State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA

From 2018 to 2022, 48 anti-transgender laws (that is, laws that restrict the rights of transgender and non-binary people) were enacted in the USA across 19 different state governments. In this study, we estimated the causal impact of state-level anti-transgender laws on suicide risk among transgender and non-binary (TGNB) young people aged 13–17 (n = 35,196) and aged 13–24 (n = 61,240) using a difference-in-differences research design. We found minimal evidence of an anticipatory effect in the time periods leading up to the enactment of the laws. However, starting in the first year after anti-transgender laws were enacted, there were statistically significant increases in rates of past-year suicide attempts among TGNB young people ages 13–17 in states that enacted anti-transgender laws, relative to states that did not, and for all TGNB young people beginning in the second year. Enacting state-level anti-transgender laws increased incidents of past-year suicide attempts among TGNB young people by 7–72%. Our findings highlight the need to consider the mental health impact of recent anti-transgender laws and to advance protective policies.

https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-01979-5