



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Relationship between suicide ideation and attempts, bully victimization, dating violence, and depressive symptoms among Black and Hispanic youth

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## Abstract

**Background:** Suicide rates among Black and Hispanic youth have been increasing over the past decade in the United States. The objective of this study was to identify risk factors for suicide ideation and attempt among Black and Hispanic youth in the United States using intersectionality theory and minority stress theory as a framework.

**Methods:** Data from the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS; 2015–2019) were analyzed and delimited to include only Black and Hispanic youth.

**Results:** About 37% of the subsample identified as Black and 63% of the subsample identified as Hispanic; mean age was 16 years (SE = 0.02). Weighted multivariate logistic regressions were used to explore associations between suicide ideation and attempt, depressive symptoms, bullying, dating violence, and being threatened with a weapon. Black and Hispanic youth who had depressive symptoms, experienced bullying, dating violence, or threatened with a weapon all had increased odds of having suicide ideation and suicide attempt. Hispanic youth had the higher odds of suicide ideation and attempt than Black youth. Girls in the study also had elevated odds of suicide ideation.

**Conclusion:** This study adds to the literature on risk factors of suicide in Black and Hispanic youth and bringing to awareness the gender disparities in suicide ideation and attempt among youth.

## KEYWORDS

Black adolescents, bullying, dating violence, Hispanic adolescents, suicide ideation

## INTRODUCTION

Death by suicide is a major public health crisis as it has become the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15–24 and the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10–14 (Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, [n.d.](#)). Historically, White youth experience higher rates of suicide and research has mostly centered around their experiences (Joe et al., 2008). However, over the past few decades, suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior among Black and Hispanic youth have risen. Between 1999 and 2018, suicide rates for Black children

aged 10–17 increased by 87% and the suicide rates for Hispanic children in the same age group increased by 63% (Heron, 2019). The 2019 CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) indicated that Black (11.8%) and Hispanic (8.9%) youth compared with White non-Hispanic youth (7.9%) attempted dying by suicide. Another recent study reported that suicide attempts among Black high school students increased by 73% between 1991 and 2017 (Lindsey et al., 2019). Additionally, Lindsey et al. (2019) found that approximately 15% of Black and 18% of Hispanic youth report suicidal thoughts in the past year.

Adolescent girls in the United States have consistently higher rates of suicide ideation and suicide attempts, but adolescent boys are more likely to die by suicide (Lindsey et al., 2019; Nock et al., 2008). However, there are significant gender disparities in suicide for Black and Hispanic youth. The rate of suicide among adolescent Black girls has increased by 182% between 2001 and 2017 (Price & Khubchandani, 2019). For Black boys, research demonstrates a significant increase in injury by attempt, suggesting that Black boys may be engaging in increasingly lethal means when attempting suicide (Lindsey et al., 2019). Similarly, rates of suicide are rising among Hispanic girls more than boys, with girls having higher rates (Silva & Van Orden, 2018). In addition, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are more common in Latina adolescents as compared to White adolescents (De Luca et al., 2023; Price & Khubchandani, 2017). Due to this alarming trend, it is essential that suicide researchers aim to utilize an intersectional lens in understanding risk factors for suicide that can inform practice and policy.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK— INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY & MINORITY STRESS THEORY**

Opara, Assan, et al. (2020) noted a lack of intersectional thinking in current theoretical frameworks of suicide and encouraged the utilization of intersectionality in discussions of suicide. Intersectionality theory posits that an individual's multiple identities interact and intersect to shape personal experiences (Crenshaw, 1991) and at times form “intersecting oppressions ... that work together to produce injustice” (Collins, 2000, p. 18). Opara, Assan, et al. (2020) noted a lack of intersectional thinking in current theoretical frameworks of suicide and encouraged the utilization of intersectionality in discussions of suicide. However, studies often lack an inclusion of intersectionality at the start of the study, making it difficult to measure the impact of belonging to intersecting marginalized identities that can impact the experience of ethnic minority individuals (Abrams et al., 2020; Opara, Assan,

et al., 2020). Because Black and Hispanic youth have a complex social location within the U.S. system, they may be operating in a society, which further causes harm that may increase their likelihood of attempting and dying by suicide. A useful theory that can aid in understanding this phenomenon is minority stress theory (MST) which posits that marginalized and oppressed groups experience unique and excessive stress (e.g., stigma, prejudice, discrimination, bullying, victimization, and violence exposure), above and beyond the everyday stressor in the general population, due to their minority identity or status (Meyer, 2003). In applying MST, both Black and Hispanic youth may be at an increased risk of suicidal ideations and attempts as they experience disproportionate, unique, and often prolonged stress, to which their minority status may be associated with barriers to accessing resources to effectively cope. Even more concerning can be the double jeopardy involving the intersecting of race and gender that minority groups may face (Millar & Brooks et al., 2022). For example, Black and Hispanic girls may face greater exposures to minority stressors given gendered stereotypes that perpetuate harm and influence gender-based violence toward these groups (Opara et al., 2022). Such a disparity may explain their higher rates of suicide ideation and attempts (Lindsey et al., 2019). Cultural pathways for suicide identify minority stressors (e.g., stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and violence exposure) as key risk factors for suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among racial/ethnic minorities (Chu et al., 2020). Several additional studies have found minority stress theory as a relevant framework in understanding suicide vulnerability among racial/ethnic minority adolescents (Baiden et al., 2020; Erausquin et al., 2019). Although poor mental health has been consistently associated with likelihood of suicide attempts and ideation, other risk factors that have been understudied among Black and Hispanic youth include bully victimization, dating violence, and exposure to violence. The use of intersectionality and minority stress theory as a framework allows for the acknowledgement of minority stressors that uniquely impact youth of color, while highlighting the role of intersecting identities and its impact on their experiences.

### **Bully victimization and suicide ideation and attempts**

Bully victimization or peer victimization are defined as recurrent unwanted harmful and antagonistic behaviors by a peer or group of peers that can be verbal, relational, or physical and take place at a variety of places such as schools, in the community, and through electronic forms (Arango et al., 2016). Other characteristics of peer

victimization are the bully's intention to cause harm, the imbalance of power between the bully and victim, and the repetition of the victimization (van Geel et al., 2014). Multiple studies have found that bullying victimization is related to suicide ideation and suicide attempts among youth (Arango et al., 2016; van Geel et al., 2014). In a meta-analysis, youth who were bullied had 2.23 times the odds of suicide ideation and 2.55 times the odds of attempting suicide (van Geel et al., 2014).

Race and ethnicity can also play a significant role in victimization among adolescents. Notably, youth report being bullied due to characteristics of their identity (perceived or real), such as race and ethnicity (Lunde et al., 2007). Research on racial and ethnic differences in the prevalence of bullying victimization has yielded mixed findings. Some studies have found that minoritized racial and ethnic youth have a greater risk of being bullied (Albdour & Krouse, 2014; Rhee et al., 2017), and other studies have concluded no racial/ethnic differences (Seals & Young, 2003). In contrast, studies have found that Black and Hispanic youth experience lower incidences of bullying victimization and are less likely to be bullied than White youth (Juvonen et al., 2003; Mueller et al., 2015; Pontes et al., 2018; Spriggs et al., 2007). Similarly, recent literature on the association between race/ethnicity, bullying victimization, and suicidality suggest intersectional identities increase risks for suicidal ideations, with this relationship being slightly weaker among Hispanic bisexual female adolescence than their White heterosexual peers (Mueller et al., 2015). However, research suggests that minority youth tend to underreport their bullying victimization experiences and less frequently endorse being a victim of bullying (Sawyer et al., 2008). Considering mixed findings, further research examining the association between bullying victimization and suicide is warranted to ensure effective and culturally informed prevention strategies.

## Threatened by a weapon

Bullying victimization frameworks often include the action of being threatened with a weapon as a main component (Couture et al., 2022; Smith & Reidy, 2021). Being threatened by a weapon can increase risks of suicide ideation as well among youth and may be overlooked as a significant risk factor for Black and Hispanic youth. Among sexual minority youth, being threatened or injured with a weapon at school mediated the relationship between gender and suicide risk (Smith & Reidy, 2021). Another study conducted among youth in the United States showed that not only was being threatened by a weapon associated with suicide ideation but also associated with poor mental health outcomes and substance use (Couture et al., 2022).

As exposure to violence can be traumatic for Black and Hispanic youth and lead to feelings of hopelessness, it is important to note that being exposed to and threatened by guns and other weapons (e.g., knife) can equally pose an increased risk of suicide ideation and attempt among Black and Hispanic youth (Price & Khubchandani, 2019). However, there is limited research studying the association between threatened by weapon and violence and suicide ideation and attempt among Black and Hispanic youth.

## Dating violence and suicide ideation and attempts

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines dating violence as a type of intimate partner violence that can have physical violence, sexual violence, psychological aggression, or stalking and can happen in person, online, or through technology (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022). Approximately 8.3% of United States high school students experienced physical dating violence (CDC, 2022), and those who are victims of physical dating violence have increased odds of suicide ideation (Nahapetyan et al., 2014). As most of the research for dating violence among youth is of white youth, the limited studies that looked at race and ethnicity and dating violence have found that Black and Hispanic youth have higher prevalence of dating violence than their white peers (Eaton & Stephens, 2018). A recent systematic review found racial- and ethnic-specific factors that were identified as barriers to youth seeking help when experiencing dating violence, underscoring the importance of understanding dating violence from an intersectional perspective (Padilla-Medina et al., 2022). Furthermore, Olshen et al. (2007) found gender differences in the relationship between dating violence and suicide attempts.

## Mental health

Ninety percent of youth that attempt suicide have one or more major psychiatric disorders, with depression being the most prevalent among this age group (Gould et al., 2003). However, research has indicated the difficulty in ethnic minority youth, including Black and Hispanic youth, in receiving adequate access to mental health care. Black and Hispanic youth are less likely to receive a diagnosis and mental health treatment than White youth in the United States (Opara et al., 2021; Bridges et al., 2010). For Black and Hispanic youth, access to mental health services is limited as these services are often inaccessible or unavailable in neighborhoods where Black and Hispanic

youth are most likely to reside (Cook et al., 2013; Opara, Lardier, et al., 2020; Opara et al., 2021). There is further evidence that intersections of race, culture, social class, neighborhood, and other factors such as racial discrimination impact depressive symptoms among Black and Hispanic youth and contribute to further racial disparities in mental health.

Mental health stigma and medical mistrust within the Black and Hispanic community may further contribute to disparities in mental health (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013; Pederson et al., 2022; Sudhinaraset et al., 2022). Although prior suicide attempt is one of the strongest predictors of suicide death, especially among male youth, little is known of the specific race and gender disparities that may contribute to death by suicide among Black and Hispanic youth (Gould et al., 2003; Thompson & Swartout, 2018). Specifically, among Hispanic youth, issues pertaining to acculturation can have a unique impact on their mental health and ability to cope, as studies have found that acculturation is associated with depression among Hispanic youth (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2012).

This study aims to use national data to understand the correlates of suicide among Black and Hispanic youth and to highlight risk factors that may contribute to suicide among these groups. We hypothesize that findings will indicate a disparity in suicide ideation among Black and Hispanic youth who have experienced bullying, dating violence and exhibit poor mental health symptoms.

Results from the study aim to contribute significantly to the literature on suicide research among Black and Hispanic youth in order to inform race- and ethnicity-specific prevention research and programming.

## METHODS

### Participants

Data from the 2015, 2017, and 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) cycles were aggregated and used for this analysis. The YRBSS is a biennial cross-sectional survey administered to middle and high school students, which captures data on six categories of health-related behaviors (i.e., behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection, alcohol and other drug use, tobacco use, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and inadequate physical activity) that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among adolescents. The survey employs a sampling design that ensures national representation of demographic groups. Inclusion criteria for the

study were only youth who identified as Black or Hispanic resulting in an analytic sample size of 176,221 youth (weighted analytic  $n=12,900,814$ ) across the 3 years of survey data. Only high school student data were used for this analysis for consistency of questions asked. Data used for this secondary analysis are deidentified and publicly available; thus, no protocol approval from an institutional review board was necessary. A greater discussion of the YRBSS methodology is provided in Brener et al. (2013).

## Measures

### Outcome

#### *Suicide ideation*

The YRBSS asked students “During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?” (considered suicide) and “During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?” (planned suicide). Responding “yes” to either of these questions was considered suicide ideation; responding “no” to both questions was considered no suicide ideation.

#### *Suicide attempt*

The YRBSS asked students “During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?”; responses included one time, two or three times, four or five times, and six or more times. Participants were considered as endorsing a suicide attempt if they attempted at least one time.

### Predictors

#### *Depressive symptoms*

The YRBSS asked students “During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”; responses included “yes” and “no.” As prolonged sadness and hopelessness are just some of the symptoms of depression or a depressive episode, this variable was used as an indicator of depressive symptoms; the YRBSS did not ask any other question about mental health. This variable does not measure depression as a diagnosis.

#### *Sexual or physical dating violence*

The YRBSS asked students “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do? (Count such things as kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse.)” and

“During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose? (Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon).” Students could report 0 times up to 6 or more times; reporting at least once to either question was considered experiencing sexual or physical dating violence (“yes”); responding 0 times to both questions was considered not experiencing sexual or physical dating violence (“no”). Those who reported that they did not date were excluded from the analysis.

#### *Bullying or cyberbullying victimization*

The YRBSS asked students “Have you ever been bullied on school property?” and “Have you ever been electronically bullied? (Count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.)” Responding “yes” to either of these questions was considered bullying victimization; responding “no” to both was considered no bullying victimization.

#### *Threatened with a weapon on school property*

The YRBSS asked students “During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?”; students could report 0 times up to 12 or more times. Reporting being threatened at least once was considered threatened (“yes”); responding 0 times was considered not threatened (“no”).

#### *Demographics*

Students reported their age ranging from 12 to 18 years, their sex as male or female, and their race as non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, or Other. For the purposes of the multivariate analyses, only the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic youth subsamples were used.

#### *Procedure*

A subsample of only Black and Hispanic youth across 2015, 2017, and 2019 was used for this analysis. Univariate analyses described the distribution of demographics, predictors, and suicide ideation and attempt. Bivariate tests (t-tests and chi-square) determined any statistical associations. Multivariable logistic regression models determined odds of suicide ideation and attempt among non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic youth, respectively (i.e., two models), with depressive symptoms, bullying victimization, dating violence, threatened with a weapon, sex, and age as predictor variables. Appropriate sampling weights were applied, and survey estimations were implemented to account for the sampling design (Underwood et al., 2020). Analyses were conducted

using Stata statistical software version 17.0 (College Station, TX).

## RESULTS

The YRBSS 2015–2019 sample of Black (weighted  $n=4,786,570$ ) and Hispanic (weighted  $n=8,114,244$ ) youth (total weighted  $n=12,900,814$ ) had a mean age of 16 years (linearized standard error [SE]: 0.02) and was 50% female (weighted  $n=6,435,591$ ), 37% Black, and 63% Hispanic. Twenty-one percent (weighted  $n=2,710,706$ ) of the restricted sample reported suicide ideation; around 9% ( $n=\text{weighted } n=1,113,778$ ) reported at least one suicide attempt. Around 35% (weighted  $n=4,334,860$ ) of the sample reported feeling sad or hopeless in the past 2 weeks of taking the survey, 21% (weighted  $n=2,587,184$ ) reported any form of bullying victimization, 10% (weighted  $n=974,553$ ) reported any form of sexual or physical dating violence, and 8% (weighted  $n=1,027,264$ ) reported being threatened with a weapon on school campus (Table 1).

Among those who experienced suicide ideation, 76% had depressive symptoms, 44% experienced any form of bullying victimization, 37% experienced any form of sexual or physical dating violence, and 18% were threatened with a weapon ( $p<0.05$  for all respective statistics). Among those who reported suicide attempt, 70% had depressive symptoms, 44% experienced any form of bullying victimization, 42% experienced any form of sexual or physical dating violence, and 22% were threatened with a weapon ( $p<0.05$  for all respective statistics; Table 2).

After adjusting for bullying, sexual or physical dating violence, threatened with a weapon, sex, and age, Black youth who had depressive symptoms had 6.36 times the odds (95% CI: 5.51–7.33) of having suicide ideation and 3.70 times the odds (95% CI: 2.95–4.64) of having a suicide attempt. The weighted adjusted odds of suicide ideation and attempt for Black youth that had an experience of being bullied increased by a factor of 2.74 (95% CI: 2.30–3.28) and 2.03 (95% CI: 1.69–2.44), respectively. Black youth that experienced dating violence had 2.64 times the odds (95% CI: 2.28–3.07) of suicide ideation and 2.48 times the odds (95% CI: 1.93–3.17) of suicide attempt, after adjustment. Black youth who had experienced being threatened or injured with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property had 2.64 times the adjusted odds (95% CI: 2.28–3.07) of suicide ideation and 1.67 times the adjusted odds (95% CI: 1.24–2.26) of suicide attempt. There was also a significant increase in the adjusted odds of suicide ideation (1.49; 95% CI: 1.30–1.72) for female Black youth compared with males; odds were not significant for sex and suicide attempt for Black youth (Table 3).

**TABLE 1** Demographics of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System 2015–2019 Black and Hispanic youth sample (weighted  $n = 12,900,814$ ).

	<b>Weighed <math>n</math> (weighted %)</b>
Age (mean (linearized SE))	16.0 (0.02)
Sex	
Male	6,435,591 (50.1)
Female	6,403,809 (49.9)
Race	
Non-Hispanic Black	4,786,570 (37.1)
Hispanic	8,114,244 (62.9)
Suicide ideation	
Yes	2,710,706 (21.0)
No	9,037,322 (70.1)
Suicide attempt	
Yes	1,113,778 (8.6)
No	8,997,786 (69.8)
Missing/nonresponse	2,789,250 (21.6)
Depressive symptoms (yes)	4,334,860 (34.5)
Any bullying victimization	
Yes	2,587,184 (20.6)
No	9,954,945 (79.4)
Any sexual or physical dating violence <sup>a</sup>	437,870 (7.6)
Yes	974,553 (9.7)
No	4,898,297 (48.9)
Missing/nonresponse	4,151,457 (41.4)
Threatened with a weapon	
Yes	1,027,264 (8.4)
No	11,262,264 (91.6)

Note: Missing observations presented if missing > 10%.

Abbreviation: SE, standard error.

<sup>a</sup>Does not include those that did not date.

After adjusting for bullying, sexual, or physical dating violence, threatened with a weapon, and gender, Hispanic youth who had depressive symptoms had 8.16 times the odds (95% CI: 6.98–9.53) of having suicide ideation, and 4.01 times the odds (95% CI: 3.30–4.86) of having suicide attempt. Hispanic youth that had an experience of being bullied (OR: 2.67; 95% CI: 2.21–3.20), experienced sexual or physical dating violence (OR: 2.44; 95% CI: 2.03–2.93), had an experience where they were threatened or injured on school property (OR: 1.36; 95% CI: 1.07–1.72), all had increased adjusted odds of having suicide ideation. In addition, they also had increased adjusted odds of suicide attempt if they experienced bullying (OR: 2.06; 95% CI: 1.63–2.60), dating violence (OR: 2.27; 95% CI: 1.87–2.76), or being threatened or injured on school property (OR: 2.28; 95% CI: 1.80–2.90). Female Hispanic youth had 1.18 times the adjusted odds (95% CI: 1.04–1.34) of suicide ideation compared with Hispanic male youth. Increased age was a protective factor for ideation and attempt for Hispanic youth (OR: 0.93; 95% CI: 0.88–0.98 and OR: 0.93; 95% CI: 0.97–0.99, respectively); in other words, younger Hispanic youth were at greater risk of ideation and attempt (Table 4).

Table 5 shows the results of the interaction analysis looking at the intersection of gender and mental health on suicide ideation and attempt. Among Black youth, in comparison with boys without depressive symptoms, girls with depressive symptoms had 10 times greater odds of ideation (OR: 9.70, 95% CI: 7.93–11.97) and four times greater odds of attempt (OR: 4.34, 95% CI: 3.38–5.59). Similar odds were found for girls with depressive symptoms among Hispanic youth, in comparison with boys without depressive symptoms (OR: 9.94, 95% CI: 8.04–12.31) and four times greater odds of attempt (OR: 3.88, 95% CI: 3.01–5.01). Black and Hispanic boys (respectively) with depressive symptoms also had higher odds of ideation and attempt compared with boys without depressive symptoms.

**TABLE 2** Bivariate associations with suicide ideation and attempt among Black and Hispanic youth (weighted  $n = 12,900,814$ ).

	<b>Weighted column proportions</b>			
	<b>Suicide ideation (endorsed)</b>	<b><math>p</math></b>	<b>Suicide attempt (at least once)</b>	<b><math>p</math></b>
Age (mean (linearized SE))	15.8 (0.04)	<0.001	15.9 (0.03)	<0.001
Sex				
Male	38.1%	<0.001	40.1%	<0.001
Female	61.9%		59.9%	
Depressive symptoms (yes)	75.8%	<0.001	70.4%	<0.001
Any bullying victimization (yes)	44.2%	<0.001	43.8%	<0.001
Any sexual or physical dating violence (yes)	36.5%	<0.001	42.2%	<0.001
Threatened with a weapon (yes)	17.8%	<0.001	22.2%	<0.001

Note: complete case analysis used (only available data).

Abbreviation: SE, standard error.

**TABLE 3** Multivariate logistic regression analysis of suicide ideation and suicide attempt for Black youth by sadness, any bullying incident, any dating violence, any incident of being threatened, sex, and age.

Black youth (weighted $n = 4,786,570$ )	Suicide ideation		Suicide attempt	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<b>Depressive symptoms</b>				
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	6.36	5.51–7.33	3.70	2.95–4.64
<b>Any bullying victimization</b>				
During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied (including on school property or electronically [i.e., texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media])?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	2.74	2.30–3.28	2.03	1.69–2.44
<b>Any sexual or physical dating violence</b>				
During the past 12 months, did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things you did not want to do? (Count things such as kissing, touching, or physically forcing to have sexual intercourse.)				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	2.64	2.28–3.07	2.48	1.93–3.17
<b>Threatened with a weapon</b>				
During the past 12 months, has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	2.64	2.28–3.07	1.67	1.24–2.26
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	Ref.		Ref.	
Female	1.49	1.30–1.72	1.18	0.98–1.09
<b>Age</b>				
	0.90	0.85–0.94	1.01	0.95–1.08

Abbreviations: CI, confidence interval; OR, odds ratio.

## DISCUSSION

Drawing on intersectionality theory and minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003; Opara, Assan, et al., 2020), this study examined the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity on suicidality among a sample of Black and Hispanic adolescents. Results from the study highlight specific risk factors that not only were found to be associated with suicide ideation and attempt but also the gender disparities that exist. First, the findings indicated that over 20% of the sample reported suicide ideation, and 9% reported at least one suicide attempt. Notably, the proportion of Black and Hispanic youth in the study who experienced suicide ideation or attempted suicide in the current study is higher than those found in past national data (Joe et al., 2009; Romero et al., 2018), which suggest that additional concern and attention toward suicide among Black and Hispanic youth is a critical public health priority. Additionally, these findings support the importance of cultural models

of suicide prevention and intervention strategies (Goldston et al., 2008; Opara, Assan, et al., 2020; Opara, Lardier, et al., 2020).

Furthermore, after adjusting for other factors, Black and Hispanic youth who had depressive symptoms, experienced any form of bullying, past sexual or physical dating violence, or were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, had consistently higher odds of suicide ideation and attempts. Our findings support previous literature that has demonstrated a link between depression (Brooks et al., 2021; Gould et al., 2003; Matlin et al., 2011), bullying victimization (Arango et al., 2016; Romero et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014), and dating violence (Nahapetyan et al., 2014), with increased suicide risk for adolescents and young adults. For Black and Hispanic youth who experience symptoms of depression or are a victim of bullying or violence due to perceived racism, discrimination, or other culturally specific factors, these youth may also be at an increased risk for suicide (Opara, Assan, et al., 2020).

Hispanic youth (weighted $n = 8,114,244$ )	Suicide ideation		Suicide attempt	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<b>Depressive symptoms</b>				
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	8.16	6.98–9.53	4.01	3.30–4.86
<b>Any bullying victimization</b>				
During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied (including on school property or electronically [i.e., texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media])?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	2.67	2.21–3.20	2.06	1.63–2.60
<b>Any sexual or physical dating violence</b>				
During the past 12 months, did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things you did not want to do? (Count things such as kissing, touching, or physically forcing to have sexual intercourse.)				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	2.44	2.03–2.93	2.27	1.87–2.76
<b>Threatened with a weapon</b>				
During the past 12 months, has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?				
No	Ref.		Ref.	
Yes	1.36	1.07–1.72	2.28	1.80–2.90
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	Ref.		Ref.	
Female	1.18	1.04–1.34	1.02	0.86–1.22
<b>Age</b>				
	0.93	0.88–0.98	0.93	0.87–0.99

Abbreviations: CI, confidence interval; OR, odds ratio.

**TABLE 4** Multivariate logistic regression analysis of suicide ideation and suicide attempt for Hispanic youth by sadness, any bullying incident, any dating violence, any incident of being threatened, sex, and age.

Black youth	Suicide ideation		Suicide attempt	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
No depressive symptoms × Male	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
No depressive symptoms × Female	1.63	1.33–2.02	1.17	0.87–1.58
Depressive symptoms × Female	9.70	7.93–11.87	4.34	3.38–5.59
Depressive symptoms × Male	7.06	5.74–8.66	3.69	2.68–5.09
<b>Hispanic youth</b>				
No depressive symptoms × Male	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
No depressive symptoms × Female	1.32	1.09–1.59	0.84	0.63–1.12
Depressive symptoms × Female	9.94	8.04–12.31	3.88	3.01–5.01
Depressive symptoms × Male	9.00	7.06–11.48	3.45	2.55–4.66

Note: Models adjusted for any bully victimization, sexual or physical dating violence, threatened with a weapon, and age.

Abbreviations: CI, confidence interval; OR, odds ratio.

**TABLE 5** Measuring the intersection of mental health (i.e., depressive symptoms) and gender.

In regard to gender disparities, our findings are consistent with other studies (Kann et al., 2016; Lindsey et al., 2019; Sheftall et al., 2022) that also indicate that Black

and Hispanic girls had disproportionately higher rates of suicide ideation and attempts, as compared to Black and Hispanic boys. This finding adds to the literature on



intersectionality and youth suicidality (Standley & Foster-Fishman, 2021) and suggests that those with multiple marginalized identities are at a greater risk of reporting suicide ideation or making a suicide attempt. Consistent with the literature on intersectionality and specific disparities that affect girls of color greatly such as exposure to dating violence (Alleyne-Green et al., 2012; East & Hokoda, 2015), depressive symptoms (Hargrove et al., 2020), and suicide ideation and attempts (Price & Khubchandani, 2019; Silva & Van Orden, 2018), our findings align within the framework of both intersectionality and minority stress theory, indicating that the presence of multiple identities may contribute to worse health outcomes.

## IMPLICATIONS

As suicide rates continue to rise, it is essential that prevention researchers aim to identify risk factors that may not be accounted for. Our study incorporates risk factors not commonly studied among Black and Hispanic youth in suicide research such as dating violence, weapon carrying, and bully victimization. Hence why it is essential to incorporate an intersectional lens to suicide research as to not only understand the impact of youth belonging to multiplicative identities (socioeconomic status, race, and gender) but also how their social locations impact their current conditions and access to resources (Collins, 2000; Opara, Assan, et al., 2020, 2022).

Prevention interventions for Black and Hispanic youth should target areas where risk factors are more likely to be present and invest in key protective factors that help reduce stigma related to mental health disorders, especially among those who live in under-resourced environments and may be more exposed to risk factors such as violence and weapon carrying due to community trauma (Opara, Lardier, et al., 2020).

## LIMITATIONS

The results of this analysis should be considered in light of a few limitations. First, given the cross-sectional design of the study, temporality between the exposures and outcomes cannot be established. Furthermore, YRBSS only records responses from students who were present at school at the time of survey administration (Underwood et al., 2020). Therefore, data may be missing from youth who were absent for a variety of reasons, a population who may be at higher risk for negative health outcomes. Despite the current study's strength in analyzing suicide risk factors among Black and Hispanic youth, it failed to consider individuals with multiple racial backgrounds, including those

who may identify as both Black and Hispanic. Furthermore, the YRBSS data are self-reported, and thus, it is difficult to determine the degree of underreporting or overreporting of certain behaviors due to social desirability bias (King, 2022). Additionally, suicidal ideation and behavior were assessed using a single-item measure. Although this is a common method for studying suicide in large-scale national studies (Assari et al., 2017; Johns et al., 2020), utilizing follow-up questions and assessments may improve precision in the characterization and assessment of suicide risk (Molnar et al., 2004). In addition, though we focused on a smaller subsample of the larger nationally representative dataset, in order to overcome a small sample size, we combined multiple years of data to increase power. Lastly, we drew on minority stress theory as a framework due to the context of delimiting the sample to only include participants who identified as Black and Hispanic. For future work, we encourage the use of measures that operationalize racial and gender discrimination, xenophobia, acculturation, and socioeconomic status indicators to accurately assess intersectional experiences of Black and Hispanic youth and their association with suicide risk (Opara, Assan, et al., 2020), as YRBS does not include these measurements. Future research should also extend this work to examine suicide risk factors among LGBTQ youth or among individuals with multiple marginalized identities. For example, sexual minority youth of color may experience discrimination and other known suicide risk factors, based on their racial/ethnic and sexual minority identities (Mallory & Russell, 2021; Opara, Assan, et al., 2020; Swann et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The present study sought to examine the risk factors for suicide ideation and attempt among Black and Hispanic youth, with an emphasis on factors not previously well explored (e.g., violence exposure) and with the intersection of race and gender taken into account. By using the YRBSS data for 2015–2019, we were able to explore these risk factors in a large sample of Black and Hispanic youth. Black and Hispanic youth in the sample had elevated rates of suicide ideation and attempt, more so than in past results from similar datasets. Black and Hispanic youth were at elevated suicide risk when depressed, experiencing bully victimization, dating violence, and unsafe school environments. Importantly, as with past research, we found support for gender differences in the impact of these risk factors, with Black and Hispanic females being at greater risk. With rising rates of suicide among Black and Hispanic youth, future theoretical and preventative work must consider intersecting identities in understanding suicide risk.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts to disclose.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data used in this study are publicly available data at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

Not applicable.

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