

**Is there an association between disordered eating behaviors and suicide ideation
among adolescent girls sampled in The National Longitudinal Study of
Adolescent Health Wave II?**

Mei Ling Ellis

Introduction: Reducing rates of youth suicide and reducing relapse rates of adolescent eating disorders have been identified as goals of Healthy People 2010. Currently, a small body of research focuses on the co-morbidity of adolescent suicide and eating disorders.

Objectives: The goal of this study was to determine if adolescent girls who report engaging in disordered eating behaviors also report thoughts of suicide.

Methods: A subset of cross-sectional data were selected from a representative sample of 13 568 adolescents participating in the second wave of The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. A subpopulation of 6 963 girls was examined.

Results: The association between suicide ideation and disordered eating behaviors was strongest prior to controlling for depression. When depression was controlled for, this association was weakened and not significant. With further examination of the data, the strongest associations were found among suicide ideation and depression, self-worth, and being African American.

Discussion: Results contrast with previous findings of the co-morbidity of adolescent girls who engage in disordered eating behaviors, and demonstrate the unique role effects of depression and self-worth have on girls who engage in disordered eating behaviors. Our findings imply that professionals working with adolescent girls who exhibit disordered eating behaviors should incorporate screening for depression into their assessment and care plans. Furthermore, our findings provide a better understanding of adolescent suicide and disordered eating behaviors identifying areas that warrant further study, in addition to informing policy and prevention models to address adolescent suicide and eating disorders.

Thesis Committee:

Jane Rees, PhD, RD

Elaine Thompson, PhD, RN

Lewayne Gilchrist, PhD, MSW, MA

This research was partially supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act), grant # T76MC00011-21-00.