

Teen muscular strength, suicide link

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GRANADA, Spain -- Teens with a low muscular strength have a higher risk of developing psychiatric diseases and committing suicide, Spanish, Finnish and Swedish researchers say.

Francisco Ortega of the University of Granada, Karie Silventoinen of the University of Helsinki, Per Tynelius and Finn Rasmussen Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm said they tracked more than 1 million male teenagers in Sweden ages 16-24 over a 24-year period.

The study, published in the British Medical Journal, found teens with low muscular strength have a 30 percent higher risk of committing suicide before the age of 55, and a 65 percent higher risk of developing psychiatric diseases such as depression or schizophrenia.

In addition, a low muscular strength during childhood and adolescence was a strong predictor of early death -- before age 55 -- from cardiovascular disease. A low muscular strength was also a powerful predictor of obesity and high blood pressure, the study said.

Ortega said muscular strength could be measured through such simple tests as the grip strength test or the leg extension test, or jumping with the feet together.

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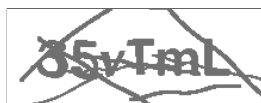
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