SUICIDE IDEATION OF OLDER ADULTS PREDICTS ALL-CAUSE MORTALITY AFTER 10 YEARS

Y.-C. Yen

Department of Psychiatry, E-Da Hospital, I-Shou University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan R.O.C.

Introduction: Many physical and social factors have been found to predict survival in late life. The role of psychological factors remains uncertain.

Aims: This study aims to explore the association of suicide ideation and future mortality in the elder population.

Methods: By applying the cohort study design, we randomly recruited a stratified sample of 900 community-dwelling elders aged from 65 to 74 via governmental household record in a prefecture of southern Taiwan in 1999. In the beginning, sociodemographics, health conditions, cognitive function, depressive symptoms and suicide ideation were recorded. In 2009, study participants were revisited to ensure their survival state. Multivariate logistic regression with robust standard error (clustered by 18 villages) was used to predict mortality with an aim to control the influence from different living environment.

Results: After 10 years, 674 (74.9%) of all participants survived, 177 (19.7%) died, and 49 (8.2%) were unable to trace. Five significant predictors for mortality were male (OR 1.85, 95% CI 1.22 2.79, p=0.004), age (OR 1.13, 95% CI 1.04 1.22, p=0.003), diabetes mellitus (OR 2.45, 95% CI 1.35 4.43, p=0.003), cancer (OR 4.82, 95% CI 1.75 13.24, p=0.002), and suicide ideation (OR 1.62, 95% CI 1.04 2.52, p=0.032) while adjusting for all covariates including income, education, marital status, physical illness, cognitive function, and depressive symptoms. Contrarily, depressive symptom severity and cognitive function failed to predict 10-year mortality.

Conclusions: Suicide ideation, but not depression, can be used to predict future survival among elders besides their physical illness. Its mechanism deserves further research.