

Suicidal Tendencies amongst Adolescents

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Introduction:

Death is always considered a forbidden topic. One would rarely find people happily engaging in a conversation about death. Some people even say that 'talking about death, is like giving it an invitation. So no one ever wants to talk about death because death is sad. And when someone dies because they themselves choose to take their life it is devastating.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death - following motor vehicle accidents - among teenagers and young adults. On average, adolescents aged 15 to 19 years have an annual suicide rate of about 1 in 10,000 people. Among youths 12 to 16 year of age, up to 10% of boys and 20% of girls have considered suicide. Gay and lesbian adolescents are more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Suicide rates are 5 to 7 times higher among First Nations and Inuit teens.

Objects of the study:

The teen years are an anxious and unsettling period as boys and girls face the difficulties of transition into adulthood. It is a period in life that is often confusing, leaving teens feeling isolated from family or peers. Unfortunately, some may at one point or another perceive suicide as a permanent answer to problems that are more often than not just temporary. The self-doubts, confusion, and pressures to succeed or conform can come at a high price for troubled adolescents.

The object of this study is to understand the reasons that push an adolescent towards suicide. Also, to highlight the warning signs and behavioral changes to watch out. Girls generally attempt suicide more often than boys, but boys are about 4 times more likely to die from the suicide attempt. This is because the methods that boys choose - often using firearms or hanging - are more lethal than those chosen by girls, namely drug overdoses or cutting themselves.

Importance/scope:

Controlling the growing number of suicides among teenagers is a big challenge for the police and society. The psychologists also expressed concerned that it is the result of is the result of high expectation from parents. In the last few days, more than a dozen teenagers have either committed suicide or made a bid to end their lives due to reasons like stress, scolding from parents and isolation. A common observation behind suicidal tendencies among teenagers was high aspirations from parents and the peer pressure.

High expectations from parents, much beyond the aptitude and capability of the child also proves to be fatal. The pressure to perform well in studies is a reflection of an increasingly competitive society. As far as budding engineers and graduates are concerned, they tend to judge their self-worth by the exam marks. The pressure that initially starts from stress grows into a

frustration and in extreme conditions turns into depression, prompting the youngsters, sometimes to initiate extreme step to end their lives. Police records state that there has been a sharp increase in teen suicide cases.

Review of literature:

Many adolescents today have problems and are getting into trouble. After all, there are a lot of pressures for kids to deal with among friends and family. For some youth, pressures include poverty, violence, parental problems, and gangs. Kids may also be concerned about significant issues such as religion, gender roles, values, or ethnicity. Some children are having difficulty dealing with past traumas they have experienced, like abuse. Parents and their teenagers are struggling between the youth's wanting independence while still needing parental guidance. Sometimes all these conflicts result in behavior problems.

Research methodology:

Adolescents:

An adolescent is an individual who is in the transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood. The period of adolescence is most closely associated with the teenage years though its physical, psychological and cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later.

Suicide:

Suicide is the act of killing oneself. It means intentionally causing one's own death. A person commits suicide most often because of depression and a feeling of disparity. A common cause for concern in adolescent suicide is the pressure from parents to do well in the national board examinations, especially for Class XII, before finishing schools.

Causes of Adolescent Suicide:

Different kinds of troubling and difficult situations can make a teen consider suicide. The same emotional states that make adults vulnerable to considering suicide also apply to adolescents. Those with good support systems (e.g., among family and peers, or extracurricular sport, social, or religious associations) are likely to have an outlet to help them deal with their feelings. Others without such networks are more susceptible during their emotional changes, and may feel that they're all alone in times of trouble. Everyone should have someone with whom they can share their sorrows and concerns. When a person does not share their thoughts and feelings with anyone and bottle up their feelings, they become a ticking atom bomb, which can and will burst any second.

People who are depressed mostly commit suicide. Depression is a mental health disorder. It causes chemical imbalances in the brain, which can lead to despondency, lethargy, or general apathy towards life. Almost half of 14- and 15-year-olds have reported feeling some symptoms of depression, which makes coping with the extensive stresses of adolescence all the more difficult. Symptoms of depression in youth are often overlooked or passed off as being typical "adolescent turmoil."

Behavioral changes:

Though many suicidal teens appear depressed or downcast, others hide their problems

underneath a disguise of excess energy. If an adolescent starts displaying uncharacteristic agitation and hyperactivity, it may also signal the existence of an underlying problem. This restlessness may take the form of confrontational or aggressive behavior.

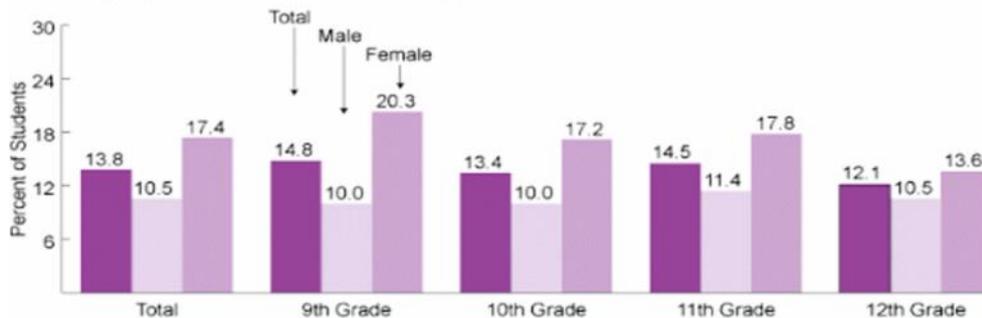
More obvious signs that an adolescent may be suicidal include low self-esteem and self-deprecating remarks. Some teens come right out and talk or write about their suicidal thoughts - this should be taken seriously, and not ignored with the hope that it's a passing phase. Any previous attempts at suicide are loud and clear cries for help, which demand responses before it's too late.

Suicide rates in India are highest in the 15-25 age group:

Young Indians are more likely to commit suicide than previously thought, especially those living in wealthier and more educated regions, according to a study on Friday that experts say suggests India's rapid development is driving many youths to despair. Opportunities that have come with two decades of economic boom and open markets have also brought more job anxiety, higher expectations and more pressure to achieve, mental health experts said. India has some of the world's highest suicide rates, with many believing the biggest risk group to be rural farmers facing debt after poor harvests. Overall, the report uses a national government survey of deaths in 2001-03 to estimate 187,000 suicides took place in 2010, making it the cause of 3 per cent of deaths that year. The WHO reports about 1 million suicides a year, which would be a rate of about 14 per 100,000 in a global population of 7 billion.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

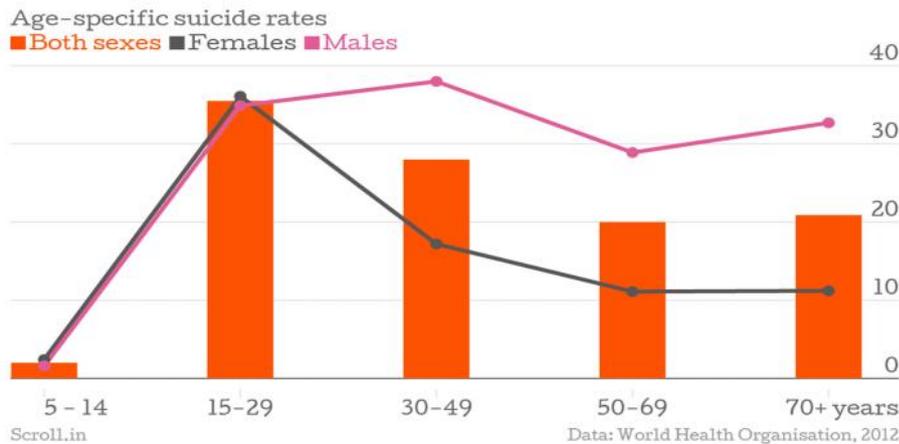
High School Students Who Considered Attempting Suicide in the Past 12 Months, by Grade Level and Sex, 2009



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2009 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline>. Accessed July 2011.

High school students who considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months, by grade level and sex, in 2009.

Global suicide rates among adolescents in the 15-19 age group, according to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) Mortality Database, were examined. Data for this age group were available from 90 countries (in some cases areas) out of the 130 WHO member states. The mean suicide rate for this age group, based on data available for the latest year, was 7.4/100,000. Suicide rates were higher in males (10.5) than in females (4.1). This applies in almost all countries. The exceptions are China, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador and Sri Lanka, where the female suicide rate was higher than the male.



Conclusion:

Suicide is never a solution to any problem. Low self-esteem is closely related to feelings of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal tendencies. Assessment of adolescents should include an evaluation of self-esteem, and therapy should attempt to address any self-esteem deficits. It's essential that you take suicidal behaviour or previous attempts seriously - and get assistance quickly. Aside from professional treatment, a suicidal teen needs to know there are people who care, and who are available to talk to. Good support means listening to what's troubling somebody without passing judgment on his or her feelings. A person should be reassured that there are always solutions to problems or ways other than suicide for coping with them. Giving an adolescent the chance to open up and talk about his or her feelings will help relieve some of the distress of those intense emotions, and make that person feel less alone.

Don't hesitate to bring up the subject of suicide.

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