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Patterns of media and social media consumption associated with suicidal ideation in Spanish children



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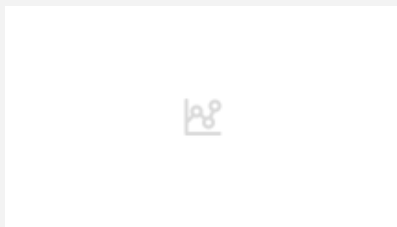
Abstract

Child suicide is a critical public health issue in Spain. From 2020 to 2021, the child suicide rate rose by approximately 57%, with 22 children aged 15 or younger taking their own lives in 2021 compared to 14 in 2020. This phenomenon is complex, with psychological, social, and economic factors potentially influencing a young person's decision to end their life. Among these, some researchers caution that certain media and social media exposures may increase or mitigate suicidal ideation, which remains the key factor to

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media content. Specifically, we focus on a) identifying which media formats might be protective or increase risk in this population; and b) identifying factors associated with suicidal ideation related to media and social media use in this age group. In this non-experimental study, we surveyed 804 Spanish children aged 10 to 15 years. Our multivariable models identified three variables consistently associated with higher odds of suicidal ideation: frequent online searches for information about suicide, regularly posting private photos on social media, and regularly viewing contests or reality shows.

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Data availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available to prevent potential misuse. However, they can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Contributions

DBI and LCC wrote the main manuscript text. SVS, AMC, and JAC developed the theoretical parts, while MGP and YSM contributed both with the design of the work and the interpretation of data. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

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Ethics declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical approval

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recorded under number 79, with CEUMA registration number 129-2023-H.

Informed consent

Prior to confirming participation in the study, written informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians who voluntarily agreed to their children's participation after receiving a detailed explanation of the study objectives and procedures. These informed consent forms were collected between February and June 2024 and are being securely held by the contracted survey agency, Sigma Dos. In addition, verbal informed assent was obtained from each participating child before completing the questionnaire, administered by a trained surveyor from Sigma Dos.

Additional information

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