

Poster presentation

## Transcultural issues about death fantasies and beliefs

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### Background

The aim of the research was to explore what kind of beliefs and fantasies about death and dying exist in suicide attempters in a Greek group of patients and whether there are differences or similarities with attempters of other cultural origin /background.

### Materials and methods

Our data comes from 32 interviews occurring during a one-year period with Greek patients who were seen within 24 hours of a suicide attempt and after admission at the casualty department of a Greek general hospital. At the end of the assessment the patient was asked to give a suicidal fantasy and speak about his thoughts and beliefs around death.

### Results

A suicidal fantasy always included a dyadic relationship between a part of the self which will survive ("surviving self") and the body, which was identified with a part of the self which had to be killed ("destruction of the body").

Suicidal fantasies took four forms: revenge, self-punishment, merging and elimination - annihilation fantasies.

### Conclusions

Transcultural issues about death fantasies and beliefs of suicide attempters are discussed.

It is suggested that exploration of a suicidal fantasy and the cultural elements which are involved can play a significant role in gaining a better understanding of the psycho-

logical conflicts of the attempters and can be used in the psychotherapeutic treatment which usually follows.

### References

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