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SUICIDE BEHAVIOR AND SUBTHRESHOLD PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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Objective: Suicide among adults have been associated to subthreshold psychiatric illnesses as well; however it is little known about the role of subthreshold mental disorders in suicide risk among children/adolescents.

Methods: Using the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview Kid the authors examined 105 hospitalized children/adolescents in the Vadaskert Child Psychiatric Hospital, Budapest. Current suicide behavior was defined as giving positive answer to any of the following questions: "In the past month did you: think you would be better off dead or wish you were dead? want to hurt yourself? think about killing yourself? attempt suicide?"

Results: We report data on 105 hospitalized children/adolescents, 76 (72.4%) boys and 29 (27.6%) girls. The mean age of the subjects was 11.4 years (SD= 3.43, min: 5, max: 17). Current suicide behavior was present in 18 cases (17.1%). There were one person with current suicide behavior, who did not have any current DSM-IV disorder, but he/she had current subthreshold disorder. The majority (n=16, 88.8%) of the children/adolescents with suicide behavior had both current subthreshold and DSM-IV disorders. Eight children/adolescents (44.4%) with current suicide behavior had current DSM-IV major depressive episode and further 5 children/adolescents (27,8%) had current subthreshold major depressive episode. The prevalence of DSM-IV and subthreshold major depressive episode was significantly higher among hospitalized children with suicide behavior (n=18), than among hospitalized children without suicide behavior (n=87) ($X^2 = 5,272$, $df = 1$. $p = 0,022$).

Conclusions: Subthreshold forms of pediatric psychiatric disorders need to be taken into account as well in suicide prevention.