

CDC Study Reveals Hispanic Youth More Prone to Suicide

Mental Health Weekly June 12, 2006

Hispanic students are much more likely than black or white students to report attempted suicide, according to a new report on youth risk behaviors released last week by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The national report, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2005, monitors priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth and adults.

YRBS provided data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools throughout the country. Nearly 14,000 U.S. high school students participated in the 2005 National YRBS.

The report found that fewer U.S. high school students are engaging in health risk behaviors compared to their counterparts from 15 years ago. Despite an overall decrease in health risk behaviors among high school students since 1991, racial and ethnic differences continue to be evident, the report noted.

'The reasons for these racial and ethnic differences are complex. More research is needed to assess the impact of education, socio-economic status, environment, and cultural factors that may contribute to health risk behaviors among high school students,' said Howell Wechsler, Ed.D., MPH.

In the United States, 71 percent of all deaths among persons aged 10-24 years result from four causes: motor vehicle crashes (31 percent), other unintentional injuries (14 percent) homicide (15 percent) and suicide (11 percent).

Nationwide 8.4 percent of students actually attempted suicide one or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey. Overall, the prevalence of having actually attempted suicide was higher among female (10.8 percent) than male (6 percent) students; higher among white female (9.3 percent), black female (9.8 percent) and Hispanic female (14.9 percent) than white male (5.2 percent) black male (5.2 percent) and Hispanic male (7.8 percent) students.

Overall, the prevalence of having actually attempted suicide was higher among Hispanic (11.3 percent) than white (7.3 percent) and black (7.6 percent) students; higher among Hispanic female (14.9 percent) than white female (9.3 percent) and black female (9.8 percent) students.

The study found the prevalence of attempted suicide was higher among Hispanic male (7.8 percent) than white male (5.2 percent) students.

According to the study, the prevalence of having actually attempted suicide was higher among 9th grade (10.4 percent) than 11th grade (7.8 percent) and 12th grade (5.4 percent)

students. It was higher among 9th grade female (14.1 percent) than 10th grade female (10.8 percent) and 12th grade female (6.5 percent) students.

Among male students, the study found the prevalence of attempted suicide was higher among 10th grade male (7.6 percent) than 11th grade male (4.5 percent) and 12th grade male (4.3 percent) students.

Sad, Hopeless

During the 12 months preceding the survey, 28.5 percent of students nationwide had felt so sad and hopeless almost every day for more than two weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities, the report noted.

Overall, the prevalence of having felt sad or hopeless almost every day for more than two weeks was higher among female (36.7 percent) than male (20.4 percent) students; higher among white female (33.4 percent), black female (36.9 percent) and Hispanic female (46.7 percent) students than white male (18.14 percent), black male (19.5 percent) and Hispanic male (26 percent) students, respectively, according to the report.

During the 12 months preceding the survey, 13 percent of students nationwide had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. Overall, the prevalence of having made a suicide plan was higher among female (16.2 percent) than male (9.9 percent) and higher among white female (15.4 percent) black female (13.5 percent) and Hispanic female (18.5 percent) students than white male (9.7 percent), black male (5.5 percent), and Hispanic male (10.7 percent) students.

For a copy of the full report visit, www.cdc.gov "