

## The role of social support in suicidal behavior: A literature review

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### Abstract

Suicide is a harmful behavior and a public health problem. Suicide has been associated with negative stress coping. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of social support on suicidal behavior or intention. This study used a literature review method, sourced from national and international scientific journal articles. Articles were obtained through Google Scholar, PUBMED, Science Direct, and SAGE. This results of this study indicate a relationship between social support and suicidal behavior.

**Keywords:** Suicide; Social Support; Mental Health; Stress Coping

### 1. Introduction

Suicide is a public mental health problem and a cause of premature death. Suicidal behavior can include suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), suicide is a deliberate act to end one's life. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death, especially among 15-29 year olds. The WHO states that more than 700,000 people die by suicide each year [1].

Suicide decisions are associated with negative stress coping. Someone who decides to commit suicide usually fails to solve everyday problems, which then become a source of stress and distress. This is related to a person's appraisal of the problems they face [2]. In addition to negative stress coping, another risk factor for suicidal behavior is psychiatric disorders. Psychiatric disorders such as major depression, bipolar disorder, personality disorders, and anxiety have been shown to be significantly associated with suicidal behavior [3].

The number of suicides needs special attention from the whole society. Someone who has suicidal intentions can be prevented. The sixty-sixth World Health Assembly extended the Comprehensive Plan of Action on Mental Health from 2013-2020 to 2030 to promote mental health and well-being for all. One of the comprehensive mental health actions aimed at the well-being of all people is to ensure social support to minimize the incidence of suicide [1].

Social support has a positive effect on the prevention of suicidal ideation. Social support can take the form of support from family, relatives, friends and social networks [4, 5]. A person with good social support has a low risk of suicidal ideation [6]. Social support is psychological help that can be interpreted as care, assistance, and help from family, friends, and the community [7]. The purpose of social support is to prevent suicidal behavior by providing psychological support so that someone with suicidal intentions feels they are not alone. A person with a stressful life is more likely to have suicidal thoughts. They believe that suicide can alleviate problems they cannot face [5]. Social support is expected to reduce psychological pressure so that a person can live with hope, motivation and confidence to go on living [8].

Based on this, researchers are interested in conducting research titled "The role of social support on suicidal intentions" to increase knowledge related to how to reduce and minimize suicide rates. With this research, it is hoped that it can

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find out the importance of social support on suicidal intentions. In addition, it is hoped that all groups can provide social support to someone with suicidal intentions so that suicide rates can be minimized.

## 2. Material and methods

This research is a literature study on 7 articles on the influence of social support on suicidal intentions. These articles were obtained using search engines in Google Scholar, PUBMED, Science Direct and SAGE with the keywords social support and suicidal intent. Studies were included if they met several criteria, namely published in the last 5 years (2019 to 2024).

## 3. Results and discussion

Social support is the most important factor in suicidal ideation. Someone who lacks social support is at risk for suicidal ideation [9]. Social support is closely related to a person's ability to solve their problems. Someone with good social support may have the confidence to solve the problem at hand. Social support also provides a sense of comfort to someone who has suicidal thoughts because they feel they are not alone [10].

Depression is one of the risk factors for suicide [11]. One of the causes of depression is a high level of stress. Stress is a person's response in solving a problem that is being faced. Someone who is unable to solve their problems and decides to commit suicide has negative stress coping. Data reveals that 86% of the world's population experiences stress [12]. Good social support serves to reduce the incidence of depression in a person [11]. Social support is one of the protective factors to prevent suicidal behavior [13].

Social support can be in the form of emotional support, instrumental support and informational support [9]. Apart from the closest person, social support in the digital era can be obtained through social media, social media makes a person free to express what an individual feel. Moreover, there is social media that offers anonymity, namely twitter. Online social support is a new breakthrough that follows the development of technology and the internet [14]. The results show that social support plays a role in a person's decision to commit suicide. In addition, someone with positive adaptive coping will not decide to commit suicide if they have good social support.

**Table 1** Results of review of 7 articles

No	Author	Research Title	Method	Result
1	Adinda, S. T, & Endang, P. (2021)	Emotion Regulation and Social Support: as Predictors of Suicidal Ideation in College Students	Descriptive-Correlational	There is a relationship between social support and suicide. Social support has an influence on the emergence of suicidal ideation in students. Most 131 (62.39%) students have moderate social support, 50 (23.81%) students have high social support and 29 (13.8%) students have low social support. Social support obtained in the form of emotional support, instrumental support, and informational support. Most of the 136 (64.77%) students had moderate suicidal ideation. This is because students are looking for solutions to the problems they face. Social support is very influential on suicidal ideation.
2	Gusmunardi, Rika, S., & Heppi, S. (2023)	Risk and Protective Factors for Adolescent Suicide Risk	Cross Sectional	Depression can be associated with feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and lack of social support. Social support can provide a person with a sense of comfort and confidence to cope with the problems and challenges they face.
3	Bintang, A. Z., & Ayik, M. M., (2021)	Depression Incidence in Adolescent According to Social Support in Jember Regency	Cross Sectional	The results showed that there was a relationship between social support and the incidence of depression. Most of the 90 (56.94%) respondents had good social support. Most of the 86 (54.43%) respondents did not have depression. A person with good social support is susceptible to depression. Conversely, a person with low social support increases the risk of depression, which can lead to suicide.

4	Laenoh, G. A., Ianm B. P. N. Z., & Ingrid, F. Y. (2021)	The Relationship Between Stress Levels and Suicide Ideation in College Students	Descriptive-Correlational	The results showed that 80.0% of respondents were in the moderate stress category and 77.2% of respondents had suicidal ideation. Stress levels are closely related to a person's suicidal ideation. In this case, the problem-solving coping of a person with high levels of stress is negative coping. A lack of social support can be the cause of suicidal ideation.
5	Budiarto, E (2021)	Analysis of Suicide Attempt Behavior in Schizophrenia Clients with Roy's Adaptation Model Approach: A Case Study	Descriptive	Up to 40% of people with depression have suicidal thoughts. This happens because people with depression experience sadness and have difficulty coping with stress. The characteristics of someone who is depressed are sadness, hopelessness, feelings of guilt, feelings of meaninglessness, low motivation for activity, and laziness to interact. According to Roy's adaptation model, suicidal behavior is related to coping mechanisms, suicidal behavior can be prevented by providing good social support. Good social support influences coping mechanisms. Social support is very influential in a person's decision to commit suicide.
6	Restrepo DM, & Megan S. (2020)	Social Support Moderates the Relationship Between Interpersonal Trauma and Suicidal Behaviors among College Students	Self-Report Questionnaires	The results show that there is a relationship between social support and suicidal behavior. Suicidal behavior can occur due to trauma to individuals that have an impact on their lives. In addition, low social support affects a person's suicidal behavior.
7	Simoies, E. V., Adriane, M, N, D., Landro, B, P, Stella M, O., Luciano, G, L., & Francisca, L, R, D. (2022)	Relationships of Adolescents with Suicidal Behavior with Social Support Networks	Descriptive	The results show that there is a relationship between social support and suicidal behavior. Social support allows an individual to get a different perspective from what they think. Support from people they rely on such as support from family makes them feel protected and safe. With social support they feel understood and feel they are getting guidance which can influence decisions in dealing with problems.

Suicidal behavior is a harmful thing. Individuals with suicidal behavior tend to hurt themselves before deciding to kill themselves. Research reveals suicidal behavior is closely related to low self-esteem, shame, hopelessness, feeling alone, stress and the presence of psychiatric disorders [3, 13]. Suicidal behavior is also often associated with a state of individual trauma to something. This trauma is usually of interpersonal origin [15]. Interpersonal trauma can be in the form of emotional trauma to the surrounding environment. Interpersonal trauma both directly and indirectly affects the risk of depression [17]. Many individuals decide to commit suicide because they do not have good social support such as not having friends to talk to and not trusting to talk about their problems [12, 14].

Social support plays an important role in positive stress management [12]. Social support usually takes the form of emotional support, instrumental support, and informational support [9]. Emotional support is support related to attention, sympathy, and understanding. Emotional support communicates attention and mobilizes listening skills to hear someone's complaints or stories. Appraisal support is defined as a form of social support by providing input to someone so that someone can decide on the actions to be taken. Instrumental support is support that relates to real needs, such as goods, money, and work. Informational support is a form of social support in the form of information by providing advice and guidance so that someone is able to see another perspective in making a decision [16].

Social support can be obtained from friends, family, neighborhoods and social media. In the digital era, social media can be utilized as a place to provide mutual support. This study is not in line with research by Cahya revealing that high social media use is at risk of anxiety and depression [18]. Simoes's research has shown that social support has an impact on suicidal behavior [19]. In line with Rahayu's research, social support through social media has a positive effect on reducing suicidal behavior. Social support is able to emotionally affect someone with suicidal ideation [14].

From 7 journals on social support and suicidal behavior, it was found that social support is very influential on suicidal behavior decision making. Someone with good social support has a lower risk of suicidal behavior. Whereas someone with poor social support tends to have a high risk of suicidal behavior. This is closely related to human stress coping mechanisms. Good social support affects adaptive stress coping in dealing with problems [14]. Social support is also able to change an individual's perspective on suicidal ideation. Everyone should be more concerned about the surrounding environment so that they can responsively recognize the signs of someone with suicidal ideation. And it is hoped that everyone will be responsive in providing social support for everyone in need. With good social support, it is expected to prevent suicidal behavior.

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#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of 7 journal articles that have been discussed and described, most of them reveal that social support plays a significant role in reducing suicidal ideation or behavior. Good social support can change a person's perspective or perspective in solving problems. Social support also plays a role in a person's problem-solving coping mechanism. Social support can be provided by family, friends, and the surrounding environment. With good social support, a person with suicidal ideation will reconsider their decision to commit suicide. In this case everyone plays an important role in providing social support for everyone in need. It is hoped that good social support can reduce suicide rates.

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#### Compliance with ethical standards

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No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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