Intentional self-poisoning by alkaline corrosive agents: a study for the period 2010 - 2012

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Objective

To present the results of a 3-year clinico-epidemiological study of features and severity of acute intentional self-poisoning by alkaline corrosive agents in the Toxicology Clinic, Emergency University Hospital “Pirogov”, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Attention is paid to the motivation of patients for carrying out the suicide attempt by means of corrosives agents.

Methods

The study includes 43 patients with acute corrosive ingestion, hospitalized in the Toxicology Clinic for the period 01.01.2010–31.12.2012.

The patients were followed-up with regard to general condition, local damage, psychiatric state, comorbidity, and complications.

The methods used include: clinical observation and examination, clinical laboratory, imaging and psychiatric methods and tests.

Results

- 43 patients between the ages of 22 and 82 with acute corrosive ingestions have been observed.
- Eleven were male - 25.6 % and 32 female - 74.4% (Fig.1).

Fig.1 Distribution by gender

- All ingestions were intentional.
- Alkaline agents were used by all of the patients.
- The severity of poisonings varied from moderate to extremely severe.

Different complications were seen in 82 % of the cases – severe bleeding, perforation, fistula or/and stricture formation.

Two of the patients have undergone surgical intervention – colesophagogplastic - and have recovered completely.

1 and 2 slide: Exstirpated oesophagus and stomach after postcorrosive damages

3 and 4 slide: Different consequetive steps of oesophageal replacement with colon interposition

The motivation in different age groups was also studied.

Through an earnest psychiatric history, an exact mental status, allowing to establish the depth of mental disorder and implementation of various psychological tests as Questionnaire for assessment of suicidal risk; The Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression, the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE), we observe significant correlation between severity of intoxication and patient's motivation. Psychiatric comorbidity occurred in patients as depressive and schizoaffective disorder, as well as existential cri-

Conclusion

Acute corrosive ingestions by alkaline agents cause severe pathology.

The severity and complex character of the injuries require good coordination between different specialists and a multidisciplinary approach to any patient with acute corrosive ingestion.