Adolescent Suicide

Population: The middle school students at the Telesecundaria No. 91 in Puentecillas, Mexico. The student population is made up of 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. This was the first time that OHSU has worked at the Puentacillas middle school.

Background/Significance:
- Puentecillas has a population of approximately 2382 people-945 are minors. Among the 537 households it is estimated that 97 of them have a computer. The medium time school is visited is 7 years (Puentecillas, 2015).
- Currently, in Mexico, suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents between the ages of 15-19 and there has also been an increase in the amount of suicides between the ages of 10-14 (Chavez-Hernandez, & Macias-Garcia, 2015).
- In Guanajuato, the rates of suicides are higher than the national average, with 6.5 in comparison to the 5 suicides per 100,000 (Chavez-Hernandez, & Macias-Garcia, 2015).
- The suicide rate in Mexico is steadily increasing. This rate will continue to rise unless it is addressed nationally as a public health concern. Unfortunately, there is currently a lack of national strategies that are addressing this growing issue (Chavez-Hernandez, & Macias-Garcia, 2015).

Goals:
- Identify what health strengths and weaknesses exist within the adolescent population of Puentecillas.
- After identifying the prevalence of suicidal ideation amongst the population, we focused our efforts on evidence based, culturally appropriate, interventions.

Assessment methods:
- Windshield walking surveys.
- Key informant interviews: middle school staff, community members, and acting mayor of Puentacillas.
- Student survey with 203 of the Puentacillas Middle School Students.

Weaknesses
- No mental health specialists on staff at the local clinic, Centro de Salud.
- There is a lack of dialogue regarding prevention of suicide.
- All emergency medical services come from neighboring towns.

Opportunities
- The town is a 30 minute bus ride from a city with ample mental health resources.
- There are interventions and trainings available for early identification and response to suicide.
- Student leaders in the school can be trained to watch for suicidal behavior in fellow classmates.

Strengths
- Discerning about outside influence.
- School staff are concerned for the wellbeing and health of the students.
- School staff and community are receptive to information about various health issues regarding the community and middle school population.

Findings:

Conclusions
Of the 203 middle school students that were surveyed, 25% had thoughts of suicide and 12% said that they had attempted suicide. Between the sexes, females were more likely to attempt suicide or have suicidal thoughts than males. Addressing the mental health needs of adolescents is vital in promoting their overall health. A curriculum should be developed that helps identify warning signs, and options for intervention.

Recommendations:
- Develop a training program for students and community members to increase knowledge and awareness about suicide prevention (Chavez-Hernandez, Medina Nuñez, & Macias-Garcia, 2008).
- Develop student leaders in the middle school population to assist in recognizing suicidal behavior in fellow classmates (Chavez-Hernandez, Medina Nuñez, & Macias-Garcia, 2008).
- Increase communication between students and parents regarding suicidal thoughts and feelings (Pérez-Amezcue et al., 2010).

Acknowledgements
Trish Kohan, RN, Clinical instructor
Teresa Hernández, University of Guanajuato, Dean of Nursing
Marta Veronica, the principle of the Telesecundaria No. 91 Teachers of the Puentacillas middle school