ethics committees in Pakistan. We also conducted a discussion group (n = 13) with members of REC from Pakistan, Nigeria and Sri Lanka. The topic guide delved into the opinions of REC members regarding ethical issues that they have come across while reviewing self-harm/suicide-related research proposals, the relevance of these issues with specific study designs, recommendations to resolve these issues, their approach to balancing risk and benefit, and guidance for researchers.

Results. The preliminary findings from thematic analysis revealed five major themes; 1) Ethical challenges, 2) Reasons for application rejection, 3) Areas of improvement, 4) Suggestions for addressing ethical issues, and 5) Researchers' attitudes towards amendments. Challenges in self-harm and suicide research included the sensitivity and stigma surrounding the topic, lack of interest and support, and difficulties in participant recruitment. The application faced rejection from the ethics committees primarily due to methodological errors, lack of procedural clarity, and insufficient understanding of the research procedure. Identified areas for improvement were the need for enhanced methodology and research patterns, as well as a better understanding of the methodological procedure. Recommendations for developing a robust research proposal included training and supervision for intervention studies, the inclusion of comprehensive ethical elements and practical plans in the proposal, and a focus on data protection, confidentiality, risk management, and harm identification. While a significant number positively acknowledged reviewer comments, some researchers opted for in-depth discussions rather than directly addressing the issues.

Conclusion. The study highlights the importance of ethical considerations and emphasises the need to address the lack of robust methodological procedures in self-harm and suicide research. Addressing these challenges and adopting suggested improvements is paramount for advancing ethical and impactful research in this context.

Unravelling the Complex of Substance Use and Suicide: Insights From a Qualitative Study in Pakistan

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Aims. Suicide and substance use all contribute significantly to the global burden of mortality and morbidity. While existing evidence establishes the association between substance use and suicidal behaviour in Lower- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), only a few studies illustrate how substance use affected deceased people's lifestyles and suicide attempts. The study addresses this gap by exploring the role of substance use (particularly, alcohol and drug use) in overall lifestyles and suicides of deceased with substance use in Pakistan – an underexplored and under-researched country regarding suicide and substance use.

Methods. We conducted in-depth qualitative interviews (N = 11) with close relatives and friends of those who died by suicide and have a history of substance use. The topic guide was comprised of a narrative part exploring the circumstances that surrounded the suicidal death of the deceased and a problem-focused part collecting comprehensive details about the deceased's personal, family, psychological, and social context and the role of substance use in the lifestyles and the suicide of the deceased.

Results. The content analysis of interviews revealed five key themes: 1) Reasons for suicide, 2) Personality traits, 3) Psychological distress, 4) Initiation of substance use, and 5) Suicidal tendencies. Most of the participants reported the reason for their loved one's suicide was either an overdose of drugs or alcohol, family dynamics, or societal attitudes such as difficulty in building trust and finding acceptance within the family or society. Deceased individuals were perceived as impulsive with low control over their emotional states. Participants highlighted the underlying psychological distress in the deceased, emphasising the complexity of mental health and substance use problems. Participants reported that the deceased initiated drugs at an early age; had suicidal ideations; and overdosed themselves as a means of suicide.

Conclusion. This study provides valuable insights into the role of substance use in suicide. The findings highlight the need for a holistic approach to understanding the multifaceted factors that may influence suicidal behaviours in individuals with substance use. Understanding these factors can help develop targeted suicide prevention and intervention strategies, particularly in low-resource settings such as Pakistan.

Therapeutic Patient Education for Severe Mental Disorders: A Systematic Review

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Aims. Therapeutic Patient Education (TPE) aims to help patients self-manage their chronic condition over their lifetime, adapting to their evolving circumstances, as well as changes in their condition and treatment. The National Institute for Clinical and Healthcare Excellence underscores the importance of patient education as a crucial part of early interventions for mental disorders. This systematic review aimed to review TPE programmes in managing psychiatric disorders, considering the diversity in delivering agents, intervention formats, targeted skills, and therapeutic outcomes.

Methods. Comprehensive database searches, including Web of Science, PubMed, and COCHRANE, were conducted from September 2019 to January 2023, yielding 514 unique records, with 33 making it through rigorous evaluation for full-text review. Eleven studies met the inclusion criteria, focusing on various psychiatric disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis, and multiple serious mental illnesses. A total of 38 studies were included from our previous review to supplement the current database search.

Results. Among 49 included interventions, 13 were aimed at bipolar disorder, depression (n = 12), multiple serious mental illnesses and comorbidities (n = 11), schizophrenia and psychoses (n = 13). A total of 21 interventions were delivered in groups