PREVALENCE AND DETERMINANTS OF SUICIDAL TENDENCIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

**Aim**

The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence and determinants of suicidal tendencies among undergraduates of the University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To ascertain the prevalence of suicidal tendencies among undergraduates of the university of Port Harcourt.
2. To investigate the level of drug misuse among University of Port Harcourt undergraduates
3. To determine the relationship between suicidal tendencies and other risk factors.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the prevalence of suicidal tendencies among undergraduates of the University of Port Harcourt?
2. What is the level of drug misuse among undergraduates of the University of Port Harcourt?
3. What is the relationship between suicidal tendencies and other risk factors?

**Hypothesis**

**H1:** There is a prevalence of suicidal tendencies with associated determinants among undergraduates of the University of Port Harcourt.

**H0:** There is no prevalence of suicidal tendencies with associated determinants among undergraduates of University of Port Harcourt.

**METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

**Statistical Software for Social Sciences was used for data analysis (SPSS).**

**Descriptive Statistics**: Mean, standard deviation, frequency and proportion

**Inferential Statistics**: Chi-Squared

**RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

**Table 1: Social Demographic Characteristics**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| **Sex** |  |  |
| Male | 175 | 42.6 |
| Female | 236 | 57.4 |
| **Age group** |  |  |
| 16-18years | 3 | 0.7 |
| 19-21 years | 63 | 15.3 |
| 22-24 years | 125 | 30.4 |
| ≥ 25 years | 220 | 53.5 |
| **Religion** |  |  |
| Christian | 389 | 94.6 |
| Islam | 22 | 5.4 |
| **Year of study** |  |  |
| 1 | 21 | 5.1 |
| 2 | 61 | 14.8 |
| 3 | 52 | 12.7 |
| 4 | 184 | 44.8 |
| 5 | 93 | 22.6 |
| **Tribe** |  |  |
| Ikwerre | 64 | 15.6 |
| Ogoni | 52 | 12.7 |
| Kalabari | 41 | 10.0 |
| Others | 254 | 61.8 |
| **Monthly income** |  |  |
| 1000-5000 | 66 | 16.1 |
| 6000-10000 | 82 | 20.0 |
| 11000-15000 | 71 | 17.3 |
| 16000-20000 | 64 | 15.6 |
| >20000 | 128 | 31.1 |

The result showed that 175(42.6%) of the respondents %) were males, 220(53.5%) were over 25 years of age, 389(94.6%) were Christians and 184(44.8%) were in their fourth year of study. Also, 64(15.6%) were from Ikwere ethnic group and 128(31.1%) earn over twenty thousand naira monthly.

**Table 2: Social Demographic Characteristics (Continued)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| **Family type** |  |  |
| Monogamous | 344 | 83.7 |
| Polygamous | 67 | 16.3 |
| **Residence** |  |  |
| On campus | 108 | 26.3 |
| Off campus | 303 | 73.7 |
| **Number of siblings** |  |  |
| 1-3 | 175 | 42.6 |
| 4-6 | 175 | 42.6 |
| >6 | 61 | 61.0 |
| **Marital status** |  |  |
| Single | 377 | 91.7 |
| Married | 34 | 8.3 |
| **Parents marital status** |  |  |
| Single | 83 | 20.2 |
| Married | 305 | 74.2 |
| Widowed/Single parent | 232 | 5.6 |
| **Number of friends** |  |  |
| 0-2 | 88 | 21.4 |
| 3-4 | 184 | 44.8 |
| 5 or more | 139 | 33.8 |
| **Support from friends** |  |  |
| Low | 93 | 22.6 |
| Moderate | 250 | 60.8 |
| High | 68 | 16.5 |

The table shows that 344(83.7%) of the respondents belonged to a monogamous family, 303(73.7%) reside on off campus, 377(91.7%) were single and 305(74.2%) of the respondents’ parents were married. The table reveals that 184 (44.8%) of the responders earn between 3-4 friends and 250(60.8%) had moderate support from friends.

**Table 3: Academic Performance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| **Grade** |  |  |
| Third class | 36 | 8.8 |
| Second class lower | 124 | 30.2 |
| Second class upper | 227 | 55.2 |
| First class | 24 | 5.8 |
| **Academic standing** |  |  |
| No carry overs | 283 | 68.9 |
| 1-3 carry overs | 114 | 27.7 |
| 4-6 carry overs | 4 | 1 |
| > 6 carry overs | 10 | 2.4 |
| **Academic Pressure** |  |  |
| Never | 10 | 2.4 |
| Sometimes | 244 | 59.4 |
| Always | 157 | 38.2 |
| **Satisfied with course of study** |  |  |
| Very dissatisfied | 74 | 18.0 |
| Dissatisfied | 31 | 7.5 |
| Moderately satisfied | 180 | 43.8 |
| Satisfied | 94 | 22.9 |
| Very satisfied | 32 | 7.8 |

The result shows that 227(55.2%) of the respondents were on second class upper, 283(68.9%) of the respondents had no carry overs, 244(59.4%) sometimes experience academic pressure and 180(43.8%) were moderately satisfied with their course of study.

**Table 4 History and Pattern of suicide ideation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| **Tried to kill myself when I failed exams** |  |  |
| Never | 361 | 87.8 |
| Most times | 7 | 1.7 |
| Sometimes | 43 | 10.5 |
| **Tried to end my life when I face major disappointment** |  |  |
| Never | 314 | 76.4 |
| Often | 11 | 2.7 |
| Most times | 19 | 4.6 |
| Sometimes | 67 | 16.3 |
| **Considered suicide to solve my problems** |  |  |
| Never | 272 | 66.2 |
| Often | 24 | 5.8 |
| Most times | 26 | 6.3 |
| Sometimes | 89 | 21.7 |
| **Considered killing myself during distress** |  |  |
| Never | 281 | 68.4 |
| Often | 7 | 1.7 |
| Most times | 33 | 8 |
| Sometimes | 90 | 21.9 |
| **Tried killing myself due to my parents problems** |  |  |
| Never | 376 | 91.5 |
| Often | 13 | 3.2 |
| Most times | 8 | 1.9 |
| Sometimes | 14 | 3.4 |

The result shows that 43(10.5%) of the respondents sometimes tried to kill themselves when they failed exams, 67(16.3%) sometimes tried to end their life when they face disappointment, 89(21.7%) sometimes considered suicide to solve their problems, 281(68.4%) never considered killing themselves during distress and 14(3.4%) sometimes tried killing themselves due to parents problems.

**Table 4b: History and Pattern of suicide ideation (continued)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| **Hear of completed suicide** |  |  |
| Never | 94 | 22.9 |
| Often | 67 | 16.3 |
| Most times | 22 | 5.4 |
| Sometimes | 228 | 55.5 |
| **Witness cases of completed suicide** |  |  |
| Never | 324 | 78.8 |
| Often | 17 | 4.1 |
| Most times | 13 | 3.2 |
| Sometimes | 57 | 13.9 |
| **Lost a colleague through suicide** |  |  |
| Never | 369 | 89.8 |
| Most times | 10 | 2.4 |
| Sometimes | 32 | 7.8 |
| **Attempted to kill myself when felt hopeless** |  |  |
| Never | 304 | 74 |
| Often | 12 | 2.9 |
| Most times | 23 | 5.6 |
| Sometimes | 72 | 17.5 |

The result shows 228(55.5%) sometimes hear of completed suicide cases, 324(78.8%) never witnessed cases of completed suicide, 369(89.8%) never lose a colleague through suicide and 72(17.5%) attempted to kill themselves when they felt hopeless.

**Table 5: Suggestion on suicide prevention strategy (continued)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency n=411** | **Percent** |
| Periodic evaluation of students | 407 | 99.0 |
| Public information and education | 350 | 85.3 |
| Counselling sessions for suicidal attempt survivors | 196 | 47.8 |
| Seminars for high risk students | 143 | 34.8 |
| Treatment of symptoms of anxiety, drug abuse and depression | 59 | 14.4 |

The result shows that 407(99.0%) suggested period evaluation of students, 350(85.3%) mentioned public information and education, 196(47.8%) suggested counselling sessions for suicidal attempts survivors and 143(34.8%) mentioned seminars for high risk students.

**Figure 1: Prevalence of suicide ideation**

The graph shows that 45.7% of the respondents had suicide ideation

**Table 6: Factors associated with suicide ideation**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Suicide ideation** | | **X2(p-value)** |
|  | **No n(%)** | **Yes n(%)** |  |
| **Sex** |  |  |  |
| Male | 116(66.3) | 59(33.7) | 17.765(<0.001)\* |
| Female | 107(45.3) | 129(54.7) |  |
| **Age group** |  |  |  |
| ≤24 years | 80(41.9) | 111(58.1) | 22.010(<0.001)\* |
| >24 years | 143(65.0) | 77(35.0) |  |
| Religion |  |  |  |
| Christian | 214(55.0) | 175(45.0) | 1.669(0.196) |
| Islam | 9(40.9) | 13(59.1) |  |
| **Year of study** |  |  |  |
| ≤ Third year | 58(43.3) | 76(56.7) | 9.648(0.002)\* |
| ≥ Fourth year | 165(59.6) | 112(40.4) |  |
| **Income group** |  |  |  |
| ≤15000 | 126(57.5) | 93(42.5) | 2.028(0.154) |
| >15000 | 97(50.5) | 95(49.5) |  |
| **Family type** |  |  |  |
| Monogamy | 181(52.6) | 163(47.4) | 2.291(0.130) |
| Polygamy | 42(62.7) | 25(37.3) |  |
| **Residence** |  |  |  |
| On campus | 51(47.2) | 57(52.8) | 2.922(0.087) |
| Off campus | 172(56.8) | 131(43.2) |  |
| **No of siblings** |  |  |  |
| ≤3 | 89(50.9) | 86(49.1) | 1.420(0.233) |
| >3 | 134(56.8) | 102(43.2) |  |
| **Marital status** |  |  |  |
| Single | 200(53.1) | 177(46.9) | 2.677(0.102) |
| Married | 23(67.6) | 11(32.4) |  |
| **Parents marital status** |  |  |  |
| Single/Widowed | 68(64.2) | 38(35.8) | 5.633(0.018)\* |
| Married | 155(50.8) | 150(49.2) |  |
|  |  |  |  |

The factors associated with having suicide ideation were sex (X2=17.765, p<0.001), age group (X2=22.010, P<0.001), year of study (X2=9.648, P=0.002) and parents marital status (X2=5.633, P=0.018) were significantly associated with having suicide ideation.

**Table 7: Factors associated with suicide ideation (continued)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Suicide ideation** | | **X2(p-value)** |
|  | **No n(%)** | **Yes n(%)** |  |
| **Number of friends** |  |  |  |
| ≤2 | 32(36.4) | 56(63.6) | 14.447(<0.001)\* |
| >2 | 191(59.1) | 132(40.9) |  |
| **Friends support** |  |  |  |
| Low | 44(47.3) | 49(52.7) | 2.337(0.126) |
| Moderate/high | 179(56.3) | 139(43.7) |  |
| **Academic standing** |  |  |  |
| ≤ Third class | 14(38.9) | 22(61.1) | 3.755(0.053) |
| ≥ Second class lower | 209(55.7) | 166(44.3) |  |
| **Carry over** |  |  |  |
| No | 160(56.5) | 123(43.5) | 1.902(0.168) |
| Yes | 63(49.2) | 65(50.8) |  |
| **Academic pressure** |  |  |  |
| No | 10(100.0) | 0(0.0) | 8.641(0.003)\* |
| Yes | 213(53.1) | 188(46.9) |  |

The result shows that the number of friends (X2=14.447, p<0.001) and academic pressure status were significantly associated with suicide ideation,.

**Table 8: Predictors of suicide ideation (continued)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **COR(95% C.I.)** | **AOR(95% C.I.)** |
| **Sex** |  |  |
| Female | 2.4(1.6-3.6) | 2.1(1.3-3.2)\* |
| Male R |  |  |
| **Age group** |  |  |
| ≤24 years | 2.6(1.7-3.8) | 2.2(1.4-3.5)\* |
| >24 years  R |  |  |
| **Year of study** |  |  |
| ≤ Third year | 1.9(1.3-2.9) | 1.6(0.9-2.5) |
| ≥ Fourth year  R |  |  |
| **Parents marital status** |  |  |
| Married | 1.7(1.1-2.7) | 1.4(0.8-2.4) |
| Single/Widowed  R |  |  |
| **Number of friends** |  |  |
| ≤2 | 2.6(1.6-4.1) | 2.8(1.7-4.7)\* |
| >2 R |  |  |

\**Statistical significance, COR-crude odds ratio, AOR-Adjusted odds ratio R-Reference category*

The significance predictors of having suicide ideation were Sex (AOR=2.1, 95% CI; 1.3-3.2), age group (AOR=2.2; 95% CI=1.4=3.5) and number of friends (AOR=2.8, 95% CI;1.7-4.7).