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ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF SELF-INGESTION OF POISONING: EXPLORING THE RELATED RISK FACTORS FROM SURVIVORS' PERSPECTIVE

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Background: Self ingestion of poisoning is a major public health problem in adolescents. The rate of self-ingestion of poisoning in Sri Lanka has increased in recent years and also high when compared with other developing countries. Due to hazardous nature of the issue, it is imperative at least to control its' occurrence within the society.

Aim: This study was conducted to explore the related risk factors for self-ingestion of poisoning among adolescents from survivors' perspective

Methods: The qualitative descriptive study was carried out using purposively selected 15 patients who committed self-ingestion of poisoning in medical unit, District General Hospital, Matale. The semi structured interview guide was used to explore their experiences under fewer such areas as: psychological risk factors, socio-economical risk factors and environmental risk factors. Ethical clearance was obtained from Ethical Review Board in Teaching hospital Kandy.

Results: Acute distress, interpersonal conflicts, economical barriers and easy access were the emerged themes. Acute distress was emerged theme under psychological risk factors. It was presented with displeasure, emotional pain, sadness, anger, helplessness, loneliness and worthless feeling. Interpersonal conflicts and economical barriers were emerged themes under socio-economical risk factors. Easy access was emerged theme under environmental risk factors. Availability and unsafe storage of poisonous substances and unavailability of proper legislation policy for issuing these substances were promoted easy access.

Conclusion: It is concluded that interpersonal conflicts and economical barriers were more prone to adolescents' self-ingestion of poisoning than acute distress and easy access. Parents of these participants have no deeper understanding of psychological changes occurred during adolescence period and they do not know how to deal with them. Unavailability of proper legislation policy for issuing poisonous substances and unsafe storage were promoted self-ingestion of poisoning among adolescents. Therefore, remedial actions should be focused on developing healthy public policies in terms of issuing poisonous substances and parental education.

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