Today’s pieced was prepared by Taylor House, MD based on a NY Times article [More child suicides are linked to ADD than depression, study suggests](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/19/science/more-child-suicides-are-linked-to-add-than-depression-study-suggests.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fhealth&_r=0)

The article describes a study in *Pediatrics* that sought to better understand suicide in young children. This study looked at deaths in 17 states from 2003 to 2012 in children age 5-14 years. The article’s author does an excellent job of presenting the strengths and limitations of the study. In comparing children age 5-11 to 12-14 who committed suicide, the study found that, among various mental illness diagnoses, the younger group of children were most likely to have been diagnosed with ADD while the older group were most likely to have been diagnosed with depression. The article identifies that we may need to look at behavioral markers other than depression in screening young children for suicidal ideation.

The article effectively establishes, however, that there is not a causal link between ADD and suicide. Furthermore, the sample size of the research is small, as the article’s author points out. Finally, the article highlights that the study does not establish where these children obtained their mental health diagnoses. An important strength of this article is that is concludes with the advice to parents, pediatricians, and school personnel that regardless of age and the diagnoses that a child may or may not carry, we should take any declarations of self-harm very seriously.

Readers may exercise caution the article’s author references expert sources, including the president of the American Association of Suicidology and a child psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School. While these sources may or may not be experts in ADHD, depression and suicide in children and youth, their expertise in examining this issue should not be taken for granted. The website for the quoted psychiatrist, for example, suggests she has published very little on these issues.

**RESOURCE ON SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

[Youth Suicide Prevention Program](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cszinne%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5CGUEQ4EPT%5Cyspp.org) *resources for acute crisis management, warning signs of suicide, and suggestions for how to help a child in crisis*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!