In 2016, suicide was the second leading cause of death amongst adolescents in the United States. Research has identified various social, biological, and psychological risk factors to bullying, with bullying identified as a major risk factor for suicidality amongst adolescents. The Centers for Disease Control has identified bullying as a major risk factor for suicidality amongst youth. Research investigating nonheteronormative sexual identities have been found to be at elevated risk for suicide and bullying. The influence of peer victimization on varying degrees of suicidality was explored in the current study, with a focus on students who identified as a sexual minority. Secondary data analysis was conducted on the 2017 National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBISS) (n = 14,684). The YRBISS is a self-report written survey that measures health-risk behaviors amongst students from grades nine through 12 in public and private schools, such as bullying and suicidality. Researchers revealed that students who were bullied at school and online were more likely to report suicidality than those who were not bullied. In addition, sexual minority youth were more likely to be bullied than heterosexual students, and were more likely to use peers, and their sexual identity, to endorse suicidality. Through the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide and General Strain Theory, it is imperative that school administrators, staff, parents, and peers actively prevent and intervene at bullying and suicide.

**ABSTRACT**

**Hypotheses**

1. Adolescents who have experienced bullying are more likely to have thought about suicide in comparison to adolescents who have not experienced bullying, and that adolescents who have experienced electronic bullying are more likely to have increased suicidality than those who have not been bullied.
2. Adolescents belonging to a sexual minority have increased bullying and suicidality, and that suicidality for those who have been bullied electronically is increased for those who have been bullied at school and online.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Data Collection**

With parental consent, students filled out the questionnaire and marked their answers with a pencil on a paper booklet.

**Sample**

YRBISS surveyed adolescents and young adults from grades nine through 12 in all public and private schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia, utilizing a three-stage cluster sample design.

**Measures**

Bullying was measured with two variables that asked about being bullied at school, and about being bullied electronically.

Suicidality was measured with four variables that asked about feeling sad or hopeless, considering suicide, making a suicide plan, and suicide attempts.

**Results**

Bullied at school and suicidality: Significant associations of moderate strength were found between being bullied at school and feeling sad or hopeless ($\chi^2 = 16.27$, $p < .01$, $\Phi = .14$), being bullied at school and having considered suicide ($\chi^2 = 21.75$, $p < .01$, $\Phi = .14$), and between being bullied and having made a suicide plan ($\chi^2 = 23.14$, $p < .01$, $\Phi = .14$).

**Discussion**

- Students who identified as a sexual minority youth and those who reported being bullied electronically were more likely to have endorsed suicidality.
- Notably, bisexual identity was the strongest predictor of feeling sad or hopeless, having considered suicide, having made a suicide plan, and having attempted suicide at least once.
- Students identifying as gay or lesbian were most likely to have attempted suicide four or five times.

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