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A 3-year Analysis of Suicide Attempts by Medicine Intoxication in Northeast Brazil

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Suicide is the 15th most common cause of death in the world. The method of suicide attempt varies according to each population profile. The highest suicide rates occur among groups with mental disorders. The aim of study was to define the sociodemographic profile, specific treatment, toxic agent subtypes and outcomes in suicide attempts by medicine intoxication.

METHODS: Retrospective study was carried out in Toxicological Centre in Fortaleza, Northeast Brazil, from January/2015 to December/2017. Medical records with diagnosis of medicine intoxication and suicide attempt were included. National and regional data from TABNET (official data system from the Health Ministry of Brazil) were compared with local data using the Anova one-way. Analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism v. 8 (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA, USA).

RESULTS/CONCLUSIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS: 431 patients were included. Respectively, local epidemiologic characteristics were similar to national and regional data: female gender (70.53% vs 77.25% vs 77.69%; $P=0.08$), from urban areas (93.96% vs 91.43% vs 90%; $P=0.09$) and with low lethality (0.92% vs 0.8% vs 0.98%; $P=0.58$). Locally, major occupations were student (14.61%) and housewife (11.36%). Main toxic agent subtypes were benzodiazepines (34.33%), antidepressants (34.33%), antiepileptics (25.98%) and antipsychotics (19.48%). Disintoxication measures were charcoal administration (84.68%) and gastric lavage (63.8%). The severity of clinical picture was mild/moderate in 81.15% of cases. In severe cases ($n=85$) mechanical ventilation was required in 15.31%, vasoactive drugs in 3.48% and haemodialysis in 0.69%. The most susceptible group was female and housewife living in urban areas. Attention should be raised for the high prevalence of benzodiazepine and antidepressant poisonings. Although the low lethality, some severe cases were reported. This study may contribute to improve public politics to avoid the increase of suicide attempt associated with medicine intoxication.