

Study of Personality Factors in Attempted Suicide

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ABSTRACT

Background: Suicidal attempt is becoming a major problem in the world, as it affects the person's career, life style, and family dynamics. Comorbid personality disorders are a risk factors for suicidal behavior. The aim of this study was to determine the various personality factors involved in attempted suicide.

Methods: This is a descriptive study. This study was carried out in the patients, who attempted suicide, who were admitted in the wards of Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital during 1st January 2010 to 30th July 2010. The 16-PF scale was used in all the subjects.

Results: Total 46 cases were studied. Six (13%) subjects were seen as having "schizothymic" traits. Sixteen (34.8%) of the subjects were seen as having low intelligent traits. Total 14 (30.4%) were seen as having affected by feelings. Seven (15.2%) were seen as having humble traits. Fifteen (32.6%) were seen as having sober traits and there are no cases of happy-go-lucky. Three (6.5%) were seen as having expedient. Eight (17.4%) were seen as having shy traits and there are no cases seen of venturesome traits. Total 14 (30.4%) were seen as having tough-minded traits. Eight (17.4%) were seen as having suspicious personality traits while nine (19.6%) were seen as having practical personality traits. Ten (21.7%) were seen as having shrewd personality traits. Total 17 (37.0%) were seen as having apprehensive personality traits. Twelve (26.1%) were seen as having experimenting personality traits and 6 (13.0%) were seen having group dependent personality traits. Among the patients, 10 (21.7%) were seen having undisciplined personality traits. Seven (15.2%) were seen having relaxed personality traits. Total 12 (23.1%) were seen having extroversion traits. Six (13.0%) were seen having low anxiety traits. Ten (21.7%) were seen having tender-minded emotionality personality traits. Seven (15.2%) were seen having subduedness personality traits.

Conclusions: Our study highlights the importance of personality factors in attempted suicide and these factors are at risk in attempting suicide, therefore, which can be implemented in prevention of suicide.

Keywords: attempted suicide; personality factors; 16-PF.

INTRODUCTION

Suicidal attempt is becoming a major problem in the world, as it affects the person's career, life style, and family dynamics. After the attempted suicide, one of the most raised questions is what makes him suicidal act. There have been many causative factors like, pathological family background, underlying mental illness such as Depression, Schizophrenia, Adjustment

Disorders and, many of them have observable personality psychopathology. Comorbid personality disorders are a risk factor for suicidal behavior.

The latest mean worldwide, annual rates of suicide per 100,000 inhabitants were 0.5 for females and 0.9 for males among 5.14 year old and 12.0 for females and 14.2 for males among 15.24 year old, respectively.¹

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Various studies shows that behavioral and emotional problems in childhood can predict PD in adolescence, which in turn, predicts risk for suicide attempt.²⁻⁴

When a person attempt suicide, which may be a response to severe stress perhaps regulated by an individual's personality. Many studies find an association between Personality Disorder and suicide.⁵⁻⁹

Lehner et al.¹⁰ found that hopelessness and depression were only risk factors for internalizing, whereas poor impulse control was a risk only for externalizing adolescents. Other studies report not only internalizing and externalizing types of attempters but also anxious types and socially detached types.¹¹⁻¹³ Using cluster analysis, one study identified six types of adult attempters, neurotic/ introverted and detached and another found four cluster antisocial, histrionic narcissistic, and two avoidant cluster.^{14, 15}

Using Q-factor analysis, another study found six types-internalizing, emotionally disregulated, dependent, hostile/ isolated, psychopathic, and anxious/ samatizing.¹⁶

The aim of this study was to determine the various factors involved in attempted suicide.

METHODS

A cross sectional study was carried out in the patients, who attempted suicide, were admitted in the wards of Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital during 1st January 2010 to 30th July 2010. Patients who fulfilled the selection criteria were included in the study. When the patient's physical condition improved, and after establishing rapport with the patient, the information was collected using 16-PF scale.¹⁷ Informed consent of all suicide attempters was taken. Those who refused to give consent were excluded from the study. All the collected data was entered in the computer statistical software SPSS 12.5 for Windows.

RESULTS

We studied 46 cases of attempted suicide. Male and female are in equal numbers.

On Factor A dimension of 16-PF test, 6 (13%) subjects were seen as having "schizothymic" traits and 3(6.5%) as having "affectothymic" traits. Factor B of 16-PF test represents "the low intelligent versus more intelligent". Total 16 (34.8%) of the subjects were seen as having low intelligent traits and 1(2.2%) as having high intelligent traits. Factor C denotes the personality factor of "affected by feelings versus emotionally stable". Total 14 (30.4%) were seen as having affected by feelings and

1 (2.2%) as emotionally stable. Factor E represents the personality traits of "humble versus assertive", with 7 (15.2%) were seen as having humble traits and 2 (4.3%) as having assertive traits. Factor F indicates the personality traits of "sober versus happy-go-lucky". Fifteen patients (32.6%) were seen as having sober traits and there are no cases of happy-go-lucky. Factor G shows the personality traits of "expedient versus conscientious" with 3 patients (6.5%) were seen as having expedient and 3 (6.5%) as having conscientious. Factor H represents the personality traits of "shy versus venturesome". Eight (17.4%) were seen as having shy traits and there are no cases seen of venturesome traits. Factor I represents the "tough-minded versus tender-minded" personality traits, 14 (30.4%) were seen as having tough-minded traits and 1 (2.2%) as having tender-minded personality traits. Factor L represents the "trusting versus suspicious" personality traits. Eight patients (17.4%) were seen as having suspicious personality traits and 1 (2.2%) as having trusting personality traits. Factor M represents the personality factors of "practical versus imaginative". Nine (19.6%) were seen as having practical personality traits and 2 (4.3%) as having imaginative personality traits. Factor N denotes the personality factors "forthright versus shrewd". Ten (21.7%) were seen as having shrewd personality traits and 2 (4.3%) as having forthright personality traits. Factor O shows the personality factors "placid versus apprehensive". Total 17 (37.0%) were seen as having apprehensive personality traits and 2 (4.3%) as having placid personality traits. Factor Q1 shows the personality factors "conservative versus experimenting", 12 (26.1%) were seen as having experimenting personality traits and 3 (6.5%) as having conservative personality traits. Factor Q2 represents the personality factors "group dependent versus self-sufficient". Six (13.0%) were seen having group dependent personality traits and 4 (8.7%) as self-sufficient personality traits. Factor Q3 shows the personality traits of "undisciplined versus controlled". Total 10 (21.7%) were seen having undisciplined personality traits and 4 (8.7%) as having controlled personality traits. Factor Q4 shows the represents the personality factor of "relaxed versus tense". Seven (15.2%) were seen having relaxed personality traits and 3 (6.5%) as having tense personality traits. Factor QI shows the second order personality factor, which represents the "introversion versus extraversion". Total 12 (23.1%) were seen having extroversion traits and 3 (6.5%) as introversion traits. Factor QII represents the second order personality factor, which shows the "low anxiety versus high anxiety". Six (13.0%) were seen having low anxiety traits and 4 (8.7%) as having high anxiety traits. Factor QIII represents the second order personality factor, which shows "tender-minded emotionality versus tough poise". Ten (21.7%) were seen

having tender-minded emotionality personality traits and 4 (8.7%) as having tough poise personality traits. Factor QIV represent the second order personality factor,

which shows “subduedness versus independence”. Seven (15.2%) were seen having subduedness personality traits and 6.5% as having independence personality traits.

Table 1.16-Personality Factor.

Males (n=23)		Sex		Total (46)
		Females (n=23)	n (%)	
Factor A	1-3 (reserved)	2	4	6 (13.0)
	3.1-7.9	19	18	37 (80.4)
	8-10 (outgoing)	2	1	3 (6.5)
Factor B	1-3 (less intelligent)	5	11	16 (34.8)
	3.1-7.9	18	11	29 (63.0)
	8-10 (more intelligent)	0	1	1 (2.2)
Factor C	1-3 (affected by feelings)	7	7	14 (30.4)
	3.1-7.9	16	15	31 (67.4)
	8-10 (emotionally stable)	0	1	1 (2.2)
Factor E	1-3 (Humble)	5	2	7 (15.2)
	3.1-7.9	18	19	37(80.4)
	8-10 (Assertive)	0	2	2 (4.3)
Factor F	1-3 (Sober)	6	9	15 (32.6)
	3.1-7.9	17	14	31 (67.4)
	8-10 (Happy go lucky)	0	0	0 (0)
Factor G	1-3 (Expedient)	1	2	3 (6.5)
	3.1-7.9	21	19	40 (87.0)
	8-10 (Conscientious)	1	2	3 (6.5)
Factor H	1-3 (Shy)	5	3	8 (17.4)
	3.1-7.9	18	20	38 (82.6)
	8-10 (Venturesome)	0	0	0 (0)
Factor I	1-3 (Tough minded)	0	14	14 (30.4)
	3.1-7.9	22	9	31 (67.4)
	8-10 (Tender minded)	1	0	1 (2.2)
Factor L	1-3 (Trusting)	0	1	1 (2.2)
	3.1-7.9	19	18	37 (80.4)
	8-10 (Suspicious)	4	4	8 (17.4)
Factor M	1-3 (Practical)	3	6	9 (19.6)
	3.1-7.9	19	35	35 (76.1)
	8-10 (Imaginative)	1	2	2 (4.3)
Factor N	1-3 (Forthright)	1	1	2 (4.3)
	3.1-7.9	15	19	34 (73.9)
	8-10 (Shrewd)	7	3	10 (21.7)
Factor O	1-3 (Placid)	1	1	2 (4.3)
	3.1-7.9	11	16	27 (58.7)
	8-10 (Apprehensive)	11	6	17 (37.0)
Factor Q1	1-3 (Conservative)	1	2	3 (6.5)
	3.1-7.9	20	11	31 (67.4)
	8-10 (Experimenting)	2	10	12 (26.1)
Factor Q2	1-3 (Group dependent)	4	2	6 (13.0)
	3.1-7.9	16	20	36 (78.3)
	8-10 (Self sufficient)	3	1	4 (8.7)
Factor Q3	1-3 (Undisciplined)	4	6	10 (21.7)
	3.1-7.9	19	13	32 (69.6)
	8-10 (Controlled)	0	4	4 (8.7)
Factor Q4	1-3 (Relaxed)	1	6	7 (15.2)
	3.1-7.9	20	16	36 (78.3)
	8-10 (Tense)	2	1	3 (6.5)

	1-3 (Introversion)	1	2	3 (6.5)
	3.1-7.9	20	11	31 (67.4)
Factor QI	8-10 (Extraversion)	2	10	12 (23.1)
	1-3 (Low anxiety)	4	2	6 (13.0)
	3.1-7.9	16	20	36 (78.3)
Factor QII	8-10 (High anxiety)	3	1	4 (8.7)
	1-3 (Tenderminded emotionality)	4	6	10 (21.7)
	3.1-7.9	19	13	32 (69.6)
Factor QIII	8-10 (Tough Poise)	0	4	4 (8.7)
	1-3 (Subduedness)	1	6	7 (15.2)
	3.1-7.9	20	16	36 (78.3)
Factor QIV	8-10 (Independence)	2	1	3 (6.5)

DISCUSSION

On Factor A dimension of 16-PF test, 13% subjects were seen as having “schizothymic” traits and 6.5% as having “affectothymic” traits. This indicates that persons with traits like cool, stiff, skeptical, and aloof, and avoiding compromises of viewpoints, are more likely to attempt suicide than the persons with traits like cooperative, good-natured, easy-going, emotionally expressive, Factor B of 16-PF test represents “the low intelligent versus more intelligent”. 34.8% of the subjects were seen as having low intelligent traits and 2.2% as having high intelligent traits. This clearly depict that persons with traits like dull, tends to be slow to learn and grasp, given to concrete and literal interpretation, are more likely to attempt suicide than the persons who tends to be quick to grasp ideas, a fast learner, intelligent.

Factor C denotes the personality factor of “affected by feelings versus emotionally stable”. 30.4% were seen as having affected by feelings and 2.2% as emotionally stable. This shows that person, who tends to be low in frustration tolerance for unsatisfactory conditions, are more likely to plunge into suicide attempt than persons, who tends to be emotionally mature, stable, realistic about life, unruffled.

Factor E represents the personality traits of “humble versus assertive”, 15.2% were seen as having humble traits and 4.3% as having assertive traits. This brought the light that persons, who tends to give way to others, and to conform, is often dependent, confessing, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who are assertive, self-assured, and independent-minded, tends to be austere.

Factor F indicates the personality traits of “sober versus happy-go-lucky”, 32.6% were seen as having sober traits and there are no cases of happy-go-lucky. This clearly explains that persons, who are sober, tends to be restrained, introspective, pessimistic, unduly deliberate are more likely attempt suicide than persons, who are

happy-go-lucky, cheerful, active, talkative, frank and expressive.

Factor G shows the personality traits of “expedient versus conscientious”, 6.5% were seen as having expedient and 6.5% as having conscientious. However, persons, who are seen expedient, disregard rules, weaker superego strength and conscientious, persistent, moralistic, stronger super ego strength are equally seen to attempt suicide.

Factor H represents the personality traits of “shy versus venturesome”, 17.4% were seen as having shy traits and there are no cases seen of venturesome traits. This brought the light that persons, who tends to be shy, withdrawing, cautious, retiring, are frequently seen attempting suicide than persons, who are sociable, bold, ready to try new things, spontaneous and abundant in emotional response.

Factor I represents the “tough-minded versus tender-minded” personality traits, 30.4% were seen as having tough-minded traits and 2.2% as having tender-minded personality traits. This indicates that persons, who are tough-minded, self-reliant, realistic are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who are tender-minded, sensitive, clinging, overprotected.

Factor L represents the “trusting versus suspicious” personality traits, 17.4% were seen as having suspicious personality traits and 2.2% as having trusting personality traits. This highlights that persons, who are mistrusting, and doubtful, and often involved in his own ego, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who are trusting, and tends to be free of jealous tendencies, adaptable, cheerful, uncompetitive, and concerned about other people.

Factor M represents the personality factors of “practical versus imaginative”, 19.6% were seen as having practical personality traits and 4.3% as having imaginative personality traits. This depicts that persons, who tends to be anxious to do the right things, attentive to practical

matters, are frequently indulging in suicide attempt than persons, who are unconventional, unconcerned over everyday matters, self-motivated, imaginatively creative.

Factor N denotes the personality factors “forthright versus shrewd”, 21.7% were seen as having shrewd personality traits and 4.3% as having forthright personality traits. This represents that person, who tends to be polished, experienced, worldly, shrewd, are often hardheaded and analytical, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who tends to be unsophisticated, sentimental and simple.

Factor O shows the personality factors “placid versus apprehensive”, 37.0% were seen as having apprehensive personality traits and 4.3% as having placid personality traits. This clearly brought the light that persons, who tends to be depressed, moody, a worrier, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who tends to be placid, with unshakable nerve, has a mature, unanxious confidence in himself and his capacity to deal with thing, are resilient and secure, but to the point of being insensitive of when a group is not going along with him, so that he may evoke antipathies and distrust.

Factor Q1 shows the personality factors “conservative versus experimenting”, 26.1% were seen as having experimenting personality traits and 6.5% as having conservative personality traits. This represents that persons, who tends to be interested in intellectual matters and has doubts on fundamental issues, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons who are confident in what he has been taught to believe, and accepts the tried and true, despite inconsistencies, when something else might be better.

Factor Q2 represents the personality factors “group dependent versus self-sufficient”, 13.0% were seen having group dependent personality traits and 8.7% as self-sufficient personality traits. This clearly shows that person who prefer to work and make decisions with other people, likes and depends on social approval and admiration, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons who are temperamentally independent, accustomed to going his own way, making decisions and taking action on his own.

Factor Q3 shows the personality traits of “undisciplined versus controlled”, 21.7% were seen having undisciplined personality traits and 8.7% as having controlled personality traits. This represents that person who will not be bothered with will control and regard for social demands, is not overly considerate, may feel maladjusted are more likely to attempt suicide than persons who tends to have strong control of his emotions

and general behavior, if inclined to be socially aware and careful, and evidences what is commonly termed self-respect and regard for social reputation.

Factor Q4 shows the represents the personality factor of “relaxed versus tense”, 15.2% were seen having relaxed personality traits and 6.5% as having tense personality traits. This highlights that persons who tend to be sedate, relaxed, are seen more frequently indulging into suicide attempt than persons, who tends to be tense, excitable, restless.

Factor QI shows the second order personality factor, which represents the “introversion versus extraversion”, 26.1% were seen having extroversion traits and 6.5% as introversion traits. This represents that persons, who are socially outgoing, uninhibited person, are seen frequently attempting suicide than persons who tend to be shy, self-sufficient and inhibited in interpersonal contacts.

Factor QII represents the second order personality factor, which shows the “low anxiety versus high anxiety”, 13.0% were seen having low anxiety traits and 8.7% as having high anxiety traits. This brought the light that persons, who tend to be one whose life is generally satisfying and one who is able to achieve those things that seem to him to be important are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who are high on anxiety, need not be neurotic, since anxiety could be situational.

Factor QIII represents the second order personality factor, which shows “tender-minded emotionality versus tough poise”, 21.7% were seen having tender-minded emotionality personality traits and 8.7% as having tough poise personality traits. This clearly brought to the light that person who are likely to be troubled by pervasive emotionality, and may be of a discouraged, frustrated type, likely to be artistic and rather gentle, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons, who are likely to be an enterprising, decisive, and resilient personality, is likely to miss the subtle relationship of life.

Factor QIV represent the second order personality factor, which shows “subduedness versus independence”, 15.2% were seen having subduedness personality traits and 6.5% as having independence personality traits. This depict that persons who are group-dependent, chastened, passive personality, are more likely to attempt suicide than persons who tend to be aggressive, independent, daring, incisive person.

Personality factors are equally important in attempted suicide. The current study shows that these personality factors like schizothymic, low intelligence, affected by feeling, humble nature, sober, shy traits, tough minded, suspicious traits, practical personality, shrewd type, and

apprehensive personality characteristics are prone to attempt suicide. Personality traits like experimenting type, group depended trait, undisciplined nature, relaxed type, extroversion in nature, low anxiety, tender minded emotionality type, and passive personality are more likely to attempt suicide.

Our study highlights the importance of personality factors in attempted suicide and these factors are at risk in attempting suicide, therefore, which can be implemented in prevention of suicide.

CONCLUSIONS

Personality factors are equally important in attempted suicide. The current study shows that these personality factors like schizothymic, low intelligence, affected by feeling, humble nature, sober, shy traits, tough minded, suspicious traits, practical personality, shrewd type, and apprehensive personality characteristics are prone to attempt suicide. Personality traits like experimenting type, group depended trait, undisciplined nature, relaxed type, extroversion in nature, low anxiety, tender minded emotionality type, and passive personality are more likely to attempt suicide.

Our study highlights the importance of personality factors in attempted suicide and these factors are at risk in attempting suicide, therefore, which can be implemented in prevention of suicide.

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