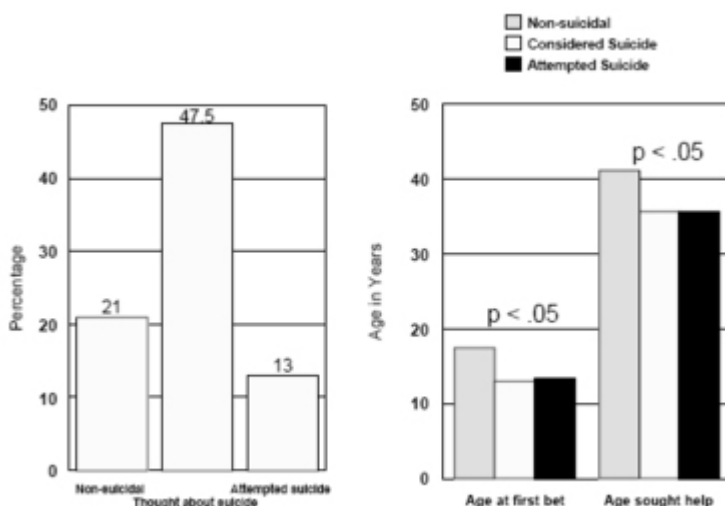


The WAGER, Vol. 1(12) - Suicidal behavior among members of Gamblers Anonymous

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A recent report highlighted the possibility that gambling losses can lead to suicide. Although little research is available to confirm this adverse potential consequence of problematic gambling, some evidence exists. In one study, a sample of 500 participants in Gamblers Anonymous (GA) were surveyed to gather data on suicidal history. Of the 162 (32.4%) who returned the survey, 21.0% reported they had never considered suicide, 47.5% had thought about suicide, and 13.0% had attempted suicide. This 13.0% rate can be compared with an estimated 1.1% lifetime incidence of attempted suicide in the general population and an estimated rate of 9.9% among patients addicted to heroin in a methadone treatment program. Suicidal GA participants placed their first bet and sought help at a significantly younger age than GA participants who had never considered suicide. Care must always be taken when interpreting findings from studies with a low response rate. For example, it is possible that GA participants who did not complete the survey had either higher or lower rates of suicidality.



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