

CASE-study 2001 and follow up 2007 in Denmark

Introduction:

The CASE-study (Child and Adolescent Self-harm in Europe) has been initiated and carried out in Denmark and several other European countries in 2001-2002. However, data become outdated fast due to the rapid changes in the youth culture, often in concurrence with the rapid electronic developments. Therefore, a repetition of the CASE-study was carried out in 2006-2007.

Objective:

The objective is to obtain a snapshot image of the adolescents' vulnerability, considerations of self-harm and self-harming behaviour, and thereupon initiate research-based prevention at the schools.

Method:

Electronic questionnaire. In total, 8,502 adolescents at the upper forms (age 15 – 17), 4,019 parents, and 305 teachers completed the questionnaire.

Results

From 2002 to 2007, the number of vulnerable adolescents had risen from 20% to 23%. In the 2002-study, there were twice as many girls than boys in the group of vulnerable adolescents. In 2007, the total group of vulnerable adolescents consisted of one quarter boys and three quarter girls.

More than every third girl and every tenth boy experience serious thoughts about self-harming actions, without acting upon it. Characteristically, those who consider self-harm are predominantly girls of a Western background who live with only one parent. The present results emphasize family as a protective factor against vulnerability, yet 7% of the vulnerable adolescents do not believe that they matter much to their family. Analysis shows that for boys, school problems as a risk factor has risen from 2002 to 2007.

13.6% of all adolescents commit self-harm. There are far more girls (22.1%) than boys (4.8%) who have committed self-harm. The majority has not spoken to anyone before committing self-harm, because they are afraid that they would not be heard. Furthermore, they think that no one can help them.