

**Rural-Urban Disparities in Adolescent Girl Suicidal Ideation and Behavior:
The Moderating Effect of Friendship Quality**

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Suicide is a leading cause of adolescent death in the United States and a much higher risk for adolescents in rural areas. While some studies have examined the rural-urban disparity in suicide deaths among adolescents, few have explored if disparity exists for adolescent suicidal ideation and behavior. The purpose of the present study was to test if there is a rural-urban disparity in suicidal ideation and behavior in adolescent girls and if that relationship is moderated by close friendship quality. Adolescent girls 9-15 years of age (N = 221, 47.5% non-Hispanic white) self-reported lifetime history of suicidal ideation, plans, and behavior, suicidal ideation severity, depressive symptoms, and friendship quality. Results suggest that participants living in a rural area were not more likely to have a lifetime history of suicidal ideation, lifetime history of suicidal plans, or a lifetime history of suicidal behavior, or significantly different rates of suicidal ideation severity than those in the urban group. Friendship quality was not associated with lifetime history of suicidal ideation, plans or behavior; however, higher positive friendship quality was associated with greater suicidal ideation severity. Friendship quality did not moderate the association between rurality and suicidal ideation or behavior. While preliminary, results from the present study suggest that lifetime histories of suicidal ideation and behavior may not differ between those in a rural versus urban areas in a small sample of girls at higher risk for suicide. More research is need to determine the driving factors in the rural-urban disparity in adolescent suicide death.

Keywords: Suicidal ideation, suicidal attempts, rurality, adolescents, friendship quality