

Risk Factors for Suicide Ideation Among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Background: To assess risk factors for suicide ideation among youth.

Material and Methods: Five hundred fifty- six college students of both genders were recruited in the study. Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) such as I do not have thoughts of killing myself. I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out. I would like to kill myself. I would kill myself if I had the chance were used in the study and the response was recorded.

Results: Out of 556 subjects, males were 246 and females were 310. Maternal education upto high school was seen in 26%, secondary school in 42% and graduation upto 32%. Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) revealed that I do not have thoughts of killing myself was observed in 90%, I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out in 4%, I would like to kill myself in 2% and I would kill myself if I had the chance in 4%. High depressive symptoms (BDI \geq 16) was observed in 4.5%. A significant difference was observed ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Results of the study show that suicide tendency and thoughts were low among youth. Among risk factors, low maternal education and male gender were common.

Keywords: Suicide ideation, Youth, Male, thought.

INTRODUCTION

Any suicide attempt, above and beyond being depressed, is a major risk factor for completed suicide and a further attempt.¹ Past suicidal ideation has also been found to increase risk of future suicidal ideation, suicide attempt, and depression.² Adolescents who are both depressed and have attempted suicide are at extremely high risk for both recurrent suicidal behavior and for completed suicide.³ Family Factors Adolescents who complete suicide are more likely to come from a family with a history of suicide.⁴

Up to 90% of young people who complete suicide have at least one psychiatric diagnosis as determined by psychological autopsy, and up to 70% experience two or more diagnoses. Depression is the most common diagnosis in adolescents who complete suicide and is highly prevalent in those with suicidal ideation and attempts.⁵ Other major suicide risk factors that should be assessed and potentially targeted for treatment include anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and conduct and antisocial disorders, the latter two diagnoses being significantly more prevalent in male suicide completers.⁶

Accurate assessment of suicidal ideation and behavior is a critical and necessary component of a comprehensive clinical evaluation of children and adolescents.⁷ Knowledge of the risk factors for suicide is a key prerequisite for assessment of risk. Risk factors have been identified by studies of clinical and normal populations as well as case control and

psychological autopsy studies, and have been shown to vary with gender and age.^{8,9} The present study assessed risk factors for suicide ideation among youth.

MATERIAL & METHODS

A sum total of five hundred fifty- six college students of both genders were recruited in the study. All were informed regarding the study and their written consent was obtained. Ethical clearance was also obtained before starting the study.

Baseline characteristics were entered in case history sheet. Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) such as I do not have thoughts of killing myself. I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out. I would like to kill myself. I would kill myself if I had the chance were used in the study and the response was recorded. Results were assessed statistically using chi- square test. P value <0.05 was regarded as significant.

RESULTS

Table I Distribution of subjects

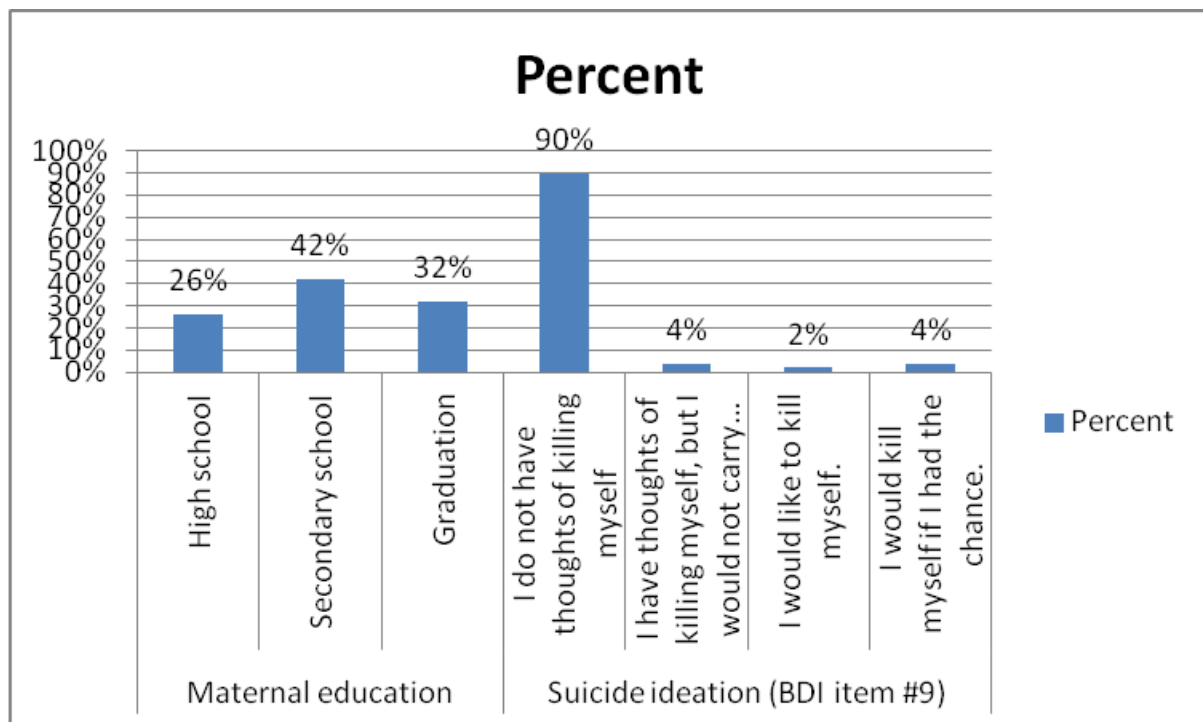
| Total- 556 | | |
|------------|-------|---------|
| Gender | Males | Females |
| Number | 246 | 310 |

Out of 556 subjects, males were 246 and females were 310.

Table II Baseline characteristics

| Characteristics | Variables | Percent | P value |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------|---------|
| Maternal education | High school | 26% | 0.91 |
| | Secondary school | 42% | |
| | Graduation | 32% | |
| Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) | I do not have thoughts of killing myself | 90% | 0.02 |
| | I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out. | 4% | |
| | I would like to kill myself. | 2% | |
| | I would kill myself if I had the chance. | 4% | |
| High depressive symptoms (BDI >= 16) | | 4.5 | - |

Maternal education upto high school was seen in 26%, secondary school in 42% and graduation upto 32%. Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) revealed that I do not have thoughts of killing myself was observed in 90%, I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out in 4%, I would like to kill myself in 2% and I would kill myself if I had the chance in 4%. High depressive symptoms (BDI >= 16) was observed in 4.5%. A significant difference was observed (P< 0.05) (Table II, Graph I).



Graph I Baseline characteristics

DISCUSSION

Suicide is a public health concern of great importance given the enduring devastating effects it has on families, friends and communities.^{10,11} Annually, it claims over 800,000 lives and many of these are young people within the 15–29 age bracket; a situation with grave economic implications for our world today.^{12,13} Suicide ideation is considered to be an important precursor to later attempted and completed suicide and is of major public health significance. National surveys estimate that 11.4% of college students seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, 7.9% made a suicide plan, and 1.7% attempted suicide.¹⁴ Suicidal ideation among university students is undoubtedly a multifaceted phenomenon with globally acknowledged negative and deleterious effects on families, friends and even the socio-economic development of countries within which it occurs. Among young people, especially university students, suicide is the second leading cause of death besides self-inflicted injuries, making this population an at-risk group.¹⁵ The present study assessed risk factors for suicide ideation among youth.

Our results showed that out of 556 subjects, males were 246 and females were 310. Abdu et al¹⁶ assessed the prevalence of suicidal behavior and associated factors among 523 regular main campus students. Lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation, plan, and attempt was 58.3%, 37.3%, and 4.4%, respectively, with one-year prevalence of suicidal ideation at 34%. The multivariate logistic regression analysis revealed that the odds of suicidal ideation were higher among female gender, students who had poor social support, family history of suicide attempt, lifetime alcohol use, rural residence, and less frequently engaging in religious practice; these factors were significantly associated with suicidality. Nearly one-fourth of respondents report suicidal behavior. Prevalence of suicide was found to be higher. Prevention and coping actions regarding identified factors to reduce burden of suicide are needed.

Our results demonstrated that maternal education upto high school was seen in 26%, secondary school in 42% and graduation upto 32%. Suicide ideation (BDI item #9) revealed that I do not have thoughts of killing myself was observed in 90%, I have thoughts of killing

myself, but I would not carry them out in 4%, I would like to kill myself in 2% and I would kill myself if I had the chance in 4%. High depressive symptoms (BDI \geq 16) was observed in 4.5%. Owusu-Ansah et al¹⁷ assessed lifetime and current prevalence of suicidal ideation or attempts in 1003 university students (507 males and 496 females) with a mean age of 20.5 years. All were administered questionnaires that measured suicide, psychological distress, self-esteem and subjective wellbeing. Results found the following prevalence rates of suicidal behaviours: ideations 15.2%, attempted 6.3%, death wishes 24.3% and suicidal plan 6.8%. Psychological distress was a risk factor for both suicidal ideation and suicidal attempt. Subjective wellbeing was protective of suicide attempt while self-esteem was protective of suicidal ideation.

Arria et al¹⁸ in their study among 1,249 first-year college students estimated 6% wt of first-year students at this university had current suicide ideation. Depressive symptoms, low social support, affective dysregulation, and father-child conflict were each independently associated with suicide ideation. Only 40%wt of individuals with suicide ideation were classified as depressed according to standard criteria. In the group who reported low levels of depressive symptoms, low social support and affective dysregulation were important predictors of suicide ideation. Alcohol use disorder was also independently associated with suicide ideation, while parental conflict was not.

CONCLUSION

Results of the study show that suicide tendency and thoughts were low among youth. Among risk factors, low maternal education and male gender were common.

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