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Meta-analysis of risk factors of suicidal phenomena in adolescents

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Suicidal phenomena (suicide attempts, deliberate self-harm and suicidal plans, threats and thoughts) are common in adolescents. Identification of factors associated with these phenomena could play an important role in the development of school or community-based prevention and intervention programs. Self-harm and suicide are major public health problems in adolescents, with rates of self-harm being high in the teenage years and suicide being the third (for females) and fourth (for males) most common cause of death in young people worldwide. This study is to provide a summary of current knowledge about suicidal phenomena risk factors in adolescent, a meta-analysis of published prospective studies longitudinally predicting suicidal phenomena in adolescents. This included 13 published reports. Results from a random-effects model demonstrated significant, albeit weak, overall prediction of suicidal phenomena in adolescent 2.45 (95% CI: 1.60 to 3.4). Among specific suicidal phenomena risk factors, alcohol abuse, family suicidal behavior, and friends' suicidal behavior yielded the strongest effects (ORs>3.0); all remaining risk factor categories produced ORs near or below 2.0. Additionally, results highlighted several limitations of the existing literature, including idiosyncratic suicidal phenomena measurement. These findings indicate that few strong suicidal phenomena risk factors have been identified, and suggest a need for standardized suicidal phenomena measurement and to create more longitudinal prospective studies of risk factors of suicidal phenomena in adolescent.

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