

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

This paper was submitted to the EMJ but declined for publication following peer review. The authors addressed the reviewers' comments and submitted the revised paper to BMJ Open where it was re-reviewed and accepted.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Characteristics of hospital-treated intentional drug overdose in Ireland and Northern Ireland
AUTHORS	Griffin, Eve; Corcoran, Paul; Cassidy, Linda; O'Carroll, Amanda; Perry, Ivan; Bonner, Brendan

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Townsend, Ellen
REVIEW RETURNED	01-Apr-2014

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This paper addresses the important issue of self-harm in terms of intentional drug overdose in a comparative study of two countries – Ireland and Northern Ireland. The data are striking in comparison to data from England where paracetamol is the 'drug of choice' in overdose. This finding is linked to availability and data on availability with the most commonly used drugs in overdose are presented here. (However, no data are presented on the availability of other drugs, such as paracetamol. Interestingly though, Ireland does have smaller pack sizes of paracetamol than England so this may be a factor worthy of discussion here.)The authors point out that they cannot tell whether a person used their own prescription medicines in overdose which is clearly a limitation of the study. Neither do the authors describe the clinical management/aftercare of patients who presented for overdose. However, the study does provide new information about patterns of overdose in these two countries. A small nit-picking point – the Multicentre Study of Self-Harm is England, rather than UK based.</p>
-------------------------	--

- This manuscript received two reviews at the EMJ but the other referee had declined to make his reviews public.

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Comments to the Author

This paper addresses the important issue of self-harm in terms of intentional drug overdose in a comparative study of two countries – Ireland and Northern Ireland. The data are striking in comparison to data from England where paracetamol is the 'drug of choice' in overdose. This finding is linked to availability and data on availability with the most commonly used drugs in overdose are presented here. However, no data are presented on the availability of other drugs, such as paracetamol. Interestingly though, Ireland does have smaller pack sizes of paracetamol than England so this may be a factor worthy of discussion here.

Response: We have added to the discussion commentary on differences in relation to the involvement of paracetamol in IDOs in England compared to Northern Ireland and Ireland. We will seek to carry out further work to explore whether these differences reflect the sales of paracetamol in these countries.

The authors point out that they cannot tell whether a person used their own prescription medicines in overdose which is clearly a limitation of the study.

Response: We agree that this is a limitation of the current study, though we do cite a study we carried out which explored the extent to which people take their own prescription medication in IDOs.

Neither do the authors describe the clinical management/aftercare of patients who presented for overdose.

Response: Both Registries have very limited data on management and aftercare of self-harm patients, confined to where the patient was admitted after emergency department care, which we report in the paper. We are aware of efforts both Registries are making to extend the range of data on aftercare.

A small nit-picking point – the Multicentre Study of Self-Harm is England, rather than UK based.

Response: This has been corrected in the text (page 6).

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	O'Neill, Siobhan University of Ulster
REVIEW RETURNED	02-Jul-2014

- The reviewer completed the checklist but made no further comments.