

# 1 in 9 young adults report having attempted suicide, 1 in 6 report self-harm

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Researchers at the University of Glasgow report that 11.3 percent of young people report having attempted suicide and 16.2 percent report self-harm at some stage in their lives, according to a new study led by the University of Glasgow. 6.5 percent reported a history of both behaviours.

The research – published today in the *BJPsych Open* and led by the University's Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory – is the first of its kind in the UK to focus exclusively on the prevalence of [suicide attempts](#) and self-harm in [young adults](#) (18-34 year olds) in a large national study. This study is a collaboration between the Universities of Glasgow, Stirling, Leeds and Nottingham.

The large representative (and confidential) study sample of 3,508 young people from across Scotland also identified earlier age at onset as associated with more frequent self-harm and suicide attempts.

The first episode of self-harm tended to precede the first suicide attempt by about two years; and the study also found women are significantly more likely to report self-harm and suicide attempts compared to men.

Almost one quarter (22.8 percent) of young people also reported having thought about suicide at some stage in their lifetime and 10.4 percent reported they last thought about suicide in the past 12 months.

Lead author Prof Rory O'Connor, Chair in Health Psychology and Director of the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory at the University's Institute of Health and Wellbeing, said: "Suicide attempts and non-suicidal self-harm are major public health concerns that affect large numbers of young people.

"Until now, there have been few studies that estimated how common these thoughts and behaviours were in young adults in the country.

"These results are stark, and serve to highlight the scale of suicide attempts and self-harm in our country's young people.

"The findings are timely given that the Scottish Government will soon publish a new suicide prevention action plan. We hope our findings also

emphasise the importance to clinicians, and others involved in the care of [young people](#), to be vigilant given that [suicide](#) attempts and self-harm are relatively common."

The paper, "Suicide attempts and non-suicidal [self-harm](#): national prevalence study of young adults" is published in *BJPsych Open*.

**More information:** Suicide attempts and non-suicidal self-harm: national prevalence study of young adults. *BJPsych Open*. [DOI: 10.1192/bjo.2018.14](#)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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