

Big rise in self-harm among girls

21st October, 2017



There has been a steep rise in reports of self-harm among young teenage girls in the United Kingdom. A new study from the British Medical Journal reports that more and more girls aged 13 to 16 suffer from self-inflicted harm. Researchers from

the University of Manchester looked at data on nearly 17,000 patients from more than 600 doctors' surgeries. The researchers found that there was a 68 per cent increase in self-harm among 13- to 16-year-old girls over the three-year period of the study. During the same period, rates stayed constant among 10- to 12-year-old girls and 17- to 19-year-olds. The study said self-harm rates among girls are three times higher than those for boys.

Doctor Nav Kapur, study author and professor of psychiatry and population health, said increasing stress and psychological problems were probably what was fuelling the trend. He said: "We must take self-harm seriously. It's important to understand its underlying causes." A UK children's charity said: "Self-harm can often be an expression of a deeper problem, which is why early intervention services to support these children are vital. Without this, the consequences really can be a matter of life or death." Self-harm is one of the biggest risk factors for suicide among teens. Suicide is now the second most common cause of death in the under-25s worldwide.

Sources: bbc.com / medicalxpress.com / newscientist.com

Writing

Teenage years are the hardest in our lives. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

steep / rise / teenage girls / self-harm / data / surgeries / three years / period / rates / author / psychiatry / trend / charity / problem / seriously / consequences / suicide

True / False

- The article reported on a slight rise in self-harm among teenage girls. T / F
- The girls reported on were aged between 13 to 16. T / F
- There was a 68% increase in self-harm in some girls over three years. T / F
- There is three times more self-harm in girls than in boys. T / F
- A professor said social media was fuelling this trend. T / F
- The professor said it was important to know why teenage girls lied. T / F
- A charity suggested that self-harm could be fatal. T / F
- Suicide takes the lives of more under-25-year-olds than anything else. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. steep | a. emotional |
| 2. study | b. reason |
| 3. increase | c. fundamental |
| 4. consequences | d. report |
| 5. cause | e. prevalent |
| 6. psychological | f. sharp |
| 7. fuelling | g. essential |
| 8. underlying | h. rise |
| 9. vital | i. results |
| 10. common | j. stimulating |

Discussion – Student A

- What difficulties do teenage girls have?
- Why do people harm themselves?
- How big a problem is this in your country?
- Why do you think there has been a steep rise?
- Why are 13-16-year-olds the biggest group of self-harmers?
- Why are girls bigger self-harmers than boys?
- How difficult was life for you at the age of 15?
- What advice do you have for 15-year-old girls?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. There has been a steep rise | a. life or death |
| 2. suffer | b. constant |
| 3. looked at data on | c. are three times higher |
| 4. rates stayed | d. trend |
| 5. self-harm rates among girls | e. from self-inflicted harm |
| 6. professor of psychiatry | f. underlying causes |
| 7. fuelling the | g. in reports of self-harm |
| 8. It's important to understand its | h. cause of death |
| 9. be a matter of | i. nearly 17,000 patients |
| 10. the second most common | j. and population health |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What stresses do young girls have today?
- Do you think life was easier for teenagers 50 years ago?
- What would you do if your friend was self-harming?
- What do you know about self-harming?
- What stresses do you have in your life?
- How can we reduce the level of suicide?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- a psete rise
- British Medical alonrJu
- self-ldifneitc harm
- doctors' egerursis
- During the same dioerp
- rates stayed tnaosctn
- professor of spytachyir
- what was llgefinu the trend
- understand its dyelrniugn causes
- an ersspnoix of a deeper problem
- early nnirvtneeti
- the biggest risk factors for csieiud

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. h	4. i	5. b
6. a	7. j	8. c	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Parents

You think parents are the best people to help young teenage girls. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people aren't as good. Also, tell the others who of these would be the least effective (and why): teachers, best friends or counselors.

Role B – Teachers

You think teachers are the best people to help young teenage girls. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people aren't as good. Also, tell the others who of these would be the least effective (and why): parents, best friends or counselors.

Role C – Best Friends

You think best friends are the best people to help young teenage girls. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people aren't as good. Also, tell the others who of these would be the least effective (and why): teachers, parents or counselors.

Role D – Counselors

You think counselors are the best people to help young teenage girls. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people aren't as good. Also, tell the others who of these would be the least effective (and why): teachers, best friends or parents.

Speaking – Help

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways for teenage girls to get help at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| • parents | • grandparents |
| • teachers | • doctors |
| • cousins | • counselors |
| • best friends | • other _____ |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.