

GEMs offer brief updates from general practice research tackling the challenges of front-line practice.

Experiences of general practice care for self-harm: a qualitative study of young people's perspectives.

Dr Faraz Mughal

The clinical problem tackled by this research

Self-harm in young people is unfortunately common and there is a lack of evidence and guidelines for GPs to refer to when supporting young people who self-harm. There has been very little past research exploring the experiences of young people who have received and accessed general practice care for self-harm. We thus aimed to explore the help-seeking behaviours, experiences of GP care, and access to general practice for young people who self-harm.

What this research tells us about the problem

- Young people reflected on poor experiences with GPs and how these can influence future help-seeking
- Young people described that GPs listening, acting and understanding, relationship-based care, and shorter waiting times were facilitators for accessing general practice care

The research team (*GPs)

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Suggested WISE Action

1. Be aware it can take work for a young person to disclose self-harm behaviour, therefore listen and act when it is disclosed
2. Explore and understand their self-harm: reasons, type, method, frequency, and duration, and document clearly
3. Review medication and assess potential risk of overdose, and if starting new medication, regularly review
4. Discuss treatment options tailored to the needs of young people and reach shared decisions
5. Follow-up young people in agreement with them, even if they are waiting for a specialist assessment or psychological therapy

Where you can read more about this work

<https://bjgp.org/content/early/2021/04/29/BJGP.2021.0091.long>

Who funded this work

This research was funded by a RCGP Scientific Foundation Board Practitioner Allowance Grant (2018-29). FM was supported by NIHR In-Practice (IPF-2017-11-002) and NIHR School for Primary Care Research GP Career Progression Fellowships in conducting this research.