

Attitudes and Perceptions of Emergency Department Nurses Toward Attempted Suicide: A Systematic Review

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Background

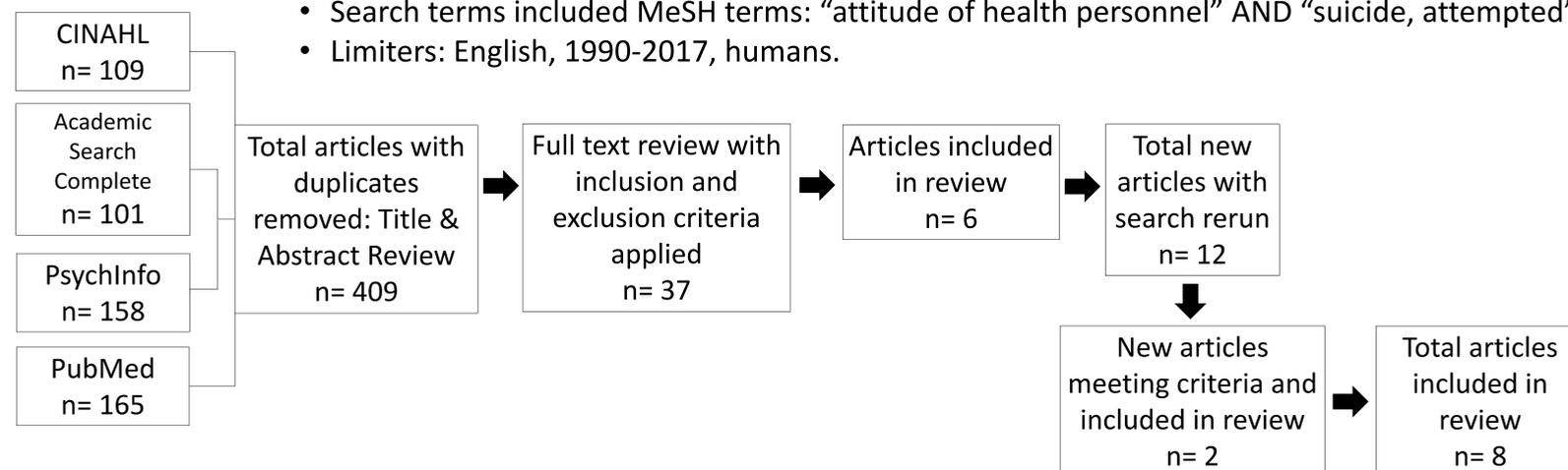
- The leading predictor for any of the 800,000 successfully completed suicides globally is a previous attempt (WHO, 2017).
- Effective emergency department (ED) care following a suicide attempt may decrease the number of repeat attempts (Giacchero Vedana et al., 2017).
- Emergency department nurses are often the first individuals to interact with patients; their attitudes may have a significant impact on future health, treatment, and overall perception of the healthcare system (Carmona-Navarro & Pichardo-Martinez, 2012).
- Due to previous negative experiences with ED nurses, individuals may hesitate to reach out for further support, which may potentially lead to a successful suicide (Frey, Hans, & Cerel, 2016).

Objective

- To report a comprehensive analysis of the literature on attitudes and perceptions that emergency department nurses have toward patients who have attempted suicide.

Method

- **Inclusion criteria:** Nursing focus, emergency department, original research, Johns Hopkins Evidence Based Practice level 3 or above.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Adolescent, pediatric, non-emergency department focus, non-suicidal self-harm, and suicidal ideation
- **Databases:**
 - EBSCO- Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Academic Search Complete, and PsychInfo.
 - Search terms included: “emergency” OR “emergency department” OR “emergency room” OR “emergency nursing” AND “suicide” OR “suicide attempt” OR “attempted suicide” AND “attitude” OR “perception” OR “bias.”
 - Limiters: English, 1990-2017, peer reviewed.
 - National Institutes of Health- PubMed
 - Search terms included MeSH terms: “attitude of health personnel” AND “suicide, attempted”
 - Limiters: English, 1990-2017, humans.



Results

Article Type: Qualitative (n= 2) and Quantitative (n= 6).

Study Location: UK (n= 1), Spain (n= 1), Brazil (n= 3), Australia (n= 1), Northern Ireland (n= 1), Taiwan (n= 1).

Attitudinal Findings:

- Emergency nurses held predominantly positive attitudes (n= 4)
- Emergency nurses held predominantly negative attitudes (n= 2)
- Inconclusive findings (n= 1)
- Focus on lack of humanized care in the emergency department (n= 1)

Attitudes Improved With:

- Increased age (n= 2)
- Increased education/training (n= 2)
- Increased work experience (n= 3)

Discussion

- Findings suggest that increased age, mental health experience, and education in ED nurses are correlated with more positive and understanding attitudes toward patients who have attempted suicide.
- Nurses report that caring for patients who attempted suicide is emotionally taxing in addition to the fast paced, technical, and physiologically focused environment of the ED. These factors challenge nurses' ability to provide care.
- Nurses express feelings of unpreparedness and incompetence when caring for such patients.

Conclusions

- More research is necessary to evaluate and identify emergency department nurses' attitudes toward patients who have attempted suicide.
- Additional research may help to improve the quality of care received upon admission to the emergency department following a suicide attempt.



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