

Risk factors in self-destructive behavior in adolescence. N. Ralph,* T. Medina and H. Wallace (UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720).

Suicide is currently the second-ranked cause of death in adolescents in California, placing behind only accidents of all kinds. The behavioral factors associated with self-destructive motivation in adolescence are not well understood. A non-psychiatric sample of 194 adolescents in Alameda County, California, was assessed with regard to self-destructive motivation and possible risk factors. The sample included black, white and Hispanic adolescents aged 12-17 years. Risk factors included were age, sex, ethnic group and family type; problems with home life, school and peers; and alcohol, marijuana and non-prescription drug use. The crude incidence of reported self-destructive motivation was 16.9%. A multiple logistic analysis was carried out to assess the role of possible risk factors for self-destructive motivation. Significant elevations in risk were noted for hispanics (OR = 3.74, $p < 0.05$), having problems at home (OR = 8.22, $p < 0.001$), having problems with friends (OR = 14.9, $p < 0.005$), and non-prescription drug use (OR = 7.71, $p < 0.05$). The study results point to the possible role of ethnic group, personal adjustment, and drug abuse as risk factors in self-destructive motivation in adolescent populations.