

Objectives: The aim of this study was to identify risk factors and possible predictors of severity of suicidal behavior of children and adolescents.

Methods: Seventy-seven patients (15 boys and 62 girls) aged 15.5–16.6 years on average, hospitalized due to a suicidal attempt in the department of pediatric psychiatry, were examined. Structured interviews with patients and their parents were used to clinically assess circumstances of suicidal behavior, relevant risk factors and severity of suicidal behavior.

Results: The results indicated that patients with any previous traumatic experience tended to have somatically less severe suicidal attempts ($p = 0.050$). Intensity of suicidal intent was associated with a history of depression ($p = 0.014$) and anxiety disorders ($p = 0.004$), and the current stress from a mental disorder ($p = 0.014$). Somatic severity of suicidal behavior was significantly associated with intensity of suicidal intent ($p = 0.014$). A history of any trauma (previous traumatic experience predicted less severe suicidal behavior, $p=0.053$) and the current stress from sexual problems ($p=0.067$) were identified as predictors of somatic severity of suicidality. These two predictors showed only a trend level of significance. The only significant predictor of intensity of suicidal intent was the current stress from a mental illness ($p=0.017$).

Conclusions: Several risk factors of somatic severity of suicidal behavior and intensity of suicidal intent were described. The most important finding of the study was the association between a history of psychological trauma and a tendency to have less somatically severe suicidal behavior.