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## Can children under 12 years old be suicidal?

**Nathalie Maltais<sup>1</sup>, Caroline Larue<sup>2</sup> and Christine Genest<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Université du Québec à Rimouski, Canada<sup>2</sup>Université de Montréal, Canada

**Statement of the Problem:** Although successful suicide attempts in children of less than 12 year old is a rare phenomenon, suicidal ideations and behaviors are more common. In 2011, 36 children committed suicide in metropolitan France. Moreover, in USA, 12% of children between 6 and 12 have suicidal ideations and 8 to 10% of all the Americans stated that they attempted suicide during their childhood. According to Greydanus and coll. (2010) many adults including health care professional have a difficult time considering that children might want to kill themselves. Child and adolescent psychiatric nurses are regularly in contact with children who present suicidal ideations and/or behaviors. Therefore, nurses need to know more about this unknown phenomenon.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** This literature review on the suicidal risk of children under 12 year present studies with a systemic approach based on Bronfenbrenner model (1979). Search engines used were: PubMed, Web of Sciences, Embase, CINAHL, PsycInfo and Google Scholar. The key words used alone and in combination were children, kids, youngsters and suicidal risk. A literature review was completed in French and in English. Articles from 2005 to 2015 were retained. 120 articles were found but nine responding to the criteria of our research were analysed in depth.

**Results:** Boys aged 12 and under make more lethal attempts than girls of the same age. Children under 12 turn to substance abuse, hanging and strangulation as a means to kill themselves. These children often have a conflictual relationship with one of their parents. Children under 12 can be more impulsive than adolescents. Although children with depression have a higher suicidal risk, depression is not the only mental illness that can be a risk factor for children under 12. The literature reveals that children diagnosed with ADHD are also at risk. Even though this age group may not have acquired the understanding of the concept of death, they still want to kill themselves and are at risk for self-harm.

maltaisnathalie@hotmail.com