Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology

Forensic assessment of childhood maltreatment and its relation to suicidal ideation among some currently enrolled medical students in Cairo governorate in the academic year 2016/2017

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Background: Rate of suicide is in a sustained and marked increase from childhood to adulthood. A higher rate of non-lethal suicide attempts and even engagement in serious suicidal ideation is recently recorded. Since suicidal ideation is the first stage in the suicidal continuum, its discovery and assessment could definitely be of paramount importance in downsizing suicide prevalence among youth. Engaging in suicidal behavior can affect all strata of the society, though it has been reported that the socioeconomically stressed categories are the ones most affected. Given this potential hazard of suicidal behaviors, an expanding body of research has been performed to examine the risk factors implicated in these behaviors. One risk factor that has been the subject of significant study in the literature is child maltreatment. Having said that, physicians, medical trainees and students in developing countries could be at potential risk of higher suicide rates than their peers of the general population.

Aim: To assess the prevalence of childhood adverse events and their possible relation with suicidal ideation among medical students in Egypt.

Methods: In this study, a total of 409 undergraduate medical students from Ain-shams university were assessed using online survey tool uploaded on survey monkey. The survey consisted of 4 parts: questions to obtain socio-demographic data, GHQ-12, a self-administered version of the Childhood Experience of Care and Abuse questionnaire (CECA-Q) and lastly the 19 items from the self-administered version of Beck’s Scale for Suicidal Ideation scale (BSS). The study was completely blinded where all participants’ emails and IP addresses were automatically omitted by the survey tool.

Results: Suicidal Ideation was reported as a median of 0 (IQR = 0-3) with a range of scores (0-25). 3.47% of suicide ideators reported previous actual attempts. As for psychological abuse, about 4.2% of the students reported mother antipathy whereas 11.55% of the students reported father antipathy. Moreover, 4.2% of the students reported mother neglect while 8.6% of the students reported father neglect. The results showed highly significant correlation between psychological abuse and the existence of suicidal thoughts. Physical abuse by both parents was recorded in about 42% of the population; however, no significant correlation was found with the existence of suicidal ideation. In contrast, sexual abuse was reported by 9.3% of the students and it was highly correlated to suicidal ideation. Regarding gender, females suffered more from father antipathy and recorded higher scores regarding suicidal ideation.

Conclusion: This study delineated the shockingly high commonness of suicidal ideation among medical students in Egypt and casted the light on the close link between the formulation of suicide thoughts in our youth’s minds and the past abusive events during their childhood.

Evaluation of “intermountain mortality risk score” (IMRS) as an outcome predictor in medico-legal trauma cases admitted to Ain Shams specialized hospital

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Purpose: Many medico-legal issues may be encountered during care of trauma patients, this needs an objective trauma scoring system which can predict the outcome and severity of injury in trauma patients by routinely ordered laboratory investigations (CBC and BMP) together with age and sex. This study tested whether Intermountain Risk Score (IMRS) can predict mortality of trauma cases in order to be used in medico-legal and forensic practice.

Methods: A retrospective study was conducted on admitted trauma patients older than 18 years to Ain Shams Specialized Hospital from January 2016 to January 2017. IMRS was calculated to all patients with complete blood count and basic metabolic profile to predict mortality at 30 days and 1 year and its relation to duration of treatment and site of injury.

Results: IMRS was highly predictive of morbidity and mortality in the study groups (lived with recovery, lived with complications and dead) at 30 days and 1 year, dead patients had high risk score. There was statistically significant difference between IMRS and duration of treatment and different sites of injury (P value < 0.001).

Conclusion: IMRS was a useful predictor tool of mortality and morbidity in trauma patients at admission together with duration of treatment and site of injury. This would help forensic experts determine the severity of injury which may be useful in medico-legal issues.

Analytical study of features of Arabic handwriting among twins


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Handwriting is a complex motor skill that is mastered through practice and repetition. Analysis of handwritten documents from the viewpoint of determining the writer has great bearing on the criminal justice system. Heredity and environment play an indispensable role in the development of a person’s handwriting. Twins represent a special situation since they are sharing genetic basis as well as environmental factors that may affect handwriting. A controversy was found between previous studies about similarities in handwriting by twins. This study