

How to reduce self-harm in
young people?
Challenges for future research

David Cottrell

September 2019

Background

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds and rates may be increasing
- Self-harm, a significant predictor of death by suicide, may also be increasing
- Until relatively recently we had little evidence to support interventions to prevent self-harm
- Evidence is now emerging around prediction, prevention and treatment
 - but it is still not very strong

Why is it so hard to obtain evidence?

- Not just a problem for self-harm studies
- There have been a lot of negative trials
 - Interventions?
 - Participants?
 - Comparisons?
 - Designs?

Evidence related to self-harm

- Specific Challenges
 - language and definition
 - measurement
 - primary outcome definition
 - time to, number of episodes etc
 - end points
 - how long after treatment completion?

Personalisation?

- How do we know what will work for which child?
- JCCP Practitioner Review pathway
 - prediction, prevention , treatment
- Smarter use of what we know about predictors and moderators
- Logic models to better define interventions
- Innovative research designs, for example
 - Adaptive designs – planned opportunities to modify eg early stopping, differential accrual
 - Umbrella protocols - assignment to different treatment strategies according to risk markers

Thank You