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FREQUENCY OF SUICIDAL IDEATION AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS IN GERMAN ADOLESCENTS FROM A SCHOOL SAMPLE

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Objective: This study aimed to examine the lifetime-prevalence of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and depressive symptoms in a community sample of non-referred German adolescents.

Method: The Self Harm Behavior Questionnaire (SHBQ) and the German version of the Center for Epidemiological studies-Depression scale (CES-D) were used to assess suicidal ideation, suicide threats, suicide attempts, and depression scores in a German school sample (n=665; age range:14-17; mean age: 14.81; SD: 0.66).

Results: Lifetime suicidal ideation was reported by 239 (35.94 %) students, of whom 102 had planned an attempt and 41 had already started preparations. 104 (15.64 %) students reported, that they had at least once in their lifetime threatened others to commit suicide. Actually conducted suicide attempts were reported by 43 (6.47 %) students, of whom only five reported, that they had received medical treatment after their attempt. Depression scores were elevated in adolescents reporting suicidal ideation (mean CES-D score: 21.92; $p < .0001$) and suicide attempts (mean CES-D score: 22.86; $p < .0001$).

Conclusion: In accordance with international prevalence rates, suicidal ideation is a common phenomenon among adolescents. A small proportion of a school sample, with elevated levels of depressive symptomatology, reports suicide attempts. This fact highlights the need for awareness and prevention programmes within the school context.