

A Cross-Sectional Study to Assess Suicide Awareness and Prevention Knowledge Among College Students Through Online Survey

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Abstract

Background: Suicide is one of the main causes of mortality for young adults and a significant global public health problem. College students may be more susceptible to suicide thoughts and actions due to a variety of academic, social, emotional, and financial difficulties. Suicide risk can be decreased and mental health can be enhanced by having sufficient awareness and understanding about suicide prevention.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach with a descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Data were collected through an online survey from 200 college students selected using convenience sampling. A structured questionnaire consisting of demographic variables and knowledge-related items on suicide awareness and prevention was utilized. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: The findings revealed that 22% of participants had poor knowledge, 48% had moderate knowledge, and 30% had good knowledge regarding suicide awareness and prevention. Significant associations were found between knowledge scores and educational level ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study concluded that although most students possessed moderate awareness regarding suicide prevention, there remains a need for educational interventions to improve understanding and promote help-seeking behavior among college students.

Keywords: Suicide Awareness, Suicide Prevention, College Students, Mental Health, Knowledge Assessment, Online Survey

Introduction

Suicide is a complex and multifaceted public

health issue that affects individuals, families, communities, and societies worldwide. It is

recognized as one of the leading causes of mortality among adolescents and young adults, particularly in the age group commonly represented in colleges and universities.¹

Young adults often encounter multiple developmental, academic, and psychosocial challenges during their college years. These challenges may include academic stress, relationship difficulties, financial constraints, social isolation, substance abuse, and uncertainty regarding future career opportunities. Such factors may contribute to emotional distress and increase the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior.²

The World Health Organization has identified suicide as a preventable public health problem and emphasizes the importance of awareness, early identification, and timely intervention.³ Suicide prevention requires a coordinated approach involving educational institutions, healthcare professionals, families, and communities. Increased awareness can help individuals recognize warning signs and seek professional assistance when needed.⁴

Many misconceptions and myths regarding suicide continue to exist among young people. Some individuals believe that discussing suicide may encourage suicidal behavior, whereas evidence suggests that open communication and appropriate support can facilitate prevention and early intervention.⁵

Educational institutions play a vital role in promoting mental health literacy and suicide prevention. College students who possess adequate knowledge regarding warning signs, risk factors, and available support services are more likely to assist peers in distress and seek help for themselves.⁶

Studies conducted across different countries have demonstrated varying levels of awareness regarding suicide prevention among university students. Although many students have basic knowledge, gaps often remain concerning risk assessment, crisis intervention, and referral services.⁷

Mental health promotion programs, awareness

campaigns, counseling services, and peer-support initiatives have shown effectiveness in enhancing knowledge and reducing stigma associated with mental illness and suicide.⁸

The increasing utilization of online platforms offers opportunities to assess knowledge and awareness among students efficiently. Online surveys facilitate large-scale data collection while ensuring participant convenience and anonymity.⁹

Understanding the current level of suicide awareness among college students is essential for planning targeted educational interventions. Such evidence can assist policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals in developing strategies to strengthen suicide prevention efforts within academic settings.¹⁰

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess suicide awareness and prevention knowledge among college students through an online survey.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess suicide awareness and prevention knowledge among college students.
2. To categorize students according to their level of knowledge.
3. To determine the association between knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

Hypotheses

H₁: There will be a significant association between suicide awareness and prevention knowledge scores and selected demographic variables among college students.

H₀: There will be no significant association between suicide awareness and prevention knowledge scores and selected demographic variables among college students.

Methodology

The study used a quantitative research technique to evaluate college students' knowledge of suicide prevention and awareness. An online questionnaire was used to gather data from 200 convenience-sampled individuals in a descriptive cross-sectional study.

Research Approach

Quantitative research approach.

Research Design

Descriptive cross-sectional survey design.

Setting of the Study

Various colleges where students participated through an online survey platform.

Population

College students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Sample Size

200 college students.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique.

Inclusion Criteria

- Students aged 18 years and above.
- Students willing to participate.
- Students having internet access.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students unwilling to participate.
- Incomplete survey responses.

Tool for Data Collection

Section A: Demographic Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Educational level
- Stream of study
- Previous exposure to mental health education

Section B: Structured Knowledge Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire consisting of 25 multiple-choice questions regarding:

- Suicide concepts
- Warning signs
- Risk factors
- Protective factors
- Prevention strategies
- Mental health services
- Crisis intervention

Scoring Criteria

Knowledge Level	Score (%)
Poor	<50
Moderate	50 – 75
Good	>75

Validity and Reliability

The tool was validated by experts in psychiatric nursing and mental health. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha method ($r = 0.84$).

Ethical Considerations

- Ethical approval obtained.
- Informed consent secured electronically.
- Confidentiality maintained.
- Participation was voluntary.

Data Analysis

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Chi-square test

Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the data gathered from 200 college students in order to determine their level of suicide awareness and prevention knowledge. The results are displayed in tables based on knowledge scores, relationships between research factors, and demographic traits.

Table 1: Distribution of Participants According to Age (N=200)

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
18–20	90	45
21–23	75	37.5
24–26	25	12.5
>26	10	5

Interpretation: Most participants (45%) belonged to the age group of 18–20 years.

Table 2: Knowledge Level Regarding Suicide Awareness and Prevention (N=200)

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	44	22
Moderate	96	48
Good	60	30

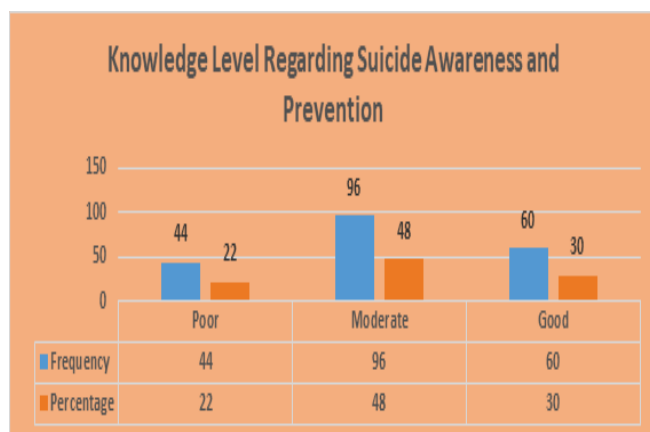


Figure 01: Knowledge Level Regarding Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Interpretation: The majority of students (48%) had moderate knowledge regarding suicide awareness and prevention.

Table 3: Mean Knowledge Score (N=200)

Variable	Mean	SD
Knowledge Score	17.8	4.2

Interpretation: The overall mean knowledge score was 17.8 ± 4.2 .

Table 4: Association Between Knowledge Level and Educational Level

Educational Level	χ^2 Value	p-value
Undergraduate/Postgraduate	8.52	0.014

Interpretation: A statistically significant association was found between educational level and knowledge score ($p < 0.05$).

Final Results

The study revealed that nearly half of the participants (48%) had moderate knowledge regarding suicide awareness and prevention, while

30% demonstrated good knowledge and 22% had poor knowledge. Educational level showed a significant association with knowledge scores. These findings indicate the need for enhanced mental health education programs among college students.

Discussion

According to the current survey, the majority of college students had a moderate understanding of suicide awareness and prevention. Kumar et al. found that university students had modest levels of mental health literacy.

The results also showed a substantial correlation between knowledge scores and educational level. Higher educated students had a greater comprehension of suicide prevention strategies. Similar findings were reported by Sharma and Singh¹², who discovered that exposure to education had a favorable impact on mental health awareness.

Even with greater information availability, a sizable percentage of participants showed insufficient understanding of warning indicators and intervention techniques. This result validates other studies highlighting the necessity of organized mental health education initiatives in educational establishments.¹³

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, college students have a moderate understanding of suicide and how to avoid it. But there are still a lot of unanswered questions about risk factors, warning indications, and available support systems. To increase college students' understanding of suicide prevention, educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and counseling services should be reinforced.¹⁴

Recommendations

1. Conduct regular suicide awareness programs in colleges.
2. Introduce mental health education modules within academic curricula.
3. Strengthen campus counseling services.
4. Organize peer-support and mentorship programs.

5. Conduct longitudinal studies on suicide prevention interventions.
6. Replicate the study with larger and more diverse samples.

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Conflicts of interests: There is no conflict of interest

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