

Risk Factors for Suicide in a Probation Population

Georgia West

Co-Authors: Prof Charlie Brooker, Karen Tocque, Prof Kevin Browne and
Dr Elizabeth Paddock

Background



- **703,000** suicides annually (World Health Organisation, 2022)



- Prison: **3.8** times more at risk (Fazel et al, 2017)



- Probation: **8.7** times greater than general population, and **1.4** times that of those in prison (Phillips et al, 2019)



- **18%** increase in self inflicted deaths 2019-2021, and **30%** of all deaths on probation (Ministry of Justice, 2021)



National Probation Service Health and Social Care Strategy (2019-2022)

“We are committed to raising awareness and understanding of suicide prevention as well as of the heightened risk of suicide for individuals under our supervision, and will develop the workforce to address these vulnerabilities”

- Existing research **prevalence** based (Phillips et al, 2018)
- **Evidence base** needed for ambition (Brooker et al, 2020)

What do we already know?

Women

(Phillips et al, 2019)

Poor physical health

(Brooker et al, 2018)

Recent custody release

(Skinner & Farrington, 2020)

Drug overdose

(Merrall et al, 2010)

Post Sentence Supervision

(Ministry of Justice, 2019)

Psychiatric in-patient admission

(Bertolote & Flesichman, 2002)

Mental health difficulties

(Candarelli et al, 2015)

Community sentence

(Skinner & Farrington, 2020)

Community Mental Health Team

(Fruehwald et al, 2018)

Ideation to action framework

- Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are **distinct phenomena**
- **71%** of adults who experience suicidal ideation do not attempt
- Risk factors for suicide are often **predictive of ideation**
- How can we know who is at **greatest risk?**
- **Improve risk assessment and tailor intervention and prevention strategies**

Article

Probation Journal

The Journal of Community and Criminal Justice

Suicide in probation: Towards the ideation- to-action model

Probation Journal
1-13

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DOI: 10.1177/02645505211041581

journals.sagepub.com/home/prb



- Aim: To examine variables that could be associated with suicidality in people on probation assessed as needing, and accepting psychological intervention.

**Georgia West, Alice Norman-Taylor,
and James Fowler**

St Andrew's Healthcare, UK

Methodology

- **Sample:** 274 adults serving a probation order with London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) who have completed a mental health assessment with partnership worker, St Andrew's Healthcare.

Kessler 6 (K6; Cornelius et al, 2013)

Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7 ; Spitzer et al, 2006)

Public Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9; Kroinke et al, 2001)

Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS; Mundt et al, 2002)

Standardised Assessment of Personality (SAPAS; Moran, 2003)

Dependent variable: Current or past suicidal ideation or attempt

Independent variables: Sociodemographic and offending variables
Psychometrics

Results

38%

scored 25+ on
psychological **distress**
score (K6)*******

60%

scored 15+ on
generalised **anxiety**
score (GAD-7)******

38%

scored 20+ on
depression score
(PHQ-9)*******

54%

had severe or
moderately severe
functional impairment
(WSAS>10)*******

32%

had previous
engagement with
services*******

94%

scored +3 on
personality disorder
screening scale
(SAPAS)*******

****** < 0.01

******* < 0.001

What does this mean?

- **High levels of suicidality** in those screening for a mental health problem in the London Probation Service
- The need for **training** in mental health and suicide risk
- Relationships with **local mental health service**
- Need for continued **partnership working** within probation

What about the ideation-to-action gap?

- Previous research identified **clear differences** between those who have suicidal thoughts, and those who attempt suicide (Favril and O'Connor, 2019; Favril et al, 2020a; Favril et al, 2020b).
- Specific mental disorders more associated with suicidal acts, such as **drug and alcohol** dependence, **PTSD**, increased **anxiety** and poor **impulse** control (Favril et al, 2020).



Methodology

- **Sample:** Men serving a probation order with London Community Rehabilitation Company who have completed a mental health assessment with partnership worker, St Andrew's Healthcare.

British National Psychiatric Morbidity Survey

- Have you ever thought of taking your own life?
- Have you ever made an attempt to take your own life?

Outcome measure: Suicidal ideation or attempt within 12 months

Predictor variables: Risk factors relevant to assessment of suicide risk

Overview of predictor variables

Sociodemographic variables

Age
Ethnicity
Multiple Deprivation Decile Score

Offending variables

Offence category (Violent vs Non-Violent)
Order type (Community vs Custody)
Risk of harm to others

Clinical variables

Stable

Impulsivity*
Temper control*
Problem solving skills*
Mental health condition?
Physical health condition?
Difficulties reading and writing*
Recklessness and risk-taking behaviour*

Static

Experience of childhood*
Previous experience of close relationships*
Employment history*
Frequency and level of historic alcohol misuse*
Drugs ever misused?

Dynamic

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (Kessler-6)
Alcohol Audit score
Frequency and level of current substance misuse*
Current psychiatric treatment or treatment pending
Permanence and suitability of accommodation *
Relationship with partner*
Relationship with close family members*
Does the individual pose a risk of serious harm to themselves?
Concerns or indicators of gang associations?
Regular contact or interaction with children?

? = Binary yes/no answer

*= Scored by Probation Practitioner

Statistical plan



- **Step 1:** Bivariate analysis of Ideation and Attempt Vs Control
- **Step 2:** Bivariate analysis of Attempt vs Ideation
- **Step 3:** Binary logistic regression of Attempt vs Ideation

Results: Step 1

- **Sociodemographic factors**
- **White British** males significantly more likely to be at elevated risk of suicide, compared with men in ethnic minority backgrounds (χ^2 , $p < .010$)
- Youngest age group (19-39) reported highest rate of suicide attempts, however differences did not differ significantly
- Men with higher Multiple **Deprivation** Decile score were significantly more likely to have attempted suicide, or experienced suicidal ideation (χ^2 , $p < .002$)
- **Offending-related factors**
- Men who had committed a **violent** offence were significantly more likely to be at elevated risk of suicide (χ^2 , $p < .001$)
- No significant difference between order types or risk of harm level

Clinical variables	Bivariate analyses	
	OR (95% CI)	p
Recent binge drinking	2.23 (1.54 – 3.22)	<0.001
Frequency and level of alcohol misuse in the past	1.92 (1.36 – 2.71)	<0.001
Class A drugs used currently	1.81 (.975 – 3.35)	<0.01
Mental health conditions	2.234 (1.634 – 3.055)	<.001
At risk of harm to self	3.187 (1.78 – 5.69)	<.001
Childhood difficulties	1.682 (1.205 – 2.345)	<.001
	Mean difference (95% CI)	P
Alcohol audit score	3.30 (.11 – 6.50)	<0.01
Measure of distress (K6)	3.457 (1.41 – 5.50)	<.001

Results: Ideation - Attempt

Violent
offending*

Deprivation**

Order Type **

Binge drinking*

Temper control**

Impulsivity*

Psychiatric
treatment*

Close contact
with children**

Relationship with
partner*

Gang
association*

* <0.05
** <0.01
*** <0.001

Final considerations

- First studies to utilise **ideation-action framework** within probation population
- Identify service users at heightened risk using variables routinely collated by probation officers
- Inform preventative suicide strategies and assessment tools
- **Future research:** Prospective large study of suicide in probation services embedded in the ideation-action model

спасибо
danke 謝謝
ngiyabonga
teşekkür ederim
dank je
gracias
tapadh leat
bedankt
hvala
maunguru
dziękuje
sukriya
kop khun krap
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Question?

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