



EFFECTS OF BULLYING AND GENDER ON SUICIDE

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This study explores the gender differences in the bullying cases that lead to suicide as reported by the media. Special attention is given to providing context to these cases and discussing why there are or are not gender differences. The following potential questions will be addressed: what role does bullying play in these suicides; how does that bullying take place; how does this vary by gender; are there differences between the impact of different types of bullying; are there differences based on characteristics of the bully (i.e. are girls more likely to commit suicide when being bullied by other girls, etc.); and what other factors go into suicide for both males and females (i.e. problems at home, at school, abuse, etc.).

The data for this study involves newspaper reporting of suicides. It will involve a content analysis of these articles. We have selected the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and the Salt Lake Tribune as sources. A time period of five years was used. Case studies are identified by name of the person who committed suicide. Then, multiple stories were read and evaluated to determine and code multiple variables such as suicide method; demographic information; background information including family information; the presence of bullying; if there is evidence of bullying, then the type of bullying; information about the bullies themselves (stranger to the victim, friends of former friends of the victim); and other stressors that impacted the suicide.

Once the data was collected, it was coded and entered into an appropriate database. In addition to descriptive and bi-variate analysis, multivariate analysis will be employed to determine significant predictors and effects.

It is anticipated that we will find significant qualitative differences between male and females who commit suicide. We expect to see a disproportionate reporting of female suicides and will theorize why that might be the case. It is expected that males will be more likely to experience physical bullying and females more likely to experience psychological bullying. We also expect to find differences in the other stressors adding to the predictors of suicide. Moreover, we hope to see the role that social media in particular plays in these suicides and see if this varies between males and females. Finally, we hope to explore the role of who the bullies are: i.e. are different people bullying girls and boys and what impact does this have. Even if we do not find the gender differences we are hypothesizing, we will have an abundance of contextual information on the bulk of suicide cases that get media attention in the United States.

