Cognitive Factors Affecting Suicidal Ideation: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract

Suicidal ideation or suicidal thought is troubling but yet common. Suicidal ideation is basically thought about and planning suicide. This paper examined cognitive factors affecting suicidal ideation and attempted to put forward a model of suicidal ideation. The findings indicated that cognitive distortion, hopelessness, problem solving, and psychache are the common cognitive factors contributing to the development of suicidal ideation. However, the findings among previous studies are inconsistent. Other studies showed that rumination is the additional antecedent for suicidal thought. Preliminary results indicated a revised version of suicidal ideation model in understanding the nature of suicidal ideation, which includes cognitive distortion, hopelessness, problem solving, psychache, and rumination. This paper also discussed the limitation and recommendation for future study.

Keywords: suicidal ideation, cognitive distortion, hopelessness, problem solving, psychache, rumination

1. INTRODUCTION

Suicide is a global issue that occurs throughout the lifespan, which would subsequently cause deaths and disability (World of Organization [WHO], 2018). In 2015, 1.4% of all deaths were caused by suicide, and it has been ranked as 17th leading cause of death, and second leading cause of death among people aged from 15 until 29 years old. Annually, almost 800 thousand people die due to suicide. Suicide would not only happen in high-income countries, but also in low- and middle-income countries, which accounted for 78% of all suicide cases (WHO, 2018).

According to WHO (2018), the crude suicide rates (per 100 thousand population) for both sexes are 12.2 in 2000, 11.6 in 2005, 11.2 in 2010 and 10.7 in 2015. This showed that global crude suicide rate for both sexes are decreasing gradually, which is 12.39% from 2000 until 2015. In Malaysia, the crude suicide rate for both sexes across 15 years are 5.3 in 2000, 5.4 in 2005, 5.1 in 2010 and 5.5 in 2015. Unlike global crude suicide rate, the Malaysia's crude suicide rate is inconsistent, but had been increased 3.77% from 2000 until 2015 (WHO, 2018). Additionally, the suicide rate among Malaysian is 6 to 8:100,000, which represents that at least 2,000 people are expected to commit suicide per year (Pillay, 2017). Besides that, Malaysian Digest (2015) proved that suicide would be the second leading cause of death among Malaysian youth, which would be expected to grow continuously.

2. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Suicide is known as an intentional action that causes a person experiencing death (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Generally, suicide can be conducted by numerous methods. Firearms, hanging, and pesticide self-poisoning are the most common methods, whereas jumping from and poisoning by drugs are the alternative methods (Ajdacic-Gross et al., 2008). Men would practice more violent and lethal methods, whereas females would choose less violent and lethal methods. Additionally, there are two reasons causing suicidal behaviours, namely escaping from painful life events and desiring to make interpersonal change or change in their environments (Matthews, 2013). Suicide can also be caused by negative internal (e.g., self-perception, emotions and physical sensations) and external experience of themes (e.g., surrounding people, location and circumstance).

This mental health issue would not only adversely affect those particular people, but would also affect the emotional and social functioning of their family members (Spillane, Larkin, Corcoran, Matvienko-Sikar, & Arensman, 2016). Globally, a total of 48 to 500 million people experience suicide bereavement due to loss of significant person