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**VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NIGERIA**

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**Introduction:** Globally, children and adolescents are victims of various forms of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence perpetrated by peers or adults within the community, school or domestic setting. Suicidal behavior is public health problem with escalating trends among young people. There is dearth of research on the relationship between violence and suicidal behavior in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Objectives/Aim:** This study determined the association between violence victimization and suicidal behavior (suicidal idea and attempts) in a sample of secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria.

**Method:** A cross-sectional study of 230 secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. Participants completed a socio-demographic questionnaire, the Global School-based Health Survey Questionnaire (violence module) and the 'Suicidality' module of the Mini International Neuro-Psychiatric Interview (MINI).

**Results:** In the past year, a fifth of the respondents were victims of weapon-related violence (23.8%) and sexual violence (21.9%). More than half (56.4%) reported peer-related violence/bullying, while 60.7% were exposed to domestic violence. Less than a third (31.3%) reported lifetime history of suicidal idea, while 13% had attempted suicide. Suicidal behavior was significantly associated with history of bullying ( $p=0.020$ ), sexual violence ( $p=0.014$ ), weapon-related violence ( $p=0.005$ ), and exposure to domestic violence ( $p=0.020$ ).

**Conclusion:** Exposure to violence is associated with suicidal behavior among secondary school children in Nigeria. This highlights the need for urgent interventions to protect Nigerian children and adolescents from violence. There is also need for improved access of victimized children to mental health care and other support services.