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CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

CPSP study examines self-harm as predictor of suicide

The investigators of a new Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) study hope that data on self-harm help lead to the creation of a national youth suicide prevention strategy.

“Suicide is responsible for more deaths among adolescents in Canada than cancer, or any of the other top ten medical causes of death in this age group combined,” said Dr. Daphne Korczak, principal investigator of the study, and a psychiatrist at the Hospital for Sick Children.

The upcoming study will examine patterns of presentation, clinical features and associated medical needs of children and youth who are hospitalized in the intensive care unit after harming themselves.

With very little available data on medically serious self-harm as a predictor of suicide among children and youth, this study has the potential to fill critical knowledge gaps.

“Mental health problems present differently in children and youth than they do in adults,” said Dr. Rachel Mitchell, a psychiatrist at University of Toronto and a study co-investigator. “This is the first study to even attempt to get a conservative incidence rate of medically serious self-harm in this age group.”

The study will gather data about the magnitude of the problem, associated health care costs, patient outcomes, and will attempt to identify possible preventive measures.

“Suicide is responsible for more deaths among adolescents in Canada than cancer, or any of the other top ten medical causes of death in this age group combined.”

Dr. Daphne Korczak

“We simply do not have enough youth suicide prevention research in Canada to guide us in making decisions about effective prevention and intervention strategies,” said Dr. Korczak.

Investigators hope to inform decisions about resource allocation and service delivery, as well as to advocate for children at high-risk of death from self-harm.

“Those with mental health problems are at higher risk for suicide,” said Dr. Mitchell. “If we can understand which mental health problems have the highest risk of suicide, we can better monitor the risk of suicide and we can determine how and when to intervene more effectively to prevent it.”

For more information on CPSP, visit www.cpsp.cps.ca

Are We Doing Enough? A status report on Canadian public policy and child and youth health

The 5th edition of *Are We Doing Enough? A status report on Canadian public policy and child and youth health* will soon be available. The report rates provinces and territories on how well they are promoting the health and safety of children and youth through legislation and policy. In addition to charting progress since the 2012 edition, the report assesses new topics like breastfeeding promotion, child death review and the management of type 1 diabetes in schools. The CPS has also produced tools to help members use the report for local advocacy. Visit: www.cps.ca/en/advocacy-defense.