

Suicide
Grade 11/Year 12
Fast Track Project Technical Report
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Citation

Instrument

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). (1994). *Suicide*. Chapel Hill, NC: Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Report

Kersteter, S. (2004). *Suicide (Fast Track Project Technical Report)* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fasttrackproject.org/>

Data Sources

Raw: C12AA

Scored: SUI12

I. Scale Description

The Suicide measure is a 7-item self-administered audio-assisted instrument based on a scale used in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. No current reliability and validity information is available. Fast Track added the measure to the child instrument battery in study year 8. The measure assesses whether the child has contemplated or attempted suicide during the past year, and whether a family member or a friend has attempted suicide over the last year. Only students who reported one or more suicide attempts were then asked about whether they received medical treatment. Only students who reported that a friend or a family member attempted suicide were asked the two items that assessed whether any of them succeeded.

II. Report Sample

These analyses were conducted with the first cohort on the control sample (n=155) and on the normative sample (n=387, N = 463 with overlap) during the twelfth year of the study. Overall, 118 records were missing the whole measure. Forty-three were missing from the control sample (5 from Durham, 17 from Nashville, 9 from Pennsylvania, and 12 from Washington) and 105 were missing from the normative sample (14 from Durham, 39 from Nashville, 23 from Pennsylvania, and 29 from Washington).

III. Scaling

For the items in this instrument, there is no obvious scoring. Most items are naturally dichotomous (e.g., either a yes or no answer). Only students who reported thoughts of suicide were asked the subsequent item that assesses the number of suicide attempts. This item is measured on a 4-point scale where 0 = 0

times, 1 = 1 time, 2 = 2 or 3 times, 3 = 4 or 5 times, and 4 = 6 or more times. Only students who reported one or suicide attempts were then asked about whether they had received medical treatment. Only students who reported that a friend or family member had attempted suicide were asked the two items (items 5 and 7) that assessed whether any of them succeeded.

The design of this measure allows certain questions to be skipped if the respondent answered “no” to the previous question. If the child answered “no” to question 1, he/she skipped to question 4. If the child answered “no” to question 4, he/she skipped to question 6. If the child answered “no” to question 6, he/she was asked no additional questions. Although no values were entered for the skipped questions, these are not considered missing data; rather, because of the “no” response to the preceding question (question 1, 4, or 6), the responses to the questions 2 and 3, 5, and 7, respectively, are actually “no.” For the purposes of these technical report analyses, if a respondent answered “no” to question 1, his/her answers to questions 2 and 3 were considered to be “no” and coded as a “0”. Likewise, if a respondent answered “no” to question 4, his/her answer to question 5 was considered to be “no” and coded as a “0,” and if a respondent answered “no” to question 6, his/her answer to question 7 was considered to be “no” and coded as a “0.”

IV. Differences Between Groups

Chi-square tests of independence were used to assess the differences between the high-risk control and normative groups for item 1 (During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously think about committing suicide?), item 3 (Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?), item 4 (Have any of your friends tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?), item 5 (Have any of them succeeded?), item 6 (Have any of your family tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?) and item 7 (Have any of them succeeded?).

The frequency distribution of item 1 (C12AA1) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA1 by group			
C12AA1 (During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously think about committing suicide?)	Group		Total
	Control	Normative	
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent			
0 (no)	100	227	327
	28.99	65.80	94.78
	30.58	69.42	
	89.29	97.42	
1 (yes)	12	6	18
	3.48	1.74	5.22
	66.67	33.33	
	10.71	2.58	
Total	112	233	345
	32.46	67.54	100.00
Frequency Missing = 118			

With $\chi^2 (1, N = 345) = 10.1329$, $p < 0.0015$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 1 was rejected for these data. Over 10 percent of the high control group responded that they had seriously considered committing suicide during the past 12 months compared to less than 3 percent of the normative group.

The frequency distribution of item 3 (C12AA3) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA3 by group			
C12AA3 (Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?)	Group		Total
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent	Control	Normative	
0 (no)	105 31.34 31.44 99.06	229 68.36 68.56 100.00	334 99.70
1 (yes)	1 0.30 100.00 0.94	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	1 0.30
Total	106 31.64	229 68.36	335 100.00
Frequency Missing = 128			

With χ^2 (1, N = 335) = 2.1668, $p < 0.1410$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 3 was not rejected for these data.

The frequency distribution of item 4 (C12AA4) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA4 by group			
C12AA4 (Have any of your friends tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?)	Group		Total
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent	Control	Normative	
0 (no)	99 28.78 32.78 88.39	203 59.01 67.22 87.50	302 87.79
1 (yes)	13 3.78 30.95 11.61	29 8.43 69.05 12.50	42 12.21
Total	112 32.56	232 67.44	344 100.00
Frequency Missing = 119			

With χ^2 (1, N = 344) = 0.0562, $p < 0.8126$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 4 was not rejected for these data.

The frequency distribution of item 5 (C12AA5) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA5 by group			
C12AA5 (Did any of them [friends] succeed?)	Group		Total
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent	Control	Normative	
0 (no)	105 30.52 32.41 93.75	219 63.66 67.59 94.40	324 94.19
1 (yes)	7 2.03 35.00 6.25	13 3.78 65.00 5.60	20 5.81
Total	112 32.56	232 67.44	344 100.00
Frequency Missing = 119			

With $\chi^2 (1, N = 344) = 0.0577$, $p < 0.8102$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 5 was not rejected for these data.

The frequency distribution of item 6 (C12AA6) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA6 by group			
C12AA6 (Have any of your family tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?)	Group		Total
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent	Control	Normative	
0 (no)	112 32.46 32.84 100.00	229 66.38 67.16 98.28	341 98.84
1 (yes)	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	4 1.16 100.00 1.72	4 1.16
Total	112 32.46	233 67.54	345 100.00
Frequency Missing = 118			

With $\chi^2 (1, N = 345) = 1.9453$, $p < 0.1631$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 6 was not rejected for these data.

The frequency distribution of item 7 (C12AA7) among the control and normative samples was:

Table of C12AA7 by group			
C12AA7 (Have any of them [family] succeeded?)	Group		Total
Frequency Percent Row Percent Column Percent	Control	Normative	
0 (no)	112 32.46 32.84 100.00	230 66.67 67.25 98.71	342 99.13
1 (yes)	0 0.00 0.00 0.00	3 0.87 100.00 1.29	3 0.87
Total	112 32.46	233 67.54	345 100.00
Frequency Missing = 118			

With χ^2 (1, N = 345) = 1.4547, $p < 0.2278$, the hypothesis of independence between risk category (normative or control) and item 7 was not rejected for these data.

A t-test was used to examine group differences for item 2 (During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?). Analysis revealed that for the normative and high-risk control groups, there are significant differences for this item ($p = 0.0543$). The mean for the control group is higher than the mean for the normative group (0.09 versus 0.02), which indicates that the control group youth made more suicide attempts than their normative counterparts.

Comparison of Variable Means for Normative and Control							
Variable	Normative		Control		DF	t Value	Pr > t
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev			
C12AA2 – During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?	0.02	0.24	0.09	0.41	343	1.93	0.0543

V. Recommendations for Use

Most items in this measure are straightforward in use and interpretation. The low number of subjects that reported suicide attempts by themselves or by friends or family members indicates that this measure should be used with caution. In addition, analysts should note that while items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 require a yes or no answer, item 2 responses range from 0 to 4. In addition, the item 2 responses 0 to 4 do not exactly represent the number of times that the child attempted suicide. Rather, 0 = 0 times, 1 = 1 time, 2 = 2 or 3 times, 3 = 3 or 4 times, and 4 = 5 or 6 times.

Analysts should also note that one child responded with an invalid response (4) to question C11AA4. For the purposes of these analyses, that response was converted to a missing response.

V1. Item and Scale Means and SD's

Descriptive Statistics for High Risk Control Sample						
Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
C12AA1	During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously think about committing suicide?	112	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00
C12AA2	During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?	112	0.09	0.41	0.00	3.00
C12AA3	Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?	106	0.01	0.10	0.00	1.00
C12AA4	Have any of your friends tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	112	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
C12AA5	Have any of them [friends] succeeded?	112	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00
C12AA6	Have any of your family tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	112	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C12AA7	Have any of them [family] succeeded?	112	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Descriptive Statistics for Normative Sample						
Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
C12AA1	During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously think about committing suicide?	282	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00
C12AA2	During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?	282	0.03	0.28	0.00	3.00
C12AA3	Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?	277	0.00	0.06	0.00	1.00
C12AA4	Have any of your friends tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	281	0.12	0.33	0.00	1.00
C12AA5	Have any of them [friends] succeeded?	281	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
C12AA6	Have any of your family tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	282	0.01	0.12	0.00	1.00
C12AA7	Have any of them [family] succeeded?	282	0.01	0.10	0.00	1.00

VII. Scale Correlations

Correlation for Full Sample

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Prob > r under H0: Rho=0 Number of Observations							
	C12AA1	C12AA2	C12AA3	C12AA4	C12AA5	C12AA6	C12AA7
C12AA1 – During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously think about committing suicide?	1.000 345	0.605 0.000 345	0.350 0.000 335	0.191 0.000 344	0.165 0.002 344	-0.025 0.638 345	-0.022 0.684 345
C12AA2 – During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?	0.605 0.000 345	1.000 345	0.168 0.002 335	0.092 0.089 344	0.127 0.019 344	-0.015 0.776 345	-0.013 0.806 345
C12AA3 – Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?	0.350 0.000 335	0.168 0.002 335	1.000 335	-0.020 0.721 334	-0.013 0.812 334	-0.006 0.913 335	-0.005 0.924 335
C12AA4 – Have any of your friends tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	0.191 0.000 344	0.092 0.089 344	-0.020 0.721 334	1.000 344	0.666 0.000 344	0.156 0.004 344	0.156 0.004 344
C12AA5 – Have any of them [friends] succeeded?	0.165 0.002 344	0.127 0.019 344	-0.013 0.812 334	0.666 0.000 344	1.000 344	0.244 0.000 344	0.244 0.000 344
C12AA6 – Have any of your family tried to kill themselves during the past 12 months?	-0.025 0.638 345	-0.015 0.776 345	-0.006 0.913 335	0.156 0.004 344	0.244 0.000 344	1.000 345	0.865 0.000 345
C12AA7 – Have any of them [family] succeeded?	-0.022 0.684 345	-0.013 0.806 345	-0.005 0.924 335	0.156 0.004 334	0.244 0.000 344	0.865 0.000 345	1.000 345