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FEELING LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY OF GREEK ADOLESCENTS

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Introduction: Thoughts of feeling life is not worth living could be the initial stage of a continuum that might end in a suicide.

Objectives: Psychiatric morbidity is quite prevalent among adolescents and has been associated with suicidal ideation.

Aims: Our aim was to test the association between thoughts that life is not worth living and psychiatric morbidity in a sample of Greek adolescents.

Methods: A two-phase cross sectional study of 5614 adolescents aged 16-18 years old attending 25 senior high schools in Greece. A stratified random sample of 2431 subjects was selected for a detailed interview at the second phase. Psychiatric morbidity and thoughts of life is not worth living were assessed with the revised Clinical Interview Schedule (CIS-R). Odds ratios adjusted for age and sex were computed for the association between such thoughts and CIS-R scores.

Results: 3,72% of the adolescents (girls:5,11%, boys:2,36%, $p < 0.001$) reported thoughts of feeling life is not worth living in the week before interview. Psychiatric morbidity correlated significantly with those thoughts (OR=1.16, 95% Confidence Intervals: 1.14-1.19). The level of psychiatric morbidity was strongly associated with such thoughts with higher levels of distress showing a greater association (Table 1).

CIS-R Score (n)	0-4 (659)	5-11 (636)	12-19 (544)	>19 (592)
OR (95% Confidence Intervals)	1.00	29.58 (3.64-240.02)	134.68 (18.08-1003.19)	554.08 (76.72-4001.72)

[Table 1]

Conclusions: Policies aiming at preventing the overall burden of psychiatric disease in adolescence may reduce the frequency of thoughts that life is not worth living, which could eventually lead to a decrease in completed suicides.