College Students’ Suicide Thoughts and Attempts: An Exploratory Study
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BACKGROUND
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in persons aged 15-34 (Center for Disease and Control [CDC], 2015).
- 1 out of every 10 college students (approximately 1,100) has developed a plan for suicide (Emory University, 2016).
- Adults aged 18-25 have the highest rates of substance use.
- Harmful drinking and illegal drug use have been problematic on college campuses (Giordano, 2012).
- Predictors of hazardous behaviors and consequences could lead to self-harm. Substance abuse has been documented as an unhealthy and risky behavior (SAMHSA, 2014).

PURPOSE
1. Explore the relationship between suicide attempts and thoughts among undergraduate college students.
2. Explore the ethnic differences in suicide attempts and thoughts.
3. Discuss the influence of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and steroids in undergraduate students’ suicide attempts and thoughts.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What are the rates of suicide thoughts and attempts among college students at public and private institutions? To what extent do they differ by background characteristics?
2. How does substance use (alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, steroids) relate to suicide thoughts and attempts?
3. What background characteristics, substance use, consequences, and beliefs predict suicide thoughts/attempts?

METHODS
- Quantitative, survey design
- Cross sectional study
- CORE Institute Alcohol and Drug Survey: Long Form
- Total sample size N=146,856; (male=54,111 female=92,745)
- Descriptive, comparative, and inferential statistical analyses (cross-tabulation, frequencies, correlation, and multiple regression)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
- Emilie Durkheim (1897). Three types of suicide: egoistic, altruistic, and anomic.
- Alfred Adler (1982). Low social interest are more likely to engage in alcohol and drug abuse.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Amer Ind/AK native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black (non-Hispanic)</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White (non-Hispanic)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>993</td>
<td>7345</td>
<td>14840</td>
<td>9116</td>
<td>107632</td>
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RESULTS

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<th>Institution</th>
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<th>Private</th>
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<td>70653</td>
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<table>
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<th>Residence</th>
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<th>Off campus</th>
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<td>58769</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Living Arrangements</th>
<th>House/Apartment</th>
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<th>Approved Housing</th>
<th>Fraternity/ Sorority</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>48.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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CONCLUSION
- Rates of suicide thoughts and attempts are similar in private and public institutions.
- There is weak correlation between substance use and suicide thoughts and/or attempts.
- This is a timely and important topic as postsecondary institutions have experienced increasing challenges with counseling centers at full capacity.
- Increase the awareness and demystify the stigma of suicide.

IMPLICATIONS
- Increase representation of diverse student population.
- Increase awareness and engage students in more research to further understand the complex relationships.
- Revisit mental health policies related to students with the objective to protect and advocate well-being of students.
- Implement more prevention and intervention plans.

SELECTED REFERENCES