

THE LIFE-TIME EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR AMONG ABUSED WOMEN IN A GENERAL PSYCHIATRIC CONTEXT

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**INTRODUCTION AND AIMS:**

Research concerning domestic violence and intimate partner violence reports life time prevalence of abuse and associations between suicidal behaviors among female psychiatric patients.

The aim of the study was to describe abused women's experiences of emotional, physical, sexual abuse and suicidal behavior experienced by women in general psychiatric care.

**METHODS:**

Women attending general psychiatric in-and outpatient care were asked to participate, using the NorVold abuse questionnaire, and seventy seven abused women contributed.

**RESULTS:**

Thoughts of suicide were significantly more common among women subjected to severe emotional abuse (n= 35, 71%), compared to women not subjected (n=14, 29%). Women suffering from mild emotional abuse register higher frequency of thoughts of suicide (n=39, 80%) compared to women with no experience (n=10, 20%). Suicide attempts were significantly higher among women experiencing severe emotional abuse (n=14, 82%) compared to women with no experience (n=3, 18%). Women who endured severe physical abuse made suicide attempt significantly more often (n=14, 74%) than women with no experience (n=5, 26%). Acts of self-deliberate harm were significantly higher among women experiencing mild emotional abuse (n=24, 86%) compared to the women with no experience (n=4, 14%).

**CONCLUSIONS:**

Results indicate that women with suicidal behavior could be victims of mild and severe emotional abuse and severe physical abuse. Even when suffering from the abuse, the women rarely confide to personnel.