

## Risk Management, Dilemmas and Issues of Suicide Risk Assessment after Suicide Attempt

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**Introduction:** During 2009, a woman suffering from bipolar disorder committed suicide by hanging during her psychiatric hospitalization. Her relatives appealed to court blaming the hospital management for causing death by negligence. The legal proceeding revived the debate regarding the caregiver's responsibility for suicide prevention.

**Objective:** This paper's aim is to display and expand the limitations in suicide risk assessment and list the tools at the disposal of the therapist and his responsibility. Israeli Psychiatric Association's litigation on the therapist and patient's liability shifts the unreasonable expectations for future suicide prediction to a responsible clinical evaluation, rational judgment and a tailor-made solution for patient's needs. Retrospective assessment of suicidal intention is never easy - after a prior suicide attempt, let alone after suicidal thoughts, as these tend to change significantly. Therefore, evaluating suicidal thoughts can apply only to the examination time, as well as suicidal intention assessment. It is crucial to evaluate past and present suicidality levels, to understand that suicidality is a changing situation.

**Methods:** Review of articles that reflect dilemmas and issues during assessment of suicidal behavior. Results: The urge to commit suicide is volatile, and in many cases the desire to die is ambivalent, elusive, fickle and ambiguous. The implementation of the impulse depends on a variety of factors, such as the intensity of the experience and the availability of a lethal means.

**Conclusions:** Caregivers, professionals in mental health, and general physician, must recognize their obligation to assess the risk of suicide, when necessary. At the same time, one must recognize the limits of this evaluation without resorting to defensive medicine that could interfere with the discretion and quality of the professional decisions. Knowledge on risk and protective factors against suicide can help reduce the risk of suicide.