

## P01-261 - FELT SECURITY AND SUICIDALITY IN A CLINICAL SAMPLE OF ADOLESCENTS

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**Introduction:** Attachment theory offers both a conceptual framework and an empirical basis for understanding the development of parent-child relationships and their contribution to individual psychosocial adaptation across the life cycle. Although no existing model adequately predicts suicide, family relationship problems are increasingly implicated in the etiology of adolescent suicidal behaviour.

**Objectives:** We sought to examine the association between felt attachment security and a history of suicidal behaviour among a group of adolescents in psychiatric treatment.

**Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, we examined the association between felt attachment security and a history of suicidal behaviour among 122 hospitalized adolescents. Felt security (as measured by the validated Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire) has been defined as one's perception of the availability and responsiveness of an attachment figure.

**Results:** Compared to others, the group coded as both depressed and suicidal had significantly higher scores on the AAQ subscales of 'perceived unavailability' and 'angry distress', as well as higher comorbidity and lower self-esteem compared to non-suicidal, non-depressed adolescents. The model accounted for approximately 50% of the observed variance.

**Conclusions:** Attachment theory integrates ethological and psychoanalytic principles in describing the origins and growth of human personality. It provides a coherent framework for understanding adolescent suicidality.