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## Psychosocial Risk and Adolescent Suicide Ideation: A Comparative Study

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### Abstract

This comparative study explores the intricate relationship between psychosocial risk factors and adolescent suicide ideation, shedding light on the vulnerability of this demographic group to such thoughts. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by unique emotional and psychological challenges. Suicide ideation among adolescents is a pressing public health concern, warranting comprehensive investigation.

The study involved two distinct groups of adolescents: those with identified psychosocial risk factors and those without. Through surveys and assessments, the research examined the prevalence, severity, and associated factors of suicide ideation in these groups. Key findings revealed a significantly higher incidence of suicide ideation among adolescents with psychosocial risk factors compared to their peers without such risk factors. Moreover, the severity and persistence of ideation were notably higher in the at-risk group. Notably, diagnosed mental health conditions, family dysfunction, and negative peer relationships emerged as significant predictors of suicide ideation among at-risk adolescents.

The implications of these findings are substantial. Early identification and tailored interventions are crucial for addressing the heightened vulnerability of at-risk adolescents. Recommendations include routine mental health screening, promoting healthy family and peer relationships, implementing mental

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health education programs, and integrating substance abuse prevention measures into school curricula. This research underscores the urgent need for a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention that takes into account psychosocial risk factors. By addressing these factors, communities and healthcare providers can work collaboratively to create a safer, more supportive environment for adolescents, ultimately reducing the prevalence of suicide ideation and the associated risks.

**Keywords:** adolescents; suicidal ideation; mental health; psychosocial risk; social support

## **Introduction**

Suicide ideation among adolescents is a critical public health concern, with far-reaching implications for individuals, families, and communities. Understanding the factors contributing to suicide ideation in adolescents is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. One significant area of research focuses on psychosocial risk factors and their role in shaping adolescent vulnerability to suicide ideation. This article delves into a comparative study that seeks to shed light on the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and suicide ideation among adolescents.

Negative life events and adversity in the family context are a type of risk factor, which includes parental separation or divorce, death of one of the parents, history of physical or sexual abuse, mental illness in the family, family history of suicidal behaviors, bullying, and alcohol or drug abuse among others. Examples of psychological risk factors include impulsivity, low self-esteem, and hopelessness. Several studies suggest that negative life events are a common denominator for most people who commit suicidal acts and, in addition, predispose the development of certain characteristics, such as hopelessness.

Hopelessness is an individual risk factor referenced in several models that makes people interpret current problems as irresolvable. Also, adverse living conditions together with personal characteristics may trigger risky family environments among families at psychosocial risk. This may affect the various family members, particularly the well-being and biopsychosocial development of children and adolescents, due to the chaotic scenario and dysfunctional communication. Studies show that the smaller the displays of affection and the weak configuration of family rules, the greater the psychological stress and the decrease in problem-solving skills.

## **The Prevalence of Adolescent Suicide Ideation**



Adolescence is a period of profound physical, emotional, and psychological development, often marked by heightened stress and vulnerability. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents aged 15 to 19 globally. While not all adolescents who experience suicide ideation will go on to attempt or complete suicide, understanding the factors contributing to these thoughts is crucial for early intervention and prevention.

### **Psychosocial Risk Factors**

Psychosocial risk factors encompass a range of elements related to an individual's psychological and social well-being. These factors can include but are not limited to:

**Mental Health Conditions:** Adolescents with psychiatric disorders, such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder, are at an increased risk of experiencing suicide ideation.

**Family Dysfunction:** Family problems, including conflict, abuse, or neglect, can contribute significantly to an adolescent's vulnerability to suicide ideation.

**Peer Relationships:** Peer rejection, bullying, or isolation can lead to feelings of hopelessness and contribute to suicide ideation.

**Substance Abuse:** The use of alcohol or drugs can impair judgment and increase impulsive behavior, elevating the risk of suicide ideation and attempts.

**Academic Stress:** High levels of academic pressure, low academic achievement, and bullying at school can increase an adolescent's vulnerability to suicide ideation.

### **The Comparative Study**

To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and suicide ideation among adolescents, a comparative study was conducted. The study involved two groups of adolescents: those with identified psychosocial risk factors and those without. The participants were surveyed to assess their experiences of suicide ideation, the severity of their ideation, and their overall emotional well-being.

### **Key Findings**



**Higher Incidence of Suicide Ideation among At-Risk Adolescents:** The study revealed a significantly higher incidence of suicide ideation among adolescents with psychosocial risk factors compared to their counterparts without these risk factors.

**Severity of Ideation:** Adolescents with psychosocial risk factors reported more severe and persistent suicide ideation than those without such risk factors.

**Mental Health Conditions:** The presence of diagnosed mental health conditions, particularly depression and anxiety, was strongly associated with suicide ideation among at-risk adolescents.

**Family Dysfunction and Peer Relationships:** Family dysfunction and negative peer relationships were found to be significant predictors of suicide ideation among at-risk adolescents.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The findings of this comparative study highlight the importance of addressing psychosocial risk factors in the prevention of adolescent suicide ideation. Early identification and intervention strategies should be tailored to the specific needs of at-risk adolescents. Some recommendations include:

**Mental Health Screening:** Routine mental health screening in schools and healthcare settings can help identify adolescents at risk and connect them with appropriate services.

**Family and Peer Support:** Encouraging healthy family dynamics and positive peer relationships can provide protective factors against suicide ideation.

**Mental Health Education:** Implementing mental health education programs in schools can reduce stigma, increase awareness, and promote help-seeking behaviors among adolescents.

**Substance Abuse Prevention:** Substance abuse prevention programs should be integrated into school curricula to address the link between substance abuse and suicide ideation.

### **Conclusion**

The comparative study on psychosocial risk and adolescent suicide ideation underscores the importance of addressing these risk factors in suicide prevention efforts. Adolescents with psychosocial risk factors are more vulnerable to experiencing and enduring suicide ideation, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that provide support, education, and early identification. By addressing psychosocial risk



factors, communities can work together to create a safer and more supportive environment for adolescents, reducing the prevalence of suicide ideation and ultimately saving lives.

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