Development of suicide prevention program for AYA generation focusing on social isolation and loneliness among college students and perinatal women.

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Summary:

The high-risk group for suicidality includes the AYA generation (Adolescent and Young Adult generation) from their late teens to their 30s. However, many college students and pregnant women, who are also considered part of the AYA generation, do not utilize existing counseling services even if they have concerns. Since college students and pregnant women are thought to share common mechanisms of suicide within the AYA generation, this study aims to identify the suicide risk among these groups and develop a system for early intervention using online psychological counseling for those at risk of suicide.

To develop a suicide prevention program for college students, we first examined the relationship between daily conversations and feelings of loneliness among medical students to identify factors related to social isolation and loneliness. The results revealed that satisfaction with the amount and frequency of conversations, as well as the frequency of conversations with peers in the same grade, were related to feelings of loneliness. Second, we implemented an online counseling service provided by BANSO-CO Inc for about three months in addition to existing support services and verified its usefulness among medical students. The results showed that 3.7% of the students used the LINE and online counseling services during the implementation period. Although there was no significant change in mental health status or loneliness from before to after the system implementation, there was a tendency for improvement in psychological well-being (WHO-5).

As part of developing a tool for early identification of suicide risk among pregnant women, we utilized the Social Life Impact for Mother (SLIM) scale, which identifies socially high-risk pregnant women based on their socioeconomic status, to see if the same algorithm could identify pregnant women at high risk of suicide. The results indicated that it is also useful for identifying pregnant women at high risk of suicide.