

Most suicidal adolescents receive follow-up care after ER visits

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For suicidal adolescents, the emergency department (ED) is most often the chosen portal to mental health services. New research, presented Friday, Oct. 1, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in San Francisco, looks at what happens to the 30 percent of suicidal adolescents who are discharged from the ED and whether they go on to access additional mental health services.

In "Predictors of Mental Health Follow up Among Adolescents with Suicidal Ideation After [Emergency Department](#) Discharge," researchers followed up with parents and guardians of adolescents (ages 11 to 18 years) one month after their pediatric ED visit. The adolescents had been discharged after undergoing a suicide risk assessment by a physician and a mental health professional.

The parents were asked if their son or daughter had visited a mental health professional since their ED visit, and whether or not the child had required a subsequent visit to the ED resulting in inpatient psychiatric admission. Parents were also asked about previous mental health service experiences.

Two out of three patients had seen a mental health professional within two months after an initial ED visit. Adolescents who had already been diagnosed with a mental health condition were more likely to successfully seek follow-up care. One in five [adolescents](#) had returned to the ED and required inpatient psychiatric admission.

Overall, most parents characterized their [mental health care](#) experiences as favorable.

"We plan to use the results of this study to develop interventions that will focus on delivering appropriate and effective mental health services to these high-risk teenagers," said lead study author Brad Sobolewski, MD, FAAP.

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