

Suicidal Ideation and Suicide Acceptance Among Age Cohorts

Caelan Vielbig



Introduction

Suicidal Ideation

- Suicide increased by 35% 1999 to 2018¹
- 2nd leading cause of death among ages 10 to 34¹
- 18-25 year olds highest ideation, 11.8%¹
- 18-25 year olds highest rate of attempt, 1.8%¹
- Risk related to internet addiction as a factor²

¹ NIMH, 2019 ² Merchant et al., 2017

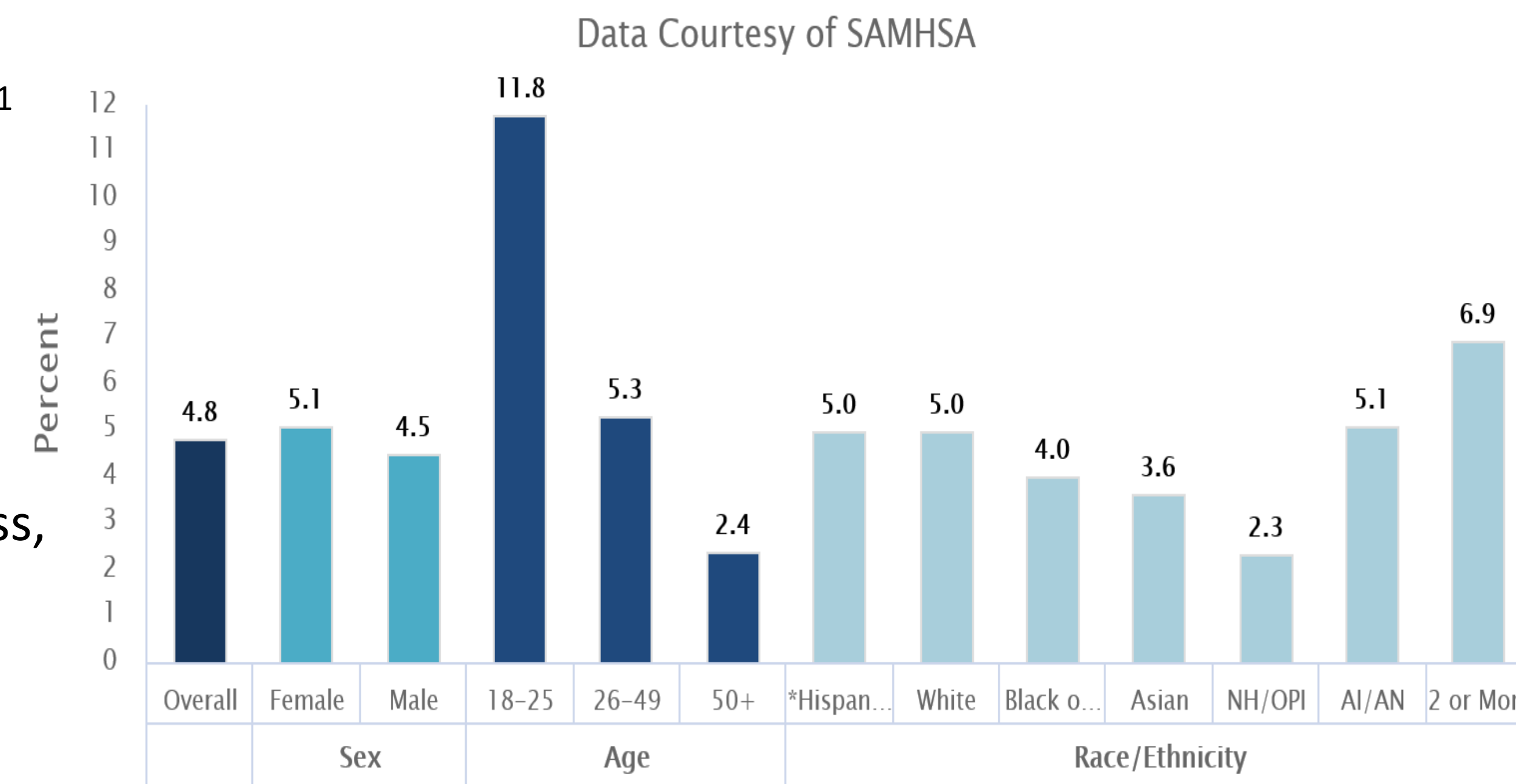
Suicide Acceptance

- Personality traits, identity and impulsivity¹
- Conduct problems¹
- Cultural meanings of depression, hopelessness, and distress²
- Demographics of suicide acceptance³
- Differences between countries^{4, 5}
- Time and changing attitudes^{6, 7}

¹ Brezo et al., 2006 ² Chu et al., 2019 ³ Joe, Romer & Jamieson, 2007 ⁴ Saito et al., 2013 ⁵ Jukkala & Makinen, 2011 ⁶ Phillips, 2018 ⁷ Tong & Phillips, 2018

NIMH. (2021, March 15). *Suicide*. National Institute of Mental Health. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml#part_154969

Past Year Prevalence of Suicidal Thoughts Among U.S. Adults (2019)



Hypotheses

1. Increasing suicide acceptance related to increasing suicide ideation.
2. Increasing age leads to decreasing suicide ideation.
3. Interaction effect between suicide acceptance and age.

Methods

Participants

- Amazon MTurk, WSU, or Winona Friendship Center
- Mean age of 36.79 ($SD=16.66$)
- 44.7% Male, 54.6% Female
- 79.8% White ethnicity

Procedure

Directed to online survey through Qualtrics. Upon completion participants received \$5 through MTurk or a \$5 Amazon e-gift card. Data analyzed with SPSS PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2020)

Measures

- Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale (von Spijker et al., 2014)
- Cognitions Concerning Suicide Scale (Cwik et al., 2017)
- Other scales were used as filler questions and to measure depression.

Results

Hypothesis 1

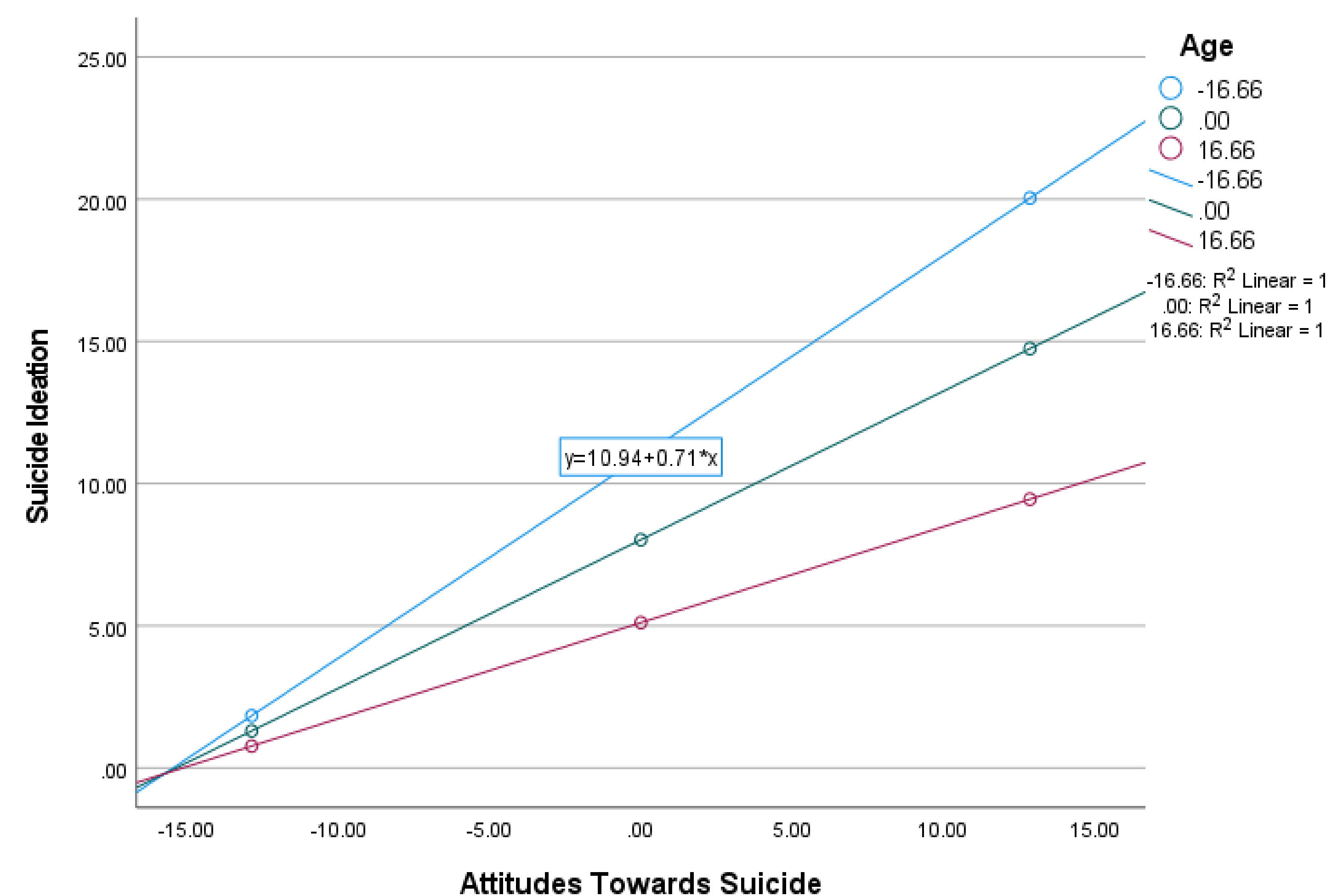
- Increased positive attitudes were a significant predictor at a .001 level of increased suicide ideation
- $b = .52, t(217) = 9.55, p < .001$

Hypothesis 2

- As age increased suicide ideation decreased.
- $b = -.17, t(217) = -3.65, p < .001$

Hypothesis 3

- The interaction of suicide acceptance and age of participants had a significant effect on their suicide ideation.
- $\Delta R^2 = .025, F(1, 217) = 8.23, p = .005$



Discussion

- The findings of the CDC and NIMH were supported, age is related to suicidal ideation. The studies concerning cultural acceptance of suicide and suicide rates have also been supported.
- Personality traits such as openness and conscientiousness may be related to positive attitudes about suicide and impulse control indicating higher risk for young people who are high in openness and low in conscientiousness.
- The development of resilience as one grows older may also be part of the explanation as to why young people are likely to ideate and be at risk for suicide. Young people are also at a high risk of depression which is also correlated with suicide ideation and risk.
- The results indicate that it would be worthwhile to investigate the relation of attitudes towards suicide. Further research may be able to help indicate the most at risk populations, what conditions lead to higher risk, and perhaps even detection and treatment options.
- Limitations include opportunities for participants to drop out of the survey as a precautionary measure, a sample that may not be representative of the larger population, and it is a correlational study not intended to determine cause and effect.
- Future research could focus on confirming attitude's impact on ideation as well as how attitude differs among different demographic groups and whether it has a similar relationship as presented here. Should this research be confirmed, the creation of new assessments that take attitudes about suicide into account could be beneficial in detecting risk and early prevention.