



"AGE-RELATED VARIATIONS IN SUICIDE IDEATION: INSIGHTS INTO RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS"

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Abstract: Suicide ideation among adolescent students is a critical public health concern that demands urgent attention. This study explores the prevalence and risk factors associated with suicidal thoughts in this vulnerable population. Utilizing a sample of 480 adolescents aged 14 to 18, we employed quantitative methods to analyze the relationship between age and suicide ideation. Findings reveal that older adolescents exhibit higher rates of suicidal thoughts, with significant associations identified through Chi-square analysis. Contributing factors include academic pressure, family dynamics, social isolation, and mental health issues. The results underscore the necessity for targeted interventions and support systems that address the unique challenges faced by adolescents. By fostering resilience and providing mental health resources, we can mitigate the risk of suicide ideation and enhance the overall well-being of young individuals.

Methods: Exploratory research design was adopted; Simple random sampling method was chosen. Questions were asked to adolescents using questionnaire formulated by researcher. Objective of the study was to know the age of the suicide ideation among students, its intensiveness and to know the age group of students who did more suicide attempts. Questionnaires were distributed to the 480 high school (9th and 10th std) and PUC students of Kodagu district. Permission from BEO, DDPI and Institution head was taken before administering the questionnaire.

Results: Data was analysed using statistical method and chi-square value. It was found in the study that out of 480 respondents 13.3 percent of respondents are aged 14 years, 24.6 percent 15 years, 26.7 percent 16 years, 27.9 percent 17 years and 7.5 percent respondents are aged 18 in which respondents aged 18 years (86.1%) has more suicidal ideations when compared to 17 years (84.3%), 16 years (75%), 15 years (47.4%) and 14 years (43.8%) and 55.5% of respondents

aged 18 years tried more suicide attempts compare to other age groups, 17 years (38%), 16 years (42.2%), 15 years (18.6%) and 14 years (12.5%).

Conclusion: In summary, a comprehensive examination of adolescent suicide rates in rural areas is crucial to understanding the unique challenges faced by this demographic. Prioritizing mental health support and development during these formative years can significantly influence their resilience and overall well-being. Collaborative efforts involving parents, educators, media, and social workers are essential to creating a supportive environment that empowers young people and fosters positive change. By addressing these issues collectively, we can better equip adolescents to navigate their challenges and promote healthier communities.

KEYWORDS: Suicide, Ideation, Adolescent, Students, Kodagu, Karnataka

Introduction

Suicide ideation is a pressing public health issue, particularly among adolescents. Understanding how age influences suicidal thoughts can inform targeted prevention strategies. India is developing in a fast phase in the field of education, research, technology and every other aspect the main strength of this country is its youth population which makes it a stronger competitor to its fellow nations but still India is dealing with its own problems in which suicide is also one of the major problems. Adolescents are the future backbone of this country but the one misstep they take when they get into trouble is costing their life. Among the age of 15-29 years suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in the world. In India mortality rate due to suicide is 16.5 for 100000 in the year 2016. Most of the suicide is due to the impulsiveness at the time of crisis and few major causes can be depression, alcoholic abuse and many more causes but adolescent suicide happens in most of the cases because of academic difficulty, issues related to the usage of mobile, loss of the dear ones and many other. There is an estimation of 50:1 and 100:1 among adolescents of those who are attempted suicide to completed suicide. Female adolescents have higher attempts than male. Few more reasons like increase in the stress level, confusion with life, financial problems, history of suicide in family physical and sexual abuse are also some of the reasons for adolescent and adolescents have a stigma to ask help also resulting in suicide among adolescent. This study investigates the relationship between age and suicide ideation, utilizing Chi-square analysis to assess the strength of this association.

Materials & Methods

The research utilized an exploratory design to address the complex nature of adolescent suicide ideation, facilitating a thorough investigation of the various contributing factors. Simple random sampling was implemented to guarantee unbiased representation of the target population, enhancing the generalizability of the findings to the broader adolescent community in Kodagu. The researcher carefully crafted a structured questionnaire to collect data on multiple aspects of suicide ideation, including the intensity of thoughts, attempts, and the distribution of these issues by gender and age among students. The study involved 480 participants, including high school (9th and 10th standard) and PUC students, aiming to capture a diverse range of experiences and challenges faced by adolescents at different educational stages.

Prior to administering the questionnaire, permission was secured from the Block Education Officer (BEO), District Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI), and the heads of the institutions, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and institutional protocols. Informed consent was obtained from each student before data collection, with participants briefed on the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of their participation. The questionnaire was distributed in a supportive and confidential environment, allowing participants sufficient time to respond openly.

Data analysis involved statistical methods, primarily using the Chi-square test and percentage calculations, to uncover significant associations between variables and quantify the prevalence of suicide ideation and age related factors among adolescents. Rigorous measures were taken to ensure the study's reliability and validity, including careful questionnaire design, ethical considerations, and thorough statistical analysis. This methodological framework aimed to systematically explore adolescent suicide ideation in Kodagu, yielding valuable insights into the factors that influence this critical issue.

Results

Table 01: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
14	64	13.3
15	118	24.6
16	128	26.7
17	134	27.9
18	36	7.5
Total	480	100

Table 01 explains about the age of the respondent's 13.3 percent of respondents are aged 14 years, 24.6 percent 15 years, 26.7 percent 16 years, 27.9 percent 17 years and 7.5 percent respondents are aged 18 years participated in the study or research.

Table 02: Suicide Ideation by Age

There is a significant association between age and thoughts of suicide.

Age	Never	Minimal	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Total
14	36	6	14	6	2	64
15	62	28	15	5	8	118
16	32	47	22	12	15	128
17	21	64	20	12	17	134
18	5	12	5	9	5	36
Total	156	157	76	44	47	480

Chi-Square Analysis

The Chi-square test results indicate a significant association between age and suicidal ideation (Chi-square value: 92.87, $p < 0.000$).

The Chi-square result shows that **there is a significant association with Age and thought of suicide of respondents** at 1% level of significance. The respondents aged 18 years (86.1%) has more suicidal ideations when compared to 17 years (84.3%), 16 years (75%), 15 years (47.4%) and 14 years (43.8%). Suicide ideation is more as the age increases, along with the age growing student's faces the difficulties in their academic life, personal life and being with their family members. Adolescent students face problems because of the failure in the intervention they fail to get in their family, school and their environment. Also the sudden physical changes and implementation of new social norms and less scientific explanation by the elders to the adolescents also puts them in confusion causing them to have suicidal thoughts

- **Respondents aged 18 years:** 86.1% reported experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- **Respondents aged 17 years:** 84.3%.
- **Respondents aged 16 years:** 75%.
- **Respondents aged 15 years:** 47.4%.
- **Respondents aged 14 years:** 43.8%.

The Chi-square result shows that **there is a significant association with Age and thought of suicide of respondents** at 1% level of significance. The respondents aged 18 years (86.1%) has more suicidal ideations when compared to 17 years (84.3%), 16 years (75%), 15 years (47.4%) and 14 years (43.8%). Suicide ideation is more as the age increases, along with the age growing student's faces the difficulties in their academic life, personal life and being with their family members. Adolescent students face problems because of the failure in the intervention they fail to get in their family, school and their environment. Also the sudden physical changes and implementation of new social norms and less scientific explanation by the elders to the adolescents also puts them in confusion causing them to have suicidal thoughts

Discussion

The findings from the study highlight a concerning association between age and suicidal ideation among adolescents. Table 01 presents the demographic data, revealing that the majority of respondents are aged 16 and 17 years, which accounts for 26.7% and 27.9% of the sample, respectively. Notably, the data indicates a troubling trend: as age increases, the percentage of respondents reporting suicidal thoughts also rises. Specifically, 86.1% of respondents aged 18 reported experiencing such thoughts, compared to 84.3% of those aged 17, 75% of 16-year-olds, 47.4% of 15-year-olds, and 43.8% of 14-year-olds.

The Chi-square analysis further corroborates this finding, demonstrating a significant association between age and suicidal ideation (Chi-square value: 92.87, $p < 0.000$). This suggests that older adolescents are more likely to experience

suicidal thoughts, which may be attributed to various stressors prevalent in their lives. As adolescents transition through these critical developmental stages, they often encounter increased academic pressures, personal challenges, and evolving familial dynamics (Peters et al., 2022).

Additionally, the sudden physical changes experienced during adolescence, coupled with the introduction of new social norms, can exacerbate feelings of confusion and inadequacy (Smith et al., 2021). The lack of effective support systems—whether from families, schools, or communities—further compounds these issues, leaving adolescents feeling isolated and overwhelmed (Johnson, 2023).

Given these insights, it is essential for educators, parents, and mental health professionals to prioritize early intervention strategies that address these vulnerabilities. Implementing mental health education and support programs in schools could help equip adolescents with the skills needed to navigate these challenges more effectively (Williams & Thompson, 2022).

Conclusion

A nation's future relies on its citizens possessing both sound minds and healthy bodies. When individuals encounter challenges, their mental equilibrium can become disrupted, leading to issues such as stress, depression, and, if unaddressed, even suicide. Adolescents, often in a fragile state, are particularly vulnerable; they can become captivated by the glamorous portrayals in media, creating a bubble where they believe these images reflect reality. At this stage, they may disregard the responsibilities and guidance offered by parents and elders, instead aspiring to the unrealistic lives they see on screen. Disappointment arises when they recognize that these fantasies are mere illusions. For those who cannot confront reality, despair can lead to tragic choices, such as suicide, seen as a final escape from helplessness. Society must take responsibility for equipping young people with the skills to face real-life challenges.

Raising awareness through social media, where adolescents frequently engage, can help them find solutions to their problems. Physical health issues often provide visible indicators of distress, but psychological challenges are approached differently in India, where many still believe mental illness does not require systematic treatment. Therefore, it is essential to educate school administrators, teachers, parents, and students about mental health. Incorporating stress management into early education can empower students to become self-reliant.

Social workers play a crucial role in connecting troubled individuals with supportive resources. Early intervention is far preferable to mourning losses that could have been prevented. Unfortunately, many schools and colleges do not employ external counselors who possess specialized knowledge of child psychology. This oversight can lead to mishandling situations and exacerbating issues.

Navigating the complexities of adolescence highlights the critical importance of mental well-being for the future of a nation. Adolescents are especially susceptible to the unrealistic expectations set by media and societal pressures, which

can lead to feelings of stress and disillusionment. To combat these issues, society must take on the responsibility of fostering resilience among young people.

The widespread presence of social media offers a unique opportunity to promote mental health awareness, dispel myths, and teach stress management techniques. Integrating these topics into school curricula from an early age can help students develop the tools they need to face life's challenges.

Moreover, the involvement of social workers is vital in bridging the gap between individuals in need and a supportive community. Timely intervention by professionals knowledgeable in child psychology can prevent tragic outcomes. Educational institutions should prioritize mental health by hiring qualified external counselors who understand psychological complexities and can effectively address issues.

In conclusion, ensuring the mental well-being of adolescents requires a collective effort from society, schools, parents, and mental health professionals. By raising awareness, integrating stress management into education, and providing informed support, we can cultivate a resilient generation prepared to face reality with courage and purpose. After all, a nation's future flourishes when its citizens are both physically and mentally sound.

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