Steroid Use and School Violence, School Violent Victimization and Suicidal Ideation among Adolescents

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School Health Overview

- Problem Behaviors
  - School Violence
    - 85% of schools
    - Physical force / attacks
    - Weapons
  - School Violent Victimization
    - Rates higher at school than away from school
  - Suicidal Ideation
    - 6% to 17%

Significance to School Health

- Risks
  - Low levels of perceived school safety
  - Poor academic performance
  - Decreased school attendance
  - Conduct problems
  - Failure to thrive
  - Long-term mental health problems
  - Suicidal ideation may lead to self-harming action
Background

- Steroids and Problem Behaviors
  - Greater involvement in violent behavior outside of school
  - Score higher on violence scale compared to those who never use
  - Evidence is lacking regarding victimization
    - Associated with low self-esteem, emotional instability
    - Steroid users 4 times more likely to have suicidal ideations

Purpose

- Investigate whether previous year school violence, school violent victimization and suicidal ideation among 9th to 12th grade students differs based on steroid use and select demographic characteristics
  - What is the extent of school violence, school violent victimization and suicidal ideation among adolescents?
  - Do involvement in school violence, school violent victimization, and suicidal ideation differ based on steroid use?
  - Do involvement in school violence, school violent victimization, and suicidal ideation differ based on demographic variables including:
    - What percentage of the variance in school violence, school violent victimization and suicidal ideation is accounted for by steroid use, sex, grade, race, and ethnicity?

Procedures

- Participants
  - 38,414 students from 133 Greater Cincinnati Schools
  - Sex
    - Male (n = 18,424); female (n = 19,192); none reported (n = 798)
  - Grade level
    - 9th (n = 11,100), 10th (n = 10,206), 11th (n = 9,424) and 12th (n = 7,684)
  - Race
    - White (n = 30,546); African American (n = 3,255); Other (n = 3,749)
  - Ethnicity
    - Non-Hispanic (n = 32,886); Hispanic (n = 1,630)
Procedures

2014 PRIDE Questionnaire

• Steroid Use
  • “Within the past year, how often have you used steroids”
  • 8-point scale dichotomized (0 = did not use; 1 = used)

• School Violence
  • 6 questions - “While at school have you…(past year)?”
  • Dichotomized (No & Yes)

• School Violent Victimization
  • 5 questions - “While at school have you…(past year)?”
  • Dichotomized (No & Yes)

• Suicidal Ideation
  • “have you thought about committing suicide?”

Data Analyses & Findings

Analyses

• Frequency Distributions
• Logistic Regression

Past Year Steroid Use
2.6% (n = 986)

School Violence
32% (n = 12,032)

School Violent Victimization
29% (n = 10,247)

Suicidal Ideation
32% (n = 12,089)

Findings

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Results

• Violent behavior at school
  • Steroid Use (7 times more likely to be perpetrators)
  • Males
  • Freshman/Sophomore
  • African American (2x) & other minority groups
  • Hispanic students
    • 3.5% to 5.5% of the variance

• Steroid Use (5 times more likely to be victims)
  • Lower grade level
  • African American
  • Hispanic
    • 2.5% to 3.6% of the variance

Results

• Suicidal Ideation
  • Steroid Use (3 times greater risk)
  • Females
  • Other minority races
    • 2.6 to 3.6% of the variance
Conclusions

• Moderate rates of steroids use
• High Rates of School Violence, School Violent Victimization and Suicidal Ideations
• Steroid use significantly increased odds for all 3 problem behaviors
• Demographic characteristics may influence involvement in problem behaviors
• Only a small percentage of the variance was accounted for by the models
• Identification of additional risk and protective factors for school violence, school violent victimization and suicidal ideation is important to future prevention and intervention efforts.
• Findings from this study may be beneficial to schools, health professionals, and prevention specialists

Recommendations

• Theory
• More in depth look at school violence, school victimization and suicidal ideations
• Examination of psychosocial and motivational factors
• Post-survey interviews, focus groups and longitudinal studies
• Involve school, parents and peers in prevention and intervention efforts
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