Abstract

Limited educational and job opportunities for youth has led to a phenomenon termed NEET (not in education, employment or training). The objective is to estimate the prevalence of psychiatric disorders, substance use and suicidal behavior in youth classified as NEET and to compare with those who study only, work only or do both. Material and Methods. 3,005 12-to-17 year-olds in Mexico City were evaluated in 2005 with the Composite International Diagnostic Interview. Descriptive and logistic regression analyses considered the multistage weighted sample design. Results. NEET youth as well as those who work only or study and work simultaneously have greater odds of psychiatric disorder, substance use and suicidal behavior compared to those who study exclusively even after controlling for social disadvantage. Conclusion. Vulnerability is not circumscribed to NEET adolescents, but to all teens who are not exclusive students. Supporting youth to continue studying exclusively may buffer negative mental health outcomes.

Keywords

Student dropout, employment, adolescent psychiatry, substance-related disorders, suicide, Mexico.