

SAD PERSONS SCALE

The 'sad persons scale' is an attempt to assist non-psychiatrists assess suicide risk. It may help as a guide regarding the need for referral or admission.

S sex male
A age <19 or >45
D depression
P previous attempt
E ethanol
R rational thinking loss
S social supports lacking
O organised plan
N no partner
S sickness

Score one point for each factor
Use calculated score to help determine outcome

0-2 home with appropriate follow up
3-6 admit or discharge with appropriate follow up
7-10 admit to hospital

NB. This is a guide only and should not be used to replace clinical judgement

You may be aware that a slightly different version of the scale appears in the Oxford handbook of A&E medicine. The scoring system gives 1 or 2 points for some of the different aspects. The final S is 'stated future intent'.

Additional risk factors for suicide include:

- Up to 4 weeks following discharge from services
- Recent self harm; history of violent self harm
- Depression as mood shifts
- Choice of method
- Young Asian female
- Chronic illness
- Chronic pain
- Care givers without adequate social support/finances especially carers of those who are severely cognitively impaired

Approximately 90% of DSH involve self-poisoning, the remainder occur from self-injury. Please see guideline for self-poisoning. In general all overdoses are admitted under the care of the medics. Those presenting with self-injury (usually wrist wounds) should have the wounds treated & if they do not need admission from the wound point of view then they should be discussed with the on-call psychiatrists for follow up.

1% of all DSH patients will successfully commit suicide in the following year.