



Brief report: Suicidal ideation in adolescent girls: Impact of race



W. LaVome Robinson^a, Jocelyn R. Droege^a, Alison E. Hipwell^b,
Stephanie D. Stepp^b, Kate Keenan^{c,*}

^a Department of Psychology, DePaul University, Chicago, IL 60614, USA

^b Department of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, USA

^c Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Keywords:

Suicide prevention
Adolescent girls
African American

ABSTRACT

In the present study, we examine the unique and interactive effects of race (African American or European American) and depression on suicidal ideation, controlling for poverty, within a representative sample of adolescent girls. A community sample of 2450 girls (43.9% African American) participating in the longitudinal Pittsburgh Girls Study (PGS) was interviewed annually about depression symptoms and suicidal ideation, from ages 10–15 years. Caregivers reported on the girls' racial/ethnic background and the family's receipt of public assistance. Race and depression scores explained unique variance in suicidal ideation; receipt of public assistance did not. Endorsement and recurrence of suicidal ideation was more likely for African American than European American girls: there was a nearly two-fold increase in the likelihood of reporting frequent thoughts of death or suicide as a function of race. Of the 255 girls reporting recurrent suicidal ideation, 65.9% were African American. An interaction effect between race and depression symptoms was observed, such that African American girls were more likely to report suicidal ideation at lower levels of depression severity. The findings indicate that race is a critical factor for understanding, preventing, and treating suicidal ideation in girls.

© 2016 The Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Suicide is among the leading causes of death for African American girls and, while rates for European American girls have declined in recent years, rates for African American girls remain consistently high (Bridge et al., 2015; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013a, 2013b). As such, there is a need for focused research examining the link between race and suicidality.

Suicidality is a complex constellation of thoughts and behaviors that includes suicidal ideation, communications, attempts, and completed suicide (O'Carroll et al., 1996; Silverman, Berman, Sanddal, O'Carroll, & Joiner, 2007a,b). Data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement revealed that approximately 40% of girls who report only suicidal ideation will make a suicide attempt (Nock et al., 2013).

Numerous studies identify depression as a key predictor of suicidality (e.g., Foley, Goldston, Costello, & Angold, 2006; Horwitz, Hill, & King, 2011) and depressed adolescents have been reported as five times more likely to make a suicide

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: keenan@uchicago.edu (K. Keenan).

attempt (Goldston et al., 2009). However, the salience of depression as a risk factor for suicidality may be tempered by race; relative to depression, other psychosocial stressors may be more predictive of suicidality for African American girls such as violence exposure or victimization (Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2001). Joe, Baser, Neighbors, Caldwell, and Jackson (2009) reported that African American adolescents are at risk for suicide in the absence of significant depressive symptomatology. The present study re-examines the function of depression as a risk factor for suicidal ideation, within a representative community sample of African American and European American adolescent girls, followed prospectively.

Methods

Participants

This study utilizes data from the Pittsburgh Girls Study (PGS), a longitudinal study of 2450 girls, enrolled at ages 5–8 years, and their primary caregivers. A stratified, random household sampling, with over sampling of households in low-income neighborhoods, was used. Written informed consent was obtained from the primary caregiver and verbal assent from the child. Nearly all of the primary caregivers were biological mothers (92%). Girls and their caregivers received yearly payments for participation. The University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures. PGS design, procedures, and participants are fully described elsewhere (Keenan et al., 2010).

Measures

Based on caregiver report, girls were identified as African American (43.9%), European American (49.8%), multiracial (5.2%) or Asian American (1.1%); these latter two groups were excluded from the current analyses. An index for number of years of receipt of public assistance was created, also based on caregiver report.

Depression was measured using the Childhood/Adolescent Symptom Inventory (CSI-4/ASI-4; Gadow & Sprafkin, 1994; 1998), based on girls' report of symptoms over the past year. Adequate concurrent validity, and sensitivity and specificity of depression severity scores to clinicians' diagnoses have been reported for the CSI-4 and ASI-4 (Gadow & Sprafkin, 1994; 1998). In the present study, internal consistency coefficients for the nine depression items ranged from $\alpha = .72$ (at age 10) to $\alpha = .80$ (at age 15). Depression scores were generated excluding the item on suicidal ideation. Total depression scores were averaged over ages 10–15 years, to generate a depression severity score.

Report of suicidal ideation was defined by the highest level of endorsement of the question, “has had thoughts of death or suicide,” across ages 10–15 years. Consistent with DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013), thoughts of death or suicide that occurred “a lot” or “all the time” were considered to meet *threshold* for suicidal ideation, whereas thoughts that occurred “sometimes” were considered *subthreshold*, and scores of “never” were coded as *absent*. Recurrent suicidal ideation was defined as endorsement in more than one annual assessment at either the subthreshold or threshold level. The prevalence of threshold suicidal ideation ranged from 1 to 2% in a given year. Descriptive statistics for depression and suicidal ideation are available via supplementary material.

Data analysis

Analyses for the present study included data from participants, ages 10–15 years. Girls for whom suicidal data were missing in more than two waves were not included (9.5%). Multinomial logistic regression was used to test the main effects of race and depression, and their interaction on absence, subthreshold, and threshold endorsement of suicidal ideation. A general estimating equation model for correlated ordinal data was computed to test the effects of race and depression on suicidal ideation over time.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for study variables and racial differences.

	Total sample (N = 2084)		African American (n = 1201)		White (n = 883)		African American vs. White
Suicidal Ideation (ever)	N	%	N	%	N	%	$\chi^2 = 20.40^{***}$
Absent	1395	66.9	756	62.9	639	72.4	
Subthreshold	582	27.9	376	31.3	206	23.3	
Threshold	107	5.1	69	5.7	38	4.3	
Suicidal Ideation (recurrent)	N	%	N	%	N	%	$\chi^2 = 20.68^{***}$
Never	1395	66.9	756	62.9	639	72.4	
Once	434	20.8	277	23.1	157	17.8	
Recurrent	255	12.2	168	14.9	87	9.9	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Average depression score	6.28	3.25	6.62	3.29	5.80	3.14	$F = 32.86^{***}$
Receipt of public assistance (years)	2.19	2.36	3.08	2.30	1.01	1.86	$F = 481.53^{***}$

*** $p < .001$.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5033897>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5033897>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)