

A systematic review of the co-occurrence of self-harm and violence: Is dual harm a unique behavioural construct?

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Introduction

- Dual harm is when an individual engages in both self-harm and violence during their lifetime
- It is unclear whether dual harm is a unique behavioural construct that has distinct psychological characteristics when compared to self-harm alone and violence alone (i.e., sole harm)

Research question: are there psychological factors that are uniquely associated with dual harm when compared to self-harm alone and violence alone?

Eligibility criteria



Adults who have engaged in dual harm behaviour



Papers assessing differences in psychological factors between those who have engaged in dual harm and sole harm



Exclusion criteria: not in English, qualitative studies, reviews, conference abstracts

Searches



PsyINFO, PubMed, CINAHL, EThOS databases searched



References of eligible papers and reviews searched, forward citation searching, contacted authors for other relevant papers

Methods



Search results exported onto Endnote software



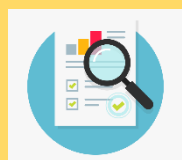
Titles/abstracts, full texts screened



Relevant data entered into data extraction form



Risk of bias assessed with Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality tool



11,125 records identified



7,739 titles/abstracts screened with 99% inter-rater reliability



201 full texts screened with 95% inter-rater reliability



29 eligible studies included in review

Results

- Psychological factors, including mood disorder, personality disorder and impulsive related traits, were significantly associated with dual harm
- Differences in these factors were mostly only found when dual harm was compared to self-harm alone or violence alone, but not when compared to both sole harm groups
- Suggests that rather than be linked to dual harm as a unique construct, psychological characteristics of dual harm may be driven by the individual self-harm or violent behaviours
- Most studies had moderate to high risk of bias

Discussion

Key findings and discussion

- No sufficient evidence for dual harm as a unique behavioural construct with distinct psychological characteristics
- May be the interaction and multiplicative effect of risk factors linked to self-harm and violence that lead to dual harm

Critical appraisal

- Dual harm research limited e.g., mostly in the West, cross-sectional designs, do not examine confounders
- Variability in definitions and measurements of harmful behaviours within literature

Implications

- Clinicians should identify risk factors of violence in those who have self-harmed and vice versa to lessen likelihood of co-occurrence
- Future research should address limitations in literature and use consistent conceptualisations of harmful behaviours