



Exploring the Nexus: Tobacco Use and Suicide Risk in Elementary School-aged Children

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INTRODUCTION

Tobacco is highly toxic and poses significant health risks to individuals who use it. The main toxic component of tobacco is nicotine, a highly addictive substance that affects the central nervous system. Nicotine can lead to addiction, making it challenging for individuals to quit using tobacco products. The use of tobacco products among elementary school-aged children is a concerning issue with far-reaching implications, including its potential correlation with suicide attempts. While it may seem surprising to associate such a serious outcome with young children, research has highlighted the interconnectedness of these behaviours and their impact on mental health outcomes.

DESCRIPTION

Studies have shown that early initiation of tobacco use, whether through experimentation or exposure to second hand smoke, can contribute to a range of negative health outcomes in children. These may include respiratory problems, cardiovascular issues, and increased susceptibility to addiction later in life. Moreover, the use of tobacco products at a young age can also be a marker for underlying psychosocial issues or environmental stressors that may contribute to mental health challenges. When examining the relationship between tobacco use and suicide attempts among elementary school-aged children, it's essential to consider the multifaceted nature of these behaviours. While tobacco use itself may not directly cause suicide attempts, it can be a contributing factor within a broader context of risk factors and vulnerabilities. One aspect to consider is the impact of nicotine on brain development. Nicotine, a highly addictive substance found in tobacco products, can alter brain chemistry, particularly in developing brains. This can affect impulse control, decision-making abilities, and mood regulation, all of which are factors that can influence the risk

of engaging in risky behaviours such as self-harm or suicide attempts. Additionally, the social and environmental factors associated with tobacco use can also contribute to the risk of suicide attempts among children. Children who are exposed to tobacco use within their households or communities may experience increased stress, conflict, or feelings of alienation, which can contribute to poor mental health outcomes and maladaptive coping strategies. It's important to note that while there may be correlations between tobacco use and suicide attempts among elementary school-aged children, causality cannot be definitively established without further longitudinal research and comprehensive assessments of individual risk factors. Factors such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, access to mental health resources, and exposure to other risk behaviours must also be considered in understanding the complex interplay between tobacco use and mental health outcomes in this age group. Addressing the issue of tobacco use and its potential association with suicide attempts among elementary school-aged children requires a multifaceted approach. This includes implementing comprehensive tobacco prevention programs in schools and communities, promoting smoke-free environments, educating parents and caregivers about the dangers of tobacco use and second hand smokes exposure, and enhancing access to mental health resources for children who may be at risk.

CONCLUSION

Moreover, fostering open and supportive environments where children feel comfortable discussing their feelings, concerns, and experiences is crucial in early intervention and prevention efforts. By promoting positive coping skills, resilience, and healthy behaviors, we can work towards reducing the prevalence of tobacco use and mitigating its potential impact on mental health outcomes, including the risk of suicide attempts among elementary school-aged children.

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