

# 'SUICIDAL CALLS' : MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL CENTRE'S ROLE TO PREVENT DEATH BY SUICIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

Medical emergency call centre (MECC) functions to take 999 emergency calls. Very rarely, it also receives calls from individuals wanting to commit suicide. We present two case series of such situation and how deaths were avoided through our ways to handle the situation.

## CASE DISCRIPTION

### Case 1 :

#### THREAT TO JUMP OFF BUILDING

32 Malay lady called saying that she wanted to jump off from tall building. She was at the 30th floor when she called. Our centre immediately despatched an ambulance. She claimed that she was giving up on life as her husband did not listen to her and her family did not care nor loved her. She said that her child passed away because of family's treatment. We advised her to not rush to jump and allowed her to express her emotions. Offer made to call the husband to persuade her. She did not jump and our ambulance arrived in 20 minutes and taken to hospital for psychiatric care.

### Case 2 :

#### DRUG OVERDOSE

A 27 years old lady with psychiatric illness called and claimed to have taken an overdose of her psychiatric drug (50 antipsychiatric drug). She just had an argument with her boyfriend. Wedispatched the ambulance immediately and calmed her down and allowed her to express her feelings. She calmed down and ambulance arrived in 20 minutes and taken to hospital for psychiatric care.

## DISCUSSION

Abnormal behaviour psychiatric protocol in the MECC does have steps to follow in case of suicidal attempt situations. However, the communication skill displaying empathy and willingness to listen needs training. There is a need to adjust the conversation based on local culture.



## CONCLUSIONS

MECC complements the effort to dissuade potential cases of suicide. The communication skill to calm patient down and listen are the most important skill to have in preventing suicide.

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