TEXT ANALYSIS OF SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

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Background: Suicide is a public concern for adolescents and young adults (AYAs), with rates rising across the United States. This generation often uses social media platforms to express suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The three-step theory (3ST) of suicide finds that strong suicide ideation progresses to action. For the early detection of suicide ideation and intention from AYAs' social media posts, understanding how AYAs talk about their suicide-related thoughts and behaviors is important.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to gather information surrounding AYA's vernacular related to suicide to determine if there are words that are concerning within this population's vernacular, to ultimately prevent suicides.

Methods: This study utilized a secondary data analysis of an existing dataset collected from 255 AYAs from the Intermountain West, United States, between the ages of 12 and 25. Participants were asked to provide descriptions of how they and their peers expressed their experiences of self-harm, suicidal thinking, and attempts. A total of 9647 words from 687 statements were analyzed by using KH Coder, a textual analysis software, eventually turning into 24 clusters of words.

Results: Using the 3ST, the clusters were then grouped into three categories: *pain or hopelessness, connectedness,* and *capacity to attempt suicide.* From there, subthemes were created: *psychological pain, physical pain, hopelessness, relationship, help-seeking, methods, and outcomes.* Generational slang words were found to imply killing oneself such as *KMS or*

KYS (i.e., kill myself or kill yourself), *yeet,* and *kermit sewage slide.* Identifying frequently used words related to suicidal thoughts or behaviors and the specific terms used by AYAs can guide efforts for early detection of suicide ideation and intention from the social media posts.

Conclusion: This study found words used by the AYA generation that would have otherwise been looked over by the public that would be indicative of suicidal thinking. These slang words offer a look into the vernacular used by this population to describe their thoughts, as well as looking into the mindset as a whole when describing suicidal thoughts, self-harm, and depression. Identifying themes from this data set shows us a possible thought process found in this generation surrounding suicidal thoughts, self-harm, and depression. This study's results can aid clinicians, nursing staff, and other healthcare professionals to better understand AYA's and their expression of concerning language on social media or possibly during CSSRS screenings. This study could be used to update discharge information given out at hospitals after every discharge, with an emphasis to aid patients that are admitted directly due to suicidal ideation or attempt. This research could also be used to prevent adolescent suicides by addressing this concerning language choice, and creating a basis for a log of words used by this generation. This log can be used to alert when there is a concern for suicide, or suicide ideation within a social media posting, be that expressing an explicit suicide attempt or alerting those at risk.