

Identification Early Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior Among Adolescents

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Abstract

Background: Increasing number of suicide cases, especially in adolescents, becomes problems that require serious treatment. Adolescence is a period of transition and hormonal development that can affect the emotions or mood. It is known that before attempting suicide, there are signs of language or linguistic such as verbal and nonverbal as an indication of the suicidal behavior action. **Purpose:** This systematic review aims to identify these signs based on the results of several studies. It is expected that the result can be used as basic data to identify signs and symptoms. **Methods:** Systematic literature searching was conducted in consultation with nursing librarians and linguistic, using Science Direct, Biomed Central and PubMed databases. The keywords used were: warning and suicide; verbal and non-verbal language of suicide and suicide in adolescents. **Results:** 12 articles related to the teenagers in suicide attempts keywords were found. **Conclusion:** Suicide signs revealed through verbal and non-verbal languages such as statements or communication that indicated desire to physically harm himself. This warning signs may include suicide notes, indirect threats, and immediate threats.

Keywords: Suicide; Adolescents; Coping Mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

This decade, suicide became global problem. According to Vitiello and Pearson (2008) suicide is expressed or implied potential self-defeating behavior to be death and psychiatric emergency due to someone being in high stress condition and using maladaptive coping. According to WHO (2016), almost 800,000 people die due to suicide every year. Worldwide, suicide have become the second-leading cause of death among adolescents. The results from Bagalkot et al (2014) in Korea, there is a rise in suicidal ideation to suicide attempts. The ideas of suicide from 15.5% increase to 24.8% and the suicide attempts from 3.2% increase to 6.2%. In Philippines, 2008, about 17.15% of high school students have suicidal ideation (Altangerel, Liou, & Yeh, 2013). This condition indicates that there is an

increase in suicide among adolescents. It starts just from the ideas become suicide attempt.

Adolescence is one of the transitional periods of human development. According to (World Health Organization, 2016, The United Nations, 2008), adolescence is a phase of human development from childhood to adulthood between the ages of 10-25 years and unmarried. According to Bridge, Goldstein, & Brent (2006), adolescence is a period characterized by disordered behavior and substance abuse such as; legal issues, aggressive behavior and drug use that trigger to engage in risky behavior. Adolescence is not always being a time of psychological upheaval, but it can be a time of vulnerability. Cho & Haslam (2010) said that one form of adolescent vulnerability is suicidal

ideation.

In South-East Asia and Indonesian Western Pacific, the prevalence of suicidal behavior in adolescent boys is 11.5% and 10.7% of girls with 5.4% of suicidal ideation and 5.0% of suicide plan. The results of research by Mckinnon, Gariépy, & Elgar (2016), in Indonesia, the number of suicides in adolescents is about 28.1%. According to Smischney, Chrisler & Villarruel (2014), deeply worrying survey results on adolescents in 2011 that conducted nationally in Indonesia, it is found that 15.8% of high school students have suicidal ideation, 12.8% have suicide plans, 7.8% have attempted suicide at least once and 2.4% receive medical treatment for injuries suffered as a result of attempted suicide. This suicidal behavior is done with various factors experienced by adolescents. This condition shows that suicidal behavior in the form of idea, plan and attempted suicide have become serious problem for teenagers in Indonesia nowadays.

The results of research by Anthony et.al (2012), about 14% of adolescents who will commit suicide convey their suicidal ideas, 23% convey their suicidal ideas to adults, 29% ask for help of adults and 15% do both of them. According to Pisani et al (2012) about 54% of students with suicidal ideas are often reveal their suicidal ideas to peers and 23% of students reveal their ideas to adults. It is necessary to prevent suicide attempts in adolescents, considering adolescents are at high-risk age in committing suicide (Townsend, 2009).

According to Stuart (2016), the signs that observed before suicide can be revealed through verbal and nonverbal language in form of suicide threat that can be revealed by themselves or revealed to others. The verbal and non-verbal warning signs of suicide risk behaviors are "Do you

remember me if I go", "Take care of my family", "I will not be here soon". The warning signs of suicide risk behavior can be identified by seeing and hearing someone's saying and doing things like; threatening to harm or kill himself, looking for ways to commit suicide by founding access to drugs or others, talking or writing about death or suicide, despair, acting recklessly or engaging in risky activity, feeling trapped and no way out, saying there is no reason to live, there is no purpose in life and speaking something different from usual character (Rudd et al., 2006)

According to (Rezaie, et, al 2011; Doan, et, al 2012), suicide is preventable. One of the suicide preventions is by identifying signs of suicide risk. Identifying signs of suicide risk is similar to identifying the risk of heart attack, in which the warning signs are having pain in the shoulders and arms, as well as with suicidal warning signs. The warning signs of suicidal behavior can be shown through behavior changes that are not in accordance with the character, conveying something through verbal and nonverbal expression such as; "I cannot stand it anymore.", "I am not good.", "They will be better without me", writing with the theme of death and suicide, body language that indicates closure or anxiety. Those indicates that a person conducting suicide risk behavior can be observed through linguistics.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this paper is to explore the linguistics manifested through verbal and non-verbal language in identifying warning signs of suicidal risk behavior in adolescents.

RESEARCH METHOD

Systematic literature searching was conducted in consultation with nursing librarians and linguistic, using Science Direct, Biomed Central and PubMed

databases. The keywords used were: warning and suicide; verbal and non-verbal language of suicide and suicide in adolescents. These keywords were used to obtain peer-reviewed research, systematic review and guidelines about warnings and suicidal signs in adolescents that reveal through established verbal and non-verbal languages. The research articles were included if they provided information about suicide alerts and warnings reveal through verbal and non-verbal communication. The articles were not included if they presented global data that were not directly related to the warning signs of suicide risk behavior. The search took 6 articles. The steps of the searching strategy are shown in Figure 1.

RESULT

Literature Search

Based on the results of literature search, 12 articles related to the teenagers in suicide attempts keywords were found. The following is the research result from Anthony et al (2012). It was found that about 14% of adolescents who would commit suicide gave suicidal ideas, 23% of adolescents conveyed suicidal ideas to adults, 29% of adolescents asked for adult help and 15% of adolescents did both. According to Pisani et al (2012) about 54% of students with suicidal ideas often reveal their suicidal ideas to peers and 23% reveal to adults. According to (Rezaie, et, al 2011; Doan, Lazear, LeBlanc, & Roggenbaum, 2012), one of the suicide preventions is by identifying signs of suicide risk. Identifying the signs of suicide risk is similar to identifying the risk of a heart attack, in which there are pain in the shoulders and neck, as well as with signs of suicide warning. The warning signs of suicidal behavior can be shown by behavior changes that are not in accordance with the character. The warning signs can be conveyed through verbal and nonverbal expression such as;

"I cannot stand it anymore.", "I'm not good anyway.", "They will be better without me.", writing with the theme of death and suicide, body language indicating closure or anxiety. These indicates that a person who commits suicide risk behavior can be observed through signs and warnings via linguistics.

The signs that can be observed before suicide are through verbal and non-verbal communication that are often as suicidal threats, the idea of suicide that can be revealed alone or revealed to others (Stuart, 2016). The warning signs of suicidal risk behavior can be identified when a person pronounces and does something like; threatening to self-harm, seeking ways to commit suicide by seeking access to drugs or other means, talking or writing about death and suicide, despair, acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities, feeling trapped and no way out, saying there is no reason to live, there is no purpose in life and sometimes communicating outside of original character (Rudd et al., 2006).

Bloomfield (2008) stated that psychologically before the expression is uttered, in the speakers, there is unphysically process, namely ideas, concepts, images, feelings, wills, and hearing therefore having corresponded or connected mental process. Hence, the mental process explains the meaning of communication form as special mental event that occurs in every speaker and hearer in connection with his utterance or expression he hears.

Language is a system, tangible symbol, sound, arbitrary, meaningful, conventional, unique, universal, productive, varied, dynamic, and human (Santoso, 2009). These warning signs can be distinguished from the clinical risk factors and symptoms that are appeared by the individuals to show the great risk

of committing suicide. These signs are a warning from someone who will commit suicidal behavior revealed through verbal and non-verbal language (Nock et al, 2008).

Hunter Institute of Mental Health (2005), an institution in Australia that deals with mental health, states that warning signs of verbal and non-verbal language of a suicide are personality changes and unnatural actions. Identified warning signs of a suicide are depression, crying, mood swings, obsessed with her friend's appearance, always try and be interested in everything, different personalities; such as not eating for days, a minute of crying, the next minute laughing, giving valuables as if feeling unnecessary, giving a will, talking as if going away forever.

Suandi & Indriani (2016) stated that verbal and nonverbal languages unite the whole effective communication process (Huang, 2011: 904). Wood (2010: 122) suggests that in communication, non-verbal behavior ranges 65% to 93% of the total meaning in communication. It is also stated by Preston, (2005) that communications' experts agree when two people engage face-to-face conversations, then the word-over message occupies only a small part of the communication process. Most of the conversation is dominated by the elements like tone of voice while the conversation' messages are conveyed through kinesis, combination of movement, posture, expression, and dressing.

As a communication tool, language is a systematic and systemic system. In the phase of a person committing suicidal behavior, there are cues of suicidal language, signs and symptoms of suicide. From that sign and symptoms, it can be known when the individual has an idea to end his life but not accompanied by threats and attempted suicide. Bloomfield

(2008) states that psychologically before language is spoken by speakers there is a process, namely ideas, concepts, images, feelings, wills, and hearing so that experiencing a corresponding or connected mental process. Therefore, the mental process can define the meaning of language in the form mental event that occurs in every speaker and hearer in connection with his utterance or the form of the language he hears.

According to Stuart (2016), the presence of direct or indirect warning, verbal or nonverbal language that a person plans to end his own life shows a sign given for suicidal behavior. Subjectively, there is an expression of guilt, sadness, anger, despair or helplessness, entrust a message to be abandoned, reveal negative things about himself. Objectively, he looks moody, sad, angry, crying, much silent, lack of eye contact, unsteady emotions, lack of sleep. In the phase of suicide threat, the client reveals to dead, reveals the plan to end life and the action to prepare the tool in committing the suicide plan.

From the results of Mandrusiak research, Rudd et al (2006) and Rudd et al (2006); Rudd (2008) explains that the signs and warnings conveyed by someone who committed suicidal behavior through verbal and non-verbal language can be identified such as; giving precious things to others, isolation, using of alcohol or drugs, changing in sleep cycle, indirect verbal statements (talking about death, if I die, I am not be a burden to the family, I feel useless to life, I feel trapped and cannot deal with it), dietary changes (death expectancy), loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities (hobbies, school, work). Mood changes are sometimes sad and sometimes laugh, sudden changes in suicidal threatening behavior by talking directly about killing himself, changing interest in school and work, careless in doing activities,

desperate, angry and anxious.

Scanlan and Purcell (2009) state that the easier signs to identify people committed suicide are threats to self-harm or suicide, looking for ways to commit suicide such as looking for access to pills, weapons, or others. Accidentally, hurting himself by injuring, cutting, or burning, talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, despair, rage, anger, revenge, acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities, seemingly mindless behavior, feeling trapped, like there is no way out, increasing the use of alcohol or drugs, withdrawing from friends, family or society, anxiety, agitation, changes in sleep or appetite, dramatic changes in mood, no reason to live, no purpose in life as a sign of suicidal behavior.

According to King and Platt (2017), the sign of suicide warning is a people perceives himself lacking social support, living alone, revealing unfocused life, troubles and chaotic thoughts. A person who risks suicide has high emotional and negative thoughts, such as; despair, helplessness, guilt, shame and always saying that "I am be a burden to others". Therefore, when a person engages in suicidal risk behavior there is a warning and signs that are communicated to the nearest person or the surroundings through verbal and non-verbal language.

CONCLUSION

Suicide signs revealed through verbal and non-verbal languages such as statements or communication that indicated desire to physically harm himself. This warning signs may include

suicide notes, indirect threats, and immediate threats. Potential places for teenagers to write suicide notes and express thoughts of suicide are in their diaries. The indirect suicide threat is often expressed in the form of desire. However, the teenagers show that it would be better if they die. The usual verbal expression of spoken words: "I wish I was dead," "Everyone would be better if I did not exist anymore," "If only I could sleep and never wake up again." The non-verbal expressions are looking moody, unwilling to socialize, sleeping disorders, depressed and anxious (Brock, 2004)

Suicidal signs and warnings will help when needed and functioned for long-term health. In the past decade, there have been calls to identify signs and warnings of suicidal behavior with the aims of improving early detection of suicidal behavior prevention, improving access to care and ultimately saving lives. Warning signs of suicidal behavior can be identified such as despair, anger, reckless behavior, feeling trapped, constantly blaming themselves, social withdrawal, agitation, sleep disorder, and losing will to live ("I feel useless"). Identification of warning signs of suicide can reduce the increase in suicidal behavior, such as; in minutes, hours, or days (Adler et al., 2016)

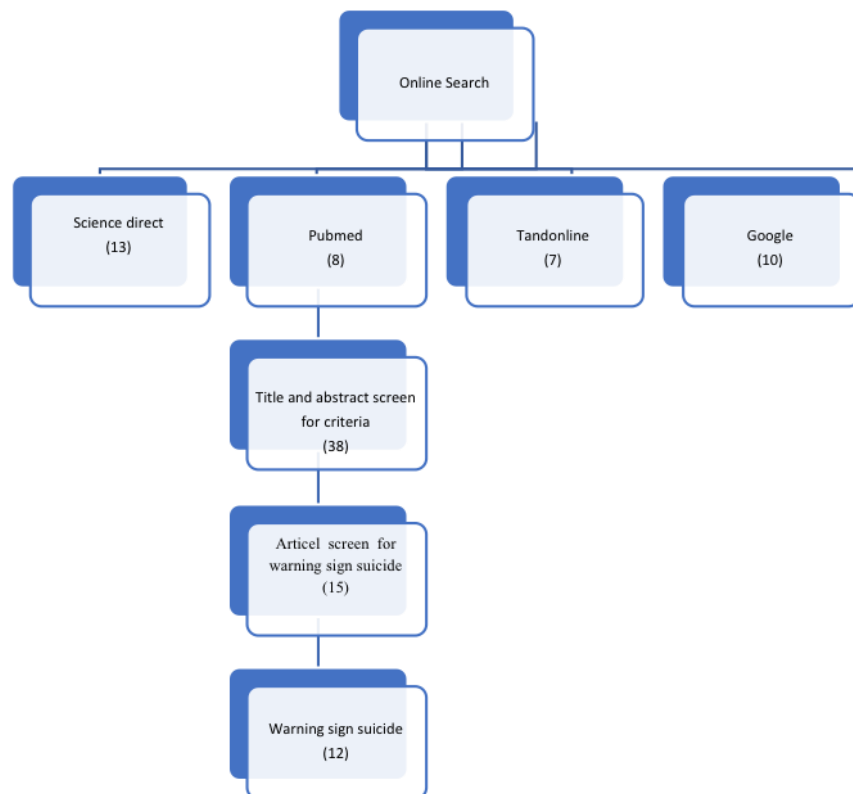


Figure 1: Searching Strategy

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