Cyberbullying, Social Networking, and Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents

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A study found that 11- to 20-year-old Canadian youth who used social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) were at increased risk for cyberbullying victimization, which in turn placed them at increased risk for psychological distress, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation.

Cyberbullying was shown to fully account for the association between social networking and psychological distress and suicide attempts, and partially account for the association between social networking and ideation. According to the authors, these findings indicate that addressing cyberbullying among adolescents who use social networking sites may help to reduce the risk of mental health problems.

The authors also identified two important topics for further research: (1) additional factors that may explain the risk of suicidal ideation among young people who use social networking sites, and (2) the mechanisms connecting cyberbullying to the risk of suicidal behaviors. They suggested that adolescents who use social networking sites to cope with loneliness and depression may be more vulnerable to victimization by cyberbullies.