



A HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA LINKED WITH INCREASED RISK OF SUICIDE IN STREET-INVOLVED YOUTH

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- This study looked at whether youth who experienced childhood abuse and neglect were more likely to attempt suicide as adolescents or young adults.
- Between October 2005 and November 2007, 495 street-involved youth between the ages of 14-26 years, were interviewed as part of the At-Risk Youth Study (ARYS) in Vancouver.
- Youth were asked about experiences of childhood abuse and neglect as well as suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts in adolescence and early adulthood.

QUICK FACT

YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCED CHILDHOOD TRAUMA ARE IN GREATER DANGER OF ATTEMPTING SUICIDE IN ADOLESCENCE AND EARLY ADULTHOOD.

FINDINGS

- Childhood trauma was common among the youth in the study; 41% of street-involved youth reported having been physically abused as children; 27% reported having been sexually abused; 50% reported emotional abuse; 46% reported physical neglect, and 36% reported emotional neglect.
- Suicidal thoughts were also very common among the youth. 37% of street-involved youth reported having thoughts of suicide at least once in their lifetime and 9% reported an actual suicide attempt in the last six months.
- Youth who had been abused or neglected as children were found to be significantly more likely to attempt suicide later in life.

IMPLICATIONS

- This study shows that we need better interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- This study also shows that we need psychosocial support services for street-involved youth, especially for those with a prior history of trauma.

Hadland SE, Marshall BDL, Kerr T, Qi J, Montaner JS, Wood E. **Suicide and history of childhood trauma among street youth.** *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 2012; 136(3): 377-380.

