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Detecting Suicide Risk in Adolescents and Adults in an Emergency Department

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Oral Presentation O7.2

**DETECTING SUICIDE RISK IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS IN AN
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

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Suicide is a serious health concern and was the 11th leading cause of death for all Americans, and the 3rd leading cause of death for young people from 15-24 years of age (Gould, Greenberg, Velting, & Shaffer, 2003; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003). Further, individuals who were over 65 years of age accounted for 18% of all suicide deaths in the United States (National Institute of Mental Health, 2003). The Emergency Department (ED) is an ideal setting in which to detect suicide risk (Folse, Eich, Hall, & Ruppman, 2006); screening is an important intervention in the prevention of suicide (Gould, et al., 2003). The purpose of this study was to assess the incidence of reported suicide risk in adolescents and adults who presented to an Emergency Department, regardless of chief complaint. A convenience sample, comprised of patients who presented to the Emergency Department in February and March 2006, was asked to answer a four-item Risk Suicide Questionnaire ([RSQ] Horowitz, Wang, Gerald, Burr, Smith & Klavon, 2001). Registered Nurses in the ED also collected data after interrater reliability was determined. The reliability of the RSQ was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and criterion-related validity was determined by correlating responses from the RSQ with the post-evaluation diagnosis. The results and implications of this study will be presented.