

Thesis: Suicide and self-harm in university students and outcomes in persons with bipolar disorder and their offspring

February 2 2024



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Recent decades have seen an increasing proportion of the youth population engaging in university level education, and the university

period usually coincides with other important life events such as moving away from home. Early adulthood is furthermore a period when severe mental disorders, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, may become symptomatic.

In a [new thesis](#) from Karolinska Institutet, Christine Takami Lageborn explores vulnerability for suicide in [university students](#) and vulnerabilities linked to having a parent with bipolar disorder or having a diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

What are the most important results in your thesis?

"In summary, we could show that some subgroups in society are more vulnerable to suicide, [self-harm](#), and some also to a range of psychiatric and somatic conditions, accidents, injuries, difficulties in school, and criminal behavior. Those who have bipolar disorder, children of one or two parents with bipolar disorder, and women who study natural sciences or women and men who study nursing education at university may benefit from targeted support from health care, university student health services, and other social support services."

Why did you become interested in this topic?

"I got interested in [suicide prevention](#) when I worked as a journalist many years ago and met people who had lost loved ones to suicide. I believe that there is still much that can be done to decrease suicide rates in all age groups. For instance, many who die of suicide were never in contact with [psychiatric care](#).

"My interest in bipolar disorder started when I worked as a junior doctor in a psychiatric ward treating patients with bipolar disorder having either a manic or a depressive episode. People with bipolar disorder can be

vulnerable to suicide when experiencing mood episodes. But with the right treatment and support they may be able to live good, balanced lives. I think that it is important to keep in mind that seeking help and receiving a diagnosis of a mental disorder can be an important step on the path to better health."

What do you think should be done in future research?

"I think that involvement of people with lived experience in research projects is a positive development. I am grateful for the insights I have received from my patients with [bipolar disorder](#) and from reading texts by and listening to people with lived experience of suicide attempts.

"Also, I would like to see more research collaborations between psychiatry and somatic medicine. For instance, [emergency physicians](#) and physicians working in medical or surgical specialties are often the first to meet individuals after a suicide attempt. Yet, few clinical research projects on suicide attempts are conducted by or in collaboration with clinicians in these fields."

More information: On suicide and self-harm in university students and outcomes in persons with bipolar disorder and their offspring. openarchive.ki.se/xmlui/handle/10616/48905

Provided by Karolinska Institutet

Citation: Thesis: Suicide and self-harm in university students and outcomes in persons with bipolar disorder and their offspring (2024, February 2) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-thesis-suicide-university-students-outcomes.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.