

Testing a Model of Adolescent Suicidal Ideation

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The objective of the study was to evaluate a causal model on Adolescent Suicidal Ideation based on Caty's Theory. Results supported the model with all coefficient coefficients achieving statistical and practical significance. Gender demonstrated indirect effects to suicidal ideation through Access to Guns and Received Counseling. Implications are discussed.

BACKGROUND

Availability to firearms correlates with an adolescent's suicidal tendencies and, at the very least, greatly increases their risk of suicide (Caty, 2009). Although high levels of suicidal ideation among adolescents, easy availability of guns, and low levels of mental health support are known contributing factors to adolescent suicides, no model has been developed to link these variables in a theoretical framework.

PURPOSE

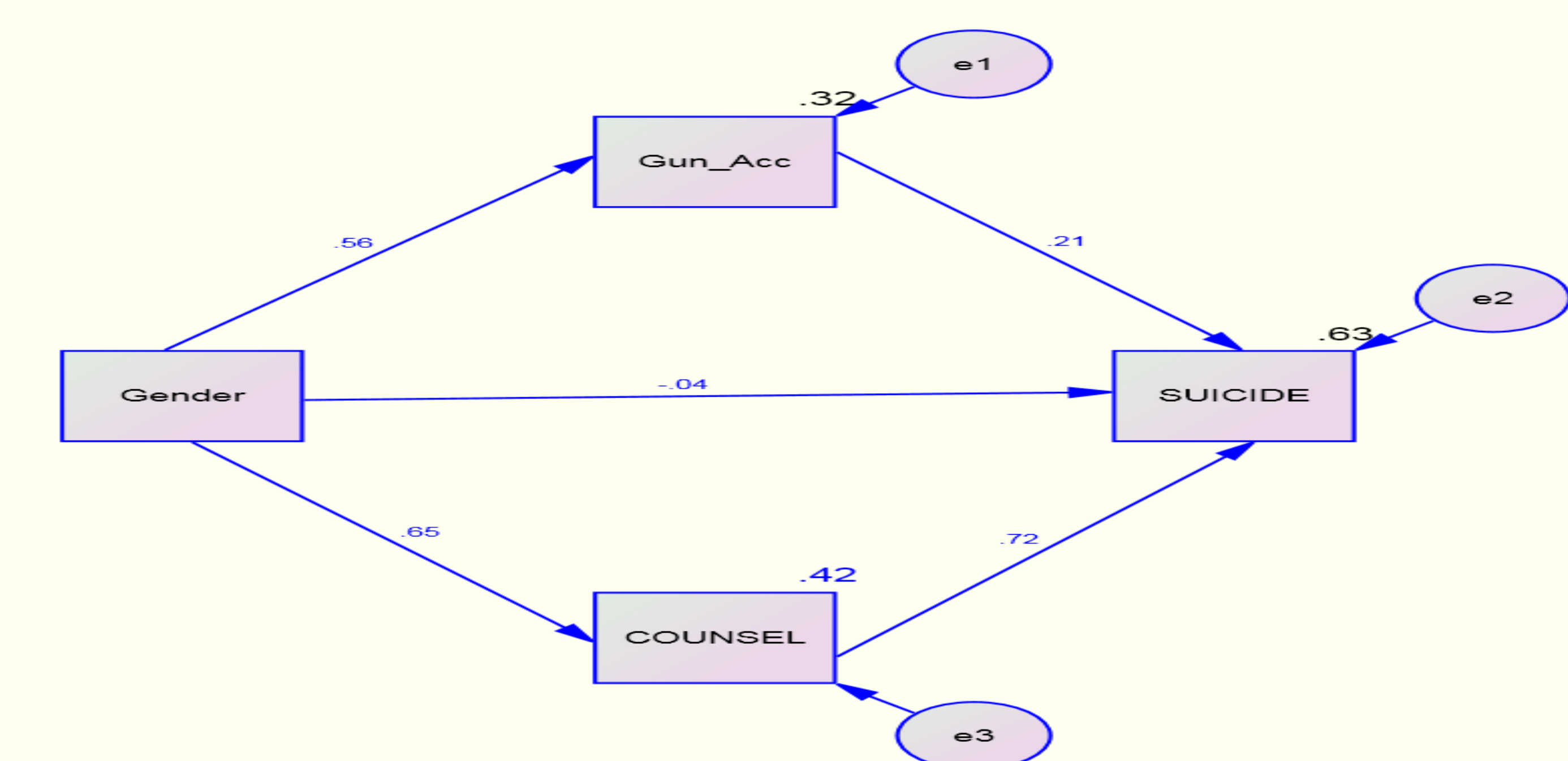
The objective of this research was to validate through path analysis the direct and indirect effects of Gender, Access to Guns, and Received Counseling on Suicidal Ideation.

METHODS

The sample was 569 students enrolled in a large public high school located in a middle class neighborhood in the greater Los Angeles area. The mean age was 16.24, SD = 1.14 (range: 14-18). Slightly more than one-half were female (53%). The sample of participants in the current study closely reflected the racial/ethnic proportions of the general student population: 33% Black; 32% Latino; 28% White; and 8% Asian. Participants completed the *Student Survey for Adolescent Risk Assessment (SSARA)* (Caty, 1996), which is comprised of 36 questions with mostly yes or no answers. Questions were developed to obtain information regarding adolescent's exposure to violence (including guns and gun violence) and other variables related to an adolescents well-being such as perceived future outlook, feelings of safety at school, and experience with counseling.

RESULTS

Path analysis, an application of multiple regression analysis in conjunction with causal theory, was used to analyze the causal models in this inquiry. Results supported the model with all coefficient coefficients achieving statistical and practical significance. The direct and indirect effects of the path coefficients are presented in Table 1.



CONCLUSION

Clearly, firearm-related mortality, and the potential for such events, among adolescents must gain greater recognition as a major health problem. With high levels of suicidal tendencies among adolescents, easy availability of extremely lethal means, and low levels of mental health support, it is incumbent upon policy makers and mental health professionals to determine how to translate effectively research into life-enhancing outcomes for society's youth.