

AS24-02 - PREVALENCE OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLES IN EUROPEAN ADOLESCENTS

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Suicide is an important public health issue, and there are substantial indications showing that suicidal behavior coincides with many underlying social, psychological and psychiatric conditions in addition to other risk behaviors. Risk behaviors and suicidality are significant predictors of subsequent mental health problems, thus, there is a paramount need to promote the adoption of healthy and positive lifestyles, especially during the early years of life. In order to achieve these tasks, the Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe (SEYLE) project has been developed to prevent risk behaviors, mental ill-health and suicidal behaviors by examining specific mental health promoting and suicide preventing intervention strategies. The main objectives of the project are to lead adolescents to better mental health through decreased risk-taking and suicidal behaviours, to evaluate outcomes of different preventive programmes and to recommend effective culturally-adjusted models for promoting adolescent mental health in different European countries.

Although it has been reported that suicide-preventive interventions can be effective in decreasing suicidal behavior, well-documented and randomized studies are lacking. The effects of such interventions in terms of combating unhealthy lifestyles in young people, which often characterize suicidal individuals, have never been reported. We know that unhealthy and risk-taking behaviors are detrimental to individuals' current and future health. Preliminary data analyses illustrate that risk behaviors among European adolescents are much higher than originally expected, and the prevalence of high-risk cases displaying signs of mental illness is also higher than estimated.