



## Sociodemographics, Perceived Prejudice, and Suicidal Behaviors among College Students

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College students who believe that most people hold negative views of those seeking mental health treatment (i.e., perceived public prejudice) have increased odds of past-year suicidal thoughts and suicide planning and attempts. The risk of suicidal behavior is also higher among those who identify as Black, female, a sexual minority, or Asian international students.

Researchers used data from the Healthy Minds Study, an annual online survey of U.S. college student demographics, mental health status and service use, and help-seeking behaviors. The study used data from 153,635 respondents who completed the survey between 2007 and 2018. Respondents answered questions about demographics and past-year suicidal thoughts and suicide planning and attempts. To measure perceptions of public prejudice, respondents rated how strongly they agreed with statements like, "Most people think less of a person who has received mental health treatment."

After controlling for depressive symptoms, perceived public prejudice was significantly associated with greater odds of 12-month suicidal thoughts and suicide planning and attempts. College students who identified as Asian international or Black were significantly more likely than White students to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months. Odds of past-year attempts were also higher for females and sexual minority youth.

With suicide as the second leading cause of death among college students, it is essential to understand the factors linked to suicidal behaviors in this population. These results highlight a need to address perceived prejudice related to mental health on college campuses and support students who identify as non-White, female, or a sexual minority.

Goodwill, J. R. & Zhou, S. (2019). Association between perceived public stigma and suicidal behaviors among college students of color in the U.S. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. Advance online publication. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.10.019> [1]

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[1] <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.10.019>

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# Suicide Prevention Resource Center

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