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Risk of attempting suicide quadruples for youth from poor neighbourhoods

From ANI

Washington, Oct 25: A new study has revealed that youth in their late teens who live in poor neighbourhoods are four times more likely to attempt suicide than peers who live in more affluent neighbourhoods.

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Researchers from Canada's Universite de Montreal and Sainte-Justine Hospital Research Center, as well as Tufts University in the U.S., also found that youth from poor neighbourhoods are twice as likely to report suicidal thoughts.

The study showed that late teens from disadvantaged neighbourhoods had higher levels of depressive symptoms along with lower levels of social support, but these factors could not fully explain why these youth were at an increased risk to consider ending their own lives.

"Rather, they were more vulnerable because difficult events, such as personally knowing someone who has committed suicide or experiencing a painful break-up with a romantic partner, apparently led to increased suicidal thoughts or attempts," said Veronique Dupere, lead author and a post-doctoral fellow at Tufts University who completed the research at the Universite de Montreal.

"In other words, difficult events seemed to have a more dramatic impact on these teenagers," Dupere added.

For this study, the researchers surveyed 2779 teens as part of Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. Poverty levels in the neighbourhood were measured in early and mid adolescence based on Census data. Suicidal thoughts and attempts were assessed later, when participants were 18 or 19 years old.

Participants were asked, "During the past 12 months, did you seriously consider attempting suicide?" Those who responded yes were then asked, "During the past 12 months how many times did you attempt suicide?"

Among teenagers from across all socioeconomic backgrounds, the research team found that hyperactivity and impulsivity, depression, substance use, low social support, exposure to suicide and negative life events increased vulnerability to suicide thoughts and attempts.

Eric Lacourse, senior author of the study and a Universite de Montreal

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sociology professor, said: "But among youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, hyperactivity and impulsivity was even more strongly associated with suicidal behaviours." We observed that community adversity could amplify a young person's vulnerability to consider suicide," Lacourse said.

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