

# FAMILY CONFLICT INFLUENCES SUICIDAL THOUGHTS IN KIDS

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**F**amily conflict and parental monitoring are significant predictors of suicidal thoughts in children as young as 9- and 10-year olds, says a study. The majority of children surveyed in the study had caregivers who either did not know, or did not report, the suicidal thoughts of the children in their charge. Historically, the belief has been that people don't need to ask kids about suicidal thoughts before adolescence, said Deanna Barch, Professor at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, US.

"Our data suggests that's absolutely not true. Kids are having these thoughts. They're not at the same rates as adults, but they are non-trivial," she added.

The study, published in the journal JAMA Network Open, looked at 11,814 children between ages 9 and 10 from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study, a longitudinal study in the US on adolescent brain health in which caretakers also participate.

Dividing suicidal thoughts and actions into several categories, researchers found that 2.4 to 6.2 per cent of the children reported having thoughts about suicide, from wishing they were dead to devising -- but not carrying out -- a plan.

When it came to actions, they saw 0.9 per cent of these 9- and -10-year-olds said they had tried to commit suicide; 9.1 per cent reported non-suicidal self-injury.

In more than 75 per cent of cases where children self-reported suicidal thoughts or behaviours, the caregivers did not know about the child's experience, said the study.

The researchers found that family conflict was a predictor of suicidal thoughts and non-suicidal self-injury. Monitoring by a caretaker was also predictive of those measures, as well as suicide attempts.

Parents, caregivers and people working with children should be aware of the possibility that a 9-year-old is thinking about suicide, Barch said.

"If you have kids who are distressed in some way, you should be asking about this," she said, adding that caregivers can help identify kids who might be in trouble.

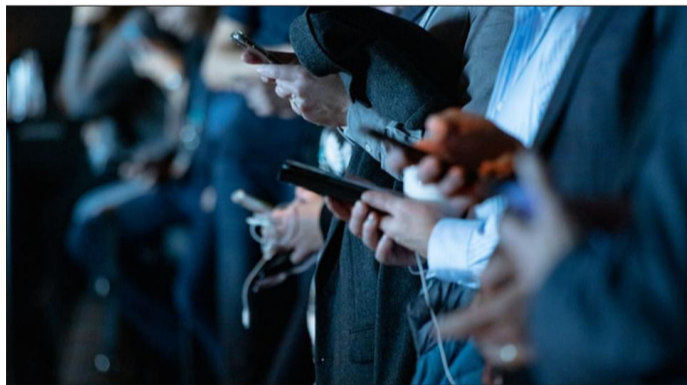


## Social Media Increases News Consumption, May Not Be Reinforcing Personal Opinions: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**S**ocial media platforms and search engines have encouraged greater and more diverse news consumption, according to a study which challenges the concept of echo chambers on the internet where users encounter only information reinforcing their own beliefs. The study, published in the journal PNAS, analysed the web browsing behaviour of more than 5,000 German internet users, and found that the use of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or search engines like Google leads to more visits to diverse news sites. "Anyone visiting Facebook or Google is much more likely to come into contact with news items. Therefore the use of these intermediaries is an important mechanism in the consumption of news on the Internet," said study co-author Frank Mangold of the University of Hohenheim in Germany.

According to the researchers, this may be due to incidental exposure to news. In the case of traditional media such as television and newspapers, they said, people often only see the news if they deliberately choose to do so. On intermediary platforms like Facebook or Twitter, users can



also come into contact with news by chance, the study noted.

In these platforms, the scientists said, people's contacts share news content with them, or they happen upon interesting articles when checking their emails.

"Previous debates have, in many respects, revolved around the fear that online media would lead to new social barriers," said Michael Scharnow, co-author of the study from Mainz University in Germany. "However, our findings show that social media and search engines in fact have great potential to break down existing barriers," Scharnow said.

While access to news often happens partly by chance in these

platforms, it may also be down to conscious choice, the researchers noted. "Regardless of whether a user usually consumed a little or a lot of online news, on days on which someone spent more time on Facebook, Twitter, or Google than usual, they also came into contact with more news as well as more news from different sources than usual," said Sebastian Stier another co-author of the study. However, the scientists cautioned that further studies, and more detailed insights into the algorithms of intermediary platforms are necessary to understand more precisely how these promote unintended, incidental news consumption.

## High Global Stillbirth Rates Linked To Gender Inequality: Study

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**P**regnant women who are poor, and have lower access to education and employment are more likely to experience a child's death at delivery, according to a study which mapped global patterns of stillbirth rates.

The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, noted that 2.6 million stillbirths happen worldwide annually, a number that has remained high despite reduction in neonatal, and under-five mortality rates.

"Our research offers a better understanding of where stillbirth rates are higher, and what the social causes underlying stillbirths are, not just taking into account the medical factors as most studies do," said Nazeem Muhajarine, from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) in Canada.

According to the computer model developed by the researchers, stillbirth rates are more likely in countries where gender inequality is high



-- where women face financial hurdles, and have less access to education and employment opportunities compared to men.

Assessing data from 194 countries, the model showed which social causes in addition to gender inequality have a potential link to stillbirth rates worldwide.

The researchers found that stillbirth rates are more likely in countries where pregnant women have higher rates of iron deficiency, limited

pre-birth healthcare, and lack of access to skilled health professionals like nurses, midwives, or doctors.

The study also noted "hot spots" of highest stillbirth rates -- a cluster of 37 countries in Africa and Southern Asia.

Nigeria and Pakistan, it said, led with 43 deaths for every 1,000 children born, which is an average four times higher than the 2030 national target of 12 deaths per 1,000 births of the World Health Assembly Every Newborn Action Plan (WHA ENAP).

The model also marked "cold spots" of low stillbirth rates, mostly in Canada, Europe, and Northern Asia, between one and 12 deaths per 1,000 births.

"A cultural change is needed in 'hot spot' countries around women's conditions," said Muhajarine.

"Not only should we offer better hospital services and more access to skilled healthcare professionals, but we also need to make sure that women and girls have access to enough food, better education and work opportunities, and are not married off too early," he said.

To lower stillbirth rates worldwide by 44 per cent, the researchers said, requires improving women's access to education by 51 per cent, and improving mothers' nutrition by 59 per cent compared to current worldwide rates.

They suggested that pregnant women should get more access to pre-birth health services and skilled healthcare professionals at the time of delivery.

## Discussing Smoking-Risks With Network Boosts Intent To Quit, Suggests Study

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**I**n a study based involving a group of smokers and non-smokers, researchers have found that awareness among smokers and their assessment of smoking's risks became more accurate by discussing their ideas with other people.

The study was conducted by doctoral candidate Douglas Guilbeault and Professor Damon Centola who found that most people, smokers and non-smokers alike, were nowhere near accurate in their answers to the question, how many people will die from tobacco use in developed countries in 2030? And other questions about smoking's health effects. The study was published in the journal PLOS ONE.

According to Centola, "We talk a lot today about misinformation, but another problem is a misunderstanding, even if the information being disseminated is factual, people can nevertheless misunderstand or misinterpret that information."

The information shared in public health campaigns and on tobacco warning labels is accurate. It has been studied and tested over and over again to ensure it conveys factual information about the deadly effects of smoking. And yet, people continue to smoke. Centola and Guilbeault wondered whether that could



be a problem of misunderstanding.

The researchers created an online network in which 1,600 participants, including both smokers and non-smokers, were asked to answer questions about the health risks associated with smoking. In the first round of the study, all participants answered the questions alone. For the second and third rounds, participants in the control group were allowed to change their answers but were still working alone. Their answers did not become any more accurate.

Meanwhile, two networked groups of participants were allowed to view the answers of others and use that information to revise their guesses for the second and third rounds. One group simply saw the answers of anonymous participants, while the other group was able to see whether the guesses were coming from smokers or non-smokers.

The answer to the question of how many people will die in developed countries is a daunting figure: 30 million, according to the World Health Organisation.

In both networked groups where

participants shared answers, everyone's responses to the question improved dramatically. Just by talking in a social network, participants came away with a much better understanding of their own smoking risks, which is a key indicator of a smoker's intention to quit.

"At the individual level, people often aren't incentivized to change their beliefs," Guilbeault says, "but if you show them that other people think differently, it can encourage belief change under the right conditions."

After completing the three rounds of questions about smoking risks, participants were then asked to complete a survey about their experience. The survey showed that when people were in networks where they could see that others were smokers and non-smokers, they were the most likely to report having improved their opinion about the other group. If they were a smoker, they now thought more favourably of non-smokers and vice versa.

"Most people think that when someone encounters an outgroup member, they are more likely to become entrenched in their position," Centola says, "but in this study with smokers and non-smokers, we found that they actually become more receptive to one another's points of view and developed mutual respect for each other."

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**T**he most common ailment among Indian women is anaemia. It means absence of blood and refers to reduction of hemoglobin level in body. Normal level of hemoglobin in adult females is between 12 to 16 g/dl, while in adult males it is between 14 to 18 g/dl.

In Sanskrit 'Pandunya' means whitish colouration. Since anaemia is characterised by a whitish tint on skin, eyes and nails, it is called Panduro in Ayurveda. It can be caused by non-nutritious diet, weak digestive fire, malnutrition or loss of blood, says Dr Partap Chauhan, author, TV personality and director of Jiva Ayurveda.

Chauhan underlines the common causes of anaemia, home remedies and some lifestyle changes to cure the disease. Common causes: Diminished production, increased destruction or severe loss of red blood cells leads to anaemia. Deficiency of iron, thyroxine, vitamins B12, C folate results in diminution of RBC production while various infections, toxins, antibodies and congenital structural abnormalities lead to their increased destruction. Other than this, anaemia can also be the cause of other serious diseases. Symptoms of anaemia: Headache, loss of appetite, fatigue, weakness, breathlessness, giddiness, swelling around eyes, whitish tint on skin, nails and eyes, palpitations and sleeplessness Home remedies: Besides the prescribed medicines, you can follow the below mentioned



home remedies. Half a cup of apple juice should be mixed with half a cup of beetroot juice. Put honey into this mixture and stir it well. If the juice can be consumed twice a day, it would take up the hemoglobin level. The second option is to take the juice of turmeric with daily. Soak one teaspoon of black sesame seeds in water for two hours. Take the soaked sesame seeds and grind it into a paste. Mix one teaspoon of paste of sesame seeds and honey to a glass of milk. Drink this milk daily to improve the hemoglobin level.

Lifestyle changes: Anaemia patients should keep in mind the following points in their daily lives: Avoid indigestion in your daily lives. Do not take spicy food. Further to this, avoid having non-vegetarian food.

Have light meals including lentil soups, vegetable soups. Pomegranate and melons should be included in your diet.

## The Road To Recovery For Anemia In Ayurveda. Here's All You Need To Know

## Melodic Alarms Can Improve Alertness Levels

AGENCIES

**F**inding it hard to get out of bed? Melodic alarms can help you. A new study shows that melodic alarms could improve alertness levels, with harsh alarm tones linked to increased levels of morning grogginess or sleep inertia.

The study, published in PLoS One journal, involved 50 participants, using a specially designed online survey that enables them to remotely contribute to the study from the comfort of their own home.

Each person logged what type of sound they used to wake up, and then rated their grogginess and alertness levels against standardised sleep inertia criteria.

"Morning grogginess was a serious problem in our 24-hour world. If you don't wake properly, your work performance can be degraded for periods up to four hours, and that has been linked to major accidents," said the study's lead author Stuart McFarlane, doctoral researcher at RMIT University in the US.

According to the researchers, the finding could have important implications for anyone who needs to perform at their peak soon after waking, such as shift workers and emergency first responders.

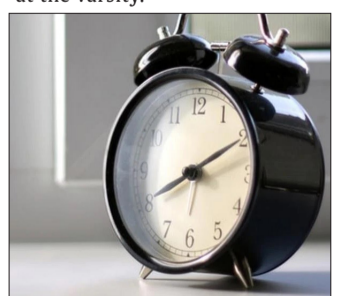
"Although more research is needed to better understand the precise combination of melody and rhythm that might work best, considering that most people use alarms to wake up, the sound you choose may have important ramifications," McFarlane said.

"This is particularly important for people who might work in

dangerous situations shortly after waking, like firefighters or pilots, but also for anyone who has to be rapidly alert, such as someone driving to hospital in an emergency," McFarlane added.

The research could help contribute to the design of more efficient interventions for people to use on their own devices to wake up properly.

"This study is important, as even NASA astronauts report that sleep inertia affects their performance on the International Space Station," said study's co-author Adrian Dyer, Associate Professor at RMIT University in the US.



"We think that a harsh 'beep beep' might work to disrupt or confuse our brain activity when waking, while a more melodic sound like the Beach Boys 'Good Vibrations' or The Cure's 'Close to Me' may help us transition to a waking state in a more effective way," Dyer added.

"If we can continue to improve our understanding of the connection between sounds and waking state, there could be potential for applications in many fields, particularly with recent advancements in sleep technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI)," Dyer concluded.