

ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to determine factors which are responsible for the high suicide rate among adolescents and young adults.

The census was taken from admission to a Health Institution in South Trinidad - The San Fernando General Hospital. An instrument based on the research questions was designed to yield the necessary data for completion of the research study. Seventy-five clients between the ages 9 years to 24 years were visited at home, interviewed and instruments completed by the researcher. The data was collated and analyzed with the aid of the computer programme SPSS Windows and a manual scientific calculator.

The study revealed that East Indians (60%) were the most represented Ethnic group and they resided in the rural areas. Male to female ration was 1:2.

The risk and precipitating factors identified are family instability (40%) emotional problems (29.6%), financial difficulties (24%), peer pressure (22.4%) and conflict with parents and family members (38.4%). Unemployment (12%) and lovers quarrel (12%) was also prevalent.

Ingestion of tablets (50.7%) was the most common means of para-suicide, followed by weedicide and insecticide (26.6%).

The victims identified support from family members/significant others and counselling being the main strategy for healing.

These findings have important public health implications in planning and developing programmes for the health and support of adolescent and young adult. This may necessitate the joint effort of politicians, community leaders, parents, significant others, teachers, religious leaders and health workers.