

Prevalence and correlates of suicide ideation in young people presenting to outpatient alcohol and other drug treatment and association with treatment engagement.

Sophia Glasgow¹, Gabrielle Campbell^{1,2,3}, Amra Catakovic^{1,2,4}, Nina Pocuca^{1,2}, Holly Stokes⁵, Julie Dignan⁵, Leanne Hides^{1,2,5}

¹*School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, Queensland, Australia*

²*National Centre for Youth Substance Use Research (NCYSUR), The University of Queensland, Queensland, Australia*

³*National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, New South Wales, Australia*

⁴*Metro North Health Service, Mental Health, Queensland Health, Herston, Australia*

⁵*Lives Lived Well, Spring Hill, Queensland, Australia*

Presenter's email: sophia.glasgow@uq.net.au

Introduction: Lifetime suicide-related behaviours are common among young people with substance use disorders. Young people are more likely to die by suicide and have inconsistent engagement with alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment than older adults. This study investigates the prevalence and correlates of recent suicidal ideation among young people accessing AOD treatment in Australia.

Methods: Administrative, treatment, and baseline patient-reported outcome measure data from 145 Lives Lived Well AOD services was used. This data includes clients who entered treatment between 2 November 2020 and 30 April 2024. Substance use (WHO-ASSIST), mental health (PHQ-9, GAD-7, Psychosis, PC-PTSD-5), and treatment engagement variables were analysed. Unadjusted bivariate logistic regressions were conducted. Significant variables at the univariate level were included in the multivariate analysis.

Key Findings: Among young people entering treatment (n = 3,461), 37.1% (95%CI: 35.5-38.7) reported recent suicidal ideation. Compared to those without, clients with ideation had a higher number of 'high severity' substances (aOR 1.43, 99%CI: 1.17-1.13), and a 'high' alcohol severity score (aOR 1.54, 99%CI: 1.07-2.23). They were less likely to score 'high' for cannabis use severity (aOR 0.68, 99%CI: 1.17-1.73). Clients with ideation exhibited higher scores on all mental health characteristics (except psychosis) and were more likely to attend and engage in treatment. Younger age and current employment/study were associated with attending two or more sessions among clients with recent suicidal ideation in multivariate analysis.

Discussions and Conclusions: Recent suicidal ideation is common among young people presenting to Australian outpatient AOD services. These clients had more complex presentations and were more likely to attend and engage in treatment when compared to clients with no suicidal ideation.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Screening for suicidal ideation at treatment entry is crucial. Early engagement with clients reporting ideation can support treatment planning and increase treatment engagement.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *GC, NP HS and LH are supported by funding through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Meaningful Outcomes in Substance Use Treatment Centre for Research Excellence. The National Centre for Youth Substance Use Research (NCYSUR) is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, under the Drug and Alcohol Program. SG is funded by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship provided by The University of Queensland. Funding bodies had no role in study design, data analysis, data interpretation, data collection, or writing of the abstract.*