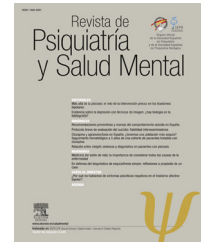




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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Suicidal ideation in a community-derived sample of Spanish adolescents[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Prevalence;
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Abstract

Introduction: Suicide is a current public health problem and among the main causes of mortality in adolescents and young adults. The main goal of this study was to analyse suicidal ideation in a representative sample of Spanish adolescents. Specifically, the prevalence rates of suicide ideation, the psychometric properties of the Paykel Suicide Scale (PSS) scores, and the socio-emotional adjustment of adolescents at risk for suicide were analysed.

Material and methods: The sample consisted of 1664 participants ($M = 16.12$ years, $SD = 1.36$, range 14–19 years), selected by stratified sampling by clusters. The instruments used were the PSS, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, the Personal Wellbeing Index-School Children, and the Oviedo Infrequency Scale.

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Results: The results showed that 4.1% of the sample indicated that they had tried to commit suicide in the previous year. Statistically significant differences were found according to gender but not according to age in the PSS mean scores. The analysis of the internal structure of the PSS showed that the one-dimensional model presented excellent goodness of fit indexes. This model showed measurement invariance across gender. The reliability of the scores, estimated with ordinal alpha, was 0.93. Participants who reported suicide ideation showed poorer mental health status and lower life satisfaction compared to the non-suicide ideation group.

Conclusions: Suicidal ideation is present during adolescence and is associated with poor subjective well-being and increased emotional and behavioural problems. PSS seems to show adequate psychometric behaviour to assess suicidal ideation in adolescents. These findings have clear implications, both in health and education systems, to improve the promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of psychological and psychiatric problems in this sector of the population.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Prevalencia;
Suicidio;
Ideación suicida;
Adolescencia;
Validación

Ideación suicida en una muestra representativa de adolescentes españoles

Resumen

Introducción: El suicidio es un problema sociosanitario de primer orden. El propósito de este estudio fue analizar la ideación suicida en una muestra representativa de adolescentes españoles. Concretamente, se examinó las tasas de prevalencia, se validó la Escala Paykel de Ideación Suicida (*Paykel Suicide Scale*, PSS) y se analizó el ajuste socioemocional de aquellos adolescentes con ideación suicida.

Material y métodos: La muestra la formaron 1.664 participantes ($M = 16,12$ años; $DT = 1,36$; rango 14-19 años) seleccionados mediante muestreo estratificado por conglomerados. Los instrumentos empleados fueron la PSS, el *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire*, el *Personal Wellbeing Index-School Children* y la Escala Oviedo de Infrecuencia de Respuesta.

Resultados: El 4,1% de la muestra informó haber intentado quitarse la vida en el último año. Se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las puntuaciones medias de la PSS en función del género pero no en función de la edad. El modelo unidimensional de la PSS presentó excelentes índices de bondad de ajuste y se mostró invariante en función del género. La fiabilidad de las puntuaciones de la PSS, estimada con el alfa ordinal, fue de 0,93. Los participantes con ideación suicida informaron de un peor estado de salud mental y menor satisfacción con la vida respecto al grupo de comparación.

Conclusiones: La ideación suicida se encuentra presente en población adolescente y se asocia a un peor bienestar emocional subjetivo y a mayores problemas emocionales y comportamentales. La PSS parece mostrar un adecuado comportamiento psicométrico para evaluar la ideación suicida en adolescentes. Estos resultados tienen claras implicaciones, tanto a nivel sanitario como educativo, de cara a mejorar la promoción del bienestar emocional y la prevención de los problemas psicológicos y psiquiátricos en este sector de la población.

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Mental disorders are among the main causes of associated disability and disease burden in the 10–24 year old age group.¹ Suicide stands out within this set of problems due to its impact, severity and associated social and healthcare cost. Suicide is one of the main causes of loss of years of life due to premature death,^{2,3} and it is the second causes of death among adolescents and young adults aged from 15 to 29 years old.⁴ The worldwide suicide rate in 2012 stood at 11.4 per 100,000 inhabitants. In that specific year in Spain the standardised suicide rate was 8.1 per every 100,000 inhabitants. In the period 2000–2012 42,905 individuals over the age of 15 years old died due to suicide. The average annual incidence during this period was 95 suicides/million inhabitants. The highest rates of mortality due to suicide

occurred in the south and North West of Spain.⁵ According to the National Statistics Institute⁶ in 2013 310 children and young people under the age of 30 years old took their own lives. This datum amounts to 7.77% of the total number of suicide victims. In the same year the suicide rates in the young population aged from 15 to 19 years old were 2.65 for every 100,000 inhabitants.⁷

The impact of this problem is not restricted to rates of consummated suicide, as it also arises due to suicidal ideation or previous attempted suicides. Suicidal ideation and previous attempts are often precedents of a consummated suicide. For example, Gabilondo et al.⁸ found that the probability of attempting suicide among those who had suicidal ideation (who had prepared a plan for suicide) was

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