

## Role of Depression and Hopelessness in suicide ideation among adolescents

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### Abstract

The phenomenon has been attracting the attention of a wide variety of medical and social disciplines including philosophy, theology, history, psychology, sociology, psychiatry, and criminology. In view of the salience of suicidal behaviour, the current study examined the relationship of suicide ideation with depression and hopelessness in non-clinical sample of 100 female adolescents. The average age of the subjects was 16.8 years. Beck's Suicide Ideation Scale, Hopelessness Scale and Depression Inventory were used to assess the relevant variables. The study revealed that after controlling for hopelessness, the relation between suicide ideation and depression emerged to be non-significant. In contrast, the relation between suicide ideation and hopelessness remained relatively significant even after controlling depression.

**Keywords:** depression, hopelessness, adolescents, psychiatry

### Introduction

In the context of psychopathology, the risk factors for suicidal behaviour among young people are multifactorial, complex and interrelated. However, suicide ideation, previous suicide attempts and psychiatric disorders are important risk factors with upto 90 percent of those who die by suicide having a mental disorder. Researchers have clearly shown that psychosocial risk factors for suicidal thoughts and behaviour in youth include depression, substance abuse, negative life events, past physical or sexual abuse and hopelessness Gili-Planas *et al.* 2001 [1] Shrivastava & Kulshrestha, 2000 [9]. More recently, Panchal, Kumar, & Joshi (2014) [4]. conducted a study to explore the role of mental health and depression on suicide ideation. The sample consisted of 200 married professionals, in the age range of 25 to 40 years. Symptoms check-list 90, Beck depression inventory, and Adult Suicidal Questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Results revealed that two potent predictors of suicide ideation i.e, depression and phobic anxiety accounted for 29 percent of the variance.

Likewise, hopelessness defined as a negative perspective of the future or a set of negative expectancies towards the future has been identified as one of the most important cognitive risk factors. The importance of hopelessness in the aetiology of suicide has been recognized for a long time in clinical research and practice. Several studies were conducted to identify its role as vulnerability factor in suicide ideation and attempted suicide (Khan, Upmayu, Vinayak, & Kumar, 2014 [4]. Panchal, Kumar, & Joshi, 2014 [4]. Samaraweera, Sumathipala, Siribaddana *et al.* 2010 [7].

In view of earlier researches concerning the role of depression and hopelessness in suicide ideation, the present study was conducted to examine their role after making refinements in the methodology of investigations.

### Objectives

The main objectives of the present study were as follows

1. To study the relationship between depression and suicide ideation.
2. To study the relationship between hopelessness and suicide ideation.
3. To explore the relationship of depression with suicide ideation after partialing out the influence of hopelessness.
4. To explore the relationship of hopelessness with suicide ideation after partialing out the influence of depression.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated

1. Depression will correlate positively with suicide ideation.
2. Hopelessness will correlate positively with suicide ideation.
3. Depression will cease to correlate with suicide ideation after partialing out hopelessness.
4. Hopelessness will cease to correlate with suicide ideation after partialing out depression.

### Methodology

**Sample:** 100 female adolescents from different schools of Deharadun were selected for the current study. The average age of the subjects was 16.8 years. Purposive incidental sampling procedure was employed for selecting the sample, which was limited only to females to control gender variable.

### Measuring Tools

The following tests were used:

#### 1. Beck Depression Inventory

BDI is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression in adults and adolescents. It is a self report inventory composed of 21 items relating to depressive symptoms, cognitions

and somatic symptoms. The psychometric properties of BDI are well established.

## 2. Hopelessness Scale

HS is a 20 item self report measure which assesses about the feelings about the future, future expectations, loss of motivation and overall hopelessness. Nine items are keyed false and eleven items are keyed true. The total score range from 0 to 20. The psychometric properties of HS are well established.

## 3. Scale for Suicide Ideation

Beck's scale for suicide ideation includes 21 items designed to evaluate the presence and severity of suicidal thoughts. The items are rated on a scale of 0 to 2, with 2 being more severe. There is sufficient evidence for the psychometric properties of the scale.

## Procedure

The tests were administered in a uniform sequence sincere efforts were made to establish rapport with the subjects in order to elicit reliable and authentic information. Subjects were assured that the information to be collected would remain strictly confidential and would be presented only in a form in which no person could be identified.

## Analysis

The data were analysed with the help SPSS soft ware. Pearson's product moment method of correlation was used.

## Results and Discussion

The results of the present study revealed significant correlation between depression and suicide ideation ( $r=.45, p<.01$ ). The results also indicated that hopelessness was significantly correlated with suicide ideation ( $r=.41, p<.01$ ). However, controlling for hopelessness led to non-significant correlation between depression and suicidal measures ( $r=.18, NS$ ). In addition hopelessness was found to be significantly correlated with the suicidal measures when depression was partialled out ( $r=.39, p<.01$ ).

The obtained correlations clearly revealed that the frequently reported relationships between depression and suicidal ideation were shown to be largely explained by hopelessness. It suggests that hopelessness contaminates the relationship of depression with suicide ideation and should be considered when attempting to predict suicidal tendencies. The obtained salience of hopelessness as a key variable in suicide ideation clearly reveals that it should be the target of clinical intervention.

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