGRAPHICS & SUICIDAL IDEATION RATES

| | Patient (N=89) | Normal (N=71) |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Age | | |
| Mean (SD) | 20.5 (3.3) | 19.7 (3.3) |
| Years of Education | | |
| Mean (SD) | 11.8 (2.2) | 12.4 (2.3) |
| Previous attempts | 23 (25.8%) | 3 (4.2%) |
| Suicidal Ideation | 37 (41.6%) | 15 (21.1%) |

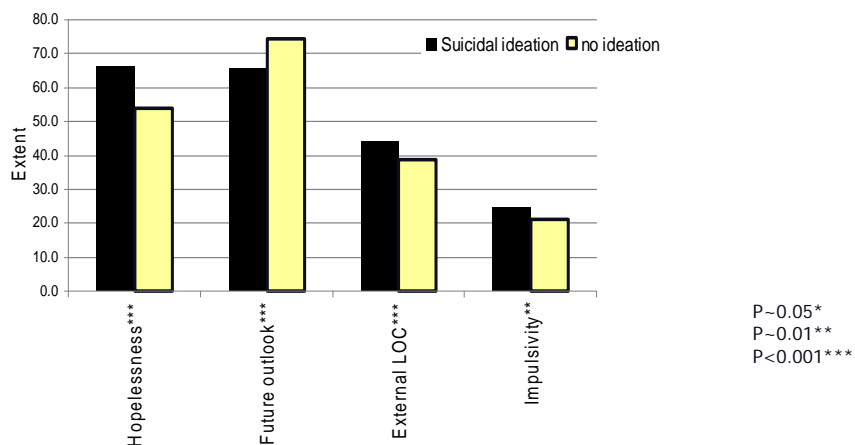
Remarks: Patients & normal controls are matched in sex, age, and years of education



CLINICAL FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDAL IDEATION



PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDAL IDEATION



Note: external LOC: tends to attribute outcomes to external cause, such as fate.

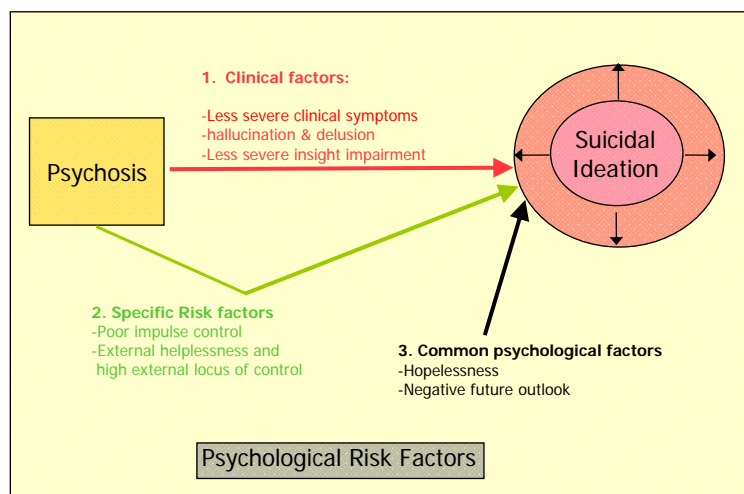


SUMMARY

- **Suicidal ideation rate in patients (41.6%) nearly doubled the rate in normal controls (21.1%)**
- **They results from interaction between 3 groups of factors**
- Common psychological factors
 - Hopelessness, negative future outlook
 - Illness intensify these factors
- Specific psychological factors related to illness
 - Impulsivity, external locus of control (tends to attribute outcomes to external cause such as fate)
- Clinical factors
 - Less severe clinical symptoms
 - Less severe insight impairment



FACTORS INTERACT LEADING TO SUICIDAL IDEATION





Recommendations For Early Psychosis Work

- To provide specialized intervention service for psychosis patients, including focus on daily functioning and future planning.
- Recognize suicide prevention as a challenge.
- Understand suicidal ideation is a result of interacting underlying factors.
- Recognize the importance of psychological factors in suicidal ideation.
- Teachers, social workers and carers have important role to play in recognizing suicide risks in patients.



QUESTIONS