Effects of Therapy on Suicide Attempts

March 18, 2016
News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark Research

Research described as “the largest follow-up study of psychosocial therapy interventions offered after deliberate self-harm” revealed significantly reduced rates of suicide attempts (which the authors refer to as “deliberate self-harm”) as well as “death by any cause” during the year following the intervention. These results were sustained over the long-term (i.e. 10-20 year follow-up). The suicide rate among people who had received psychosocial therapy was also reduced in the long-term.

A reduction in the suicide rate also occurred at the one-year follow-up, but it was not statistically significant. The intervention reduced repeat suicide attempts among women but not men. People 10-24 years of age benefited more than adults. People who were treated after their first suicide attempt seemed to benefit more than people who had prior episodes of self-harm. However, both groups of patients were less at risk of dying by suicide than people who did not receive psychosocial intervention after a suicide attempt.

The data analyzed was from Denmark (1992-2010). The psychosocial therapy interventions all focused on preventing suicide, but differed depending on which clinic treated the patient and which therapies clinicians thought would be effective with individual patients.
