

Investigating negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts in high-risk adolescents

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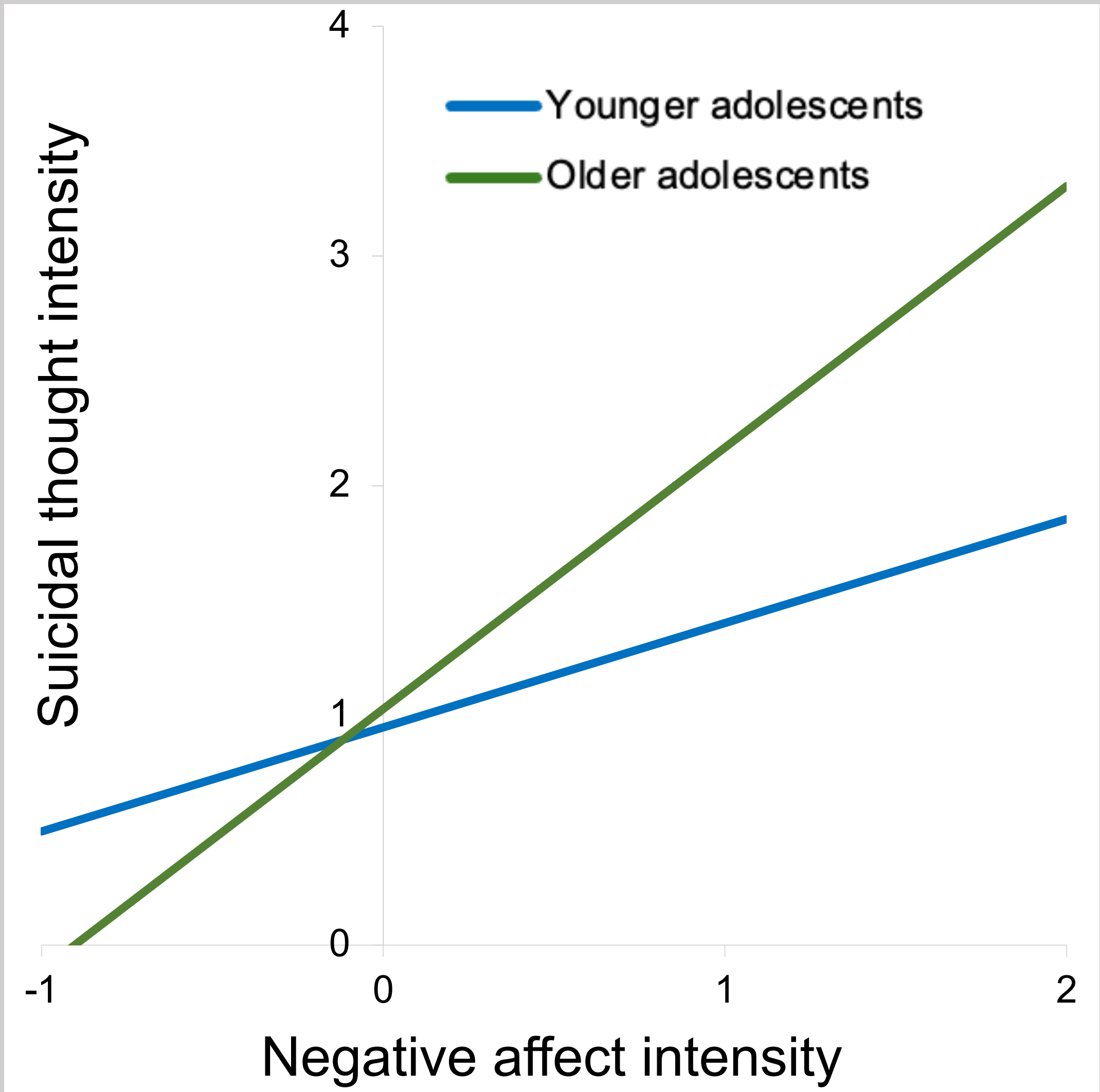
Introduction

- Rates of suicidal thoughts among adolescents are increasing
- Importance of understanding trait-level versus state-level associations between negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts in adolescents to inform *when* risk for suicidal thoughts increases
- Test age-related associations between negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts from a real-time monitoring study in a clinically high-risk sample of youth

Method

- 48 adolescents, ages 12-18 ($M_{age}=14.96$), recently discharged from acute psychiatric care for suicide risk who completed an ecological momentary assessment (EMA) design for up to 28 days
- Negative emotion states: nervous, sad, agitated, angry, guilty (0=*not at all* to 4=*extremely*)
 - Day-level worst-point intensity
 - Day-level variability
- Suicidal thought intensity (0=*absent* to 5=*extremely intense*)
 - Day-level worst-point intensity

Among older adolescents specifically, *more intense* and *variable* state-level negative emotions are linked to *more intense* suicidal thoughts.

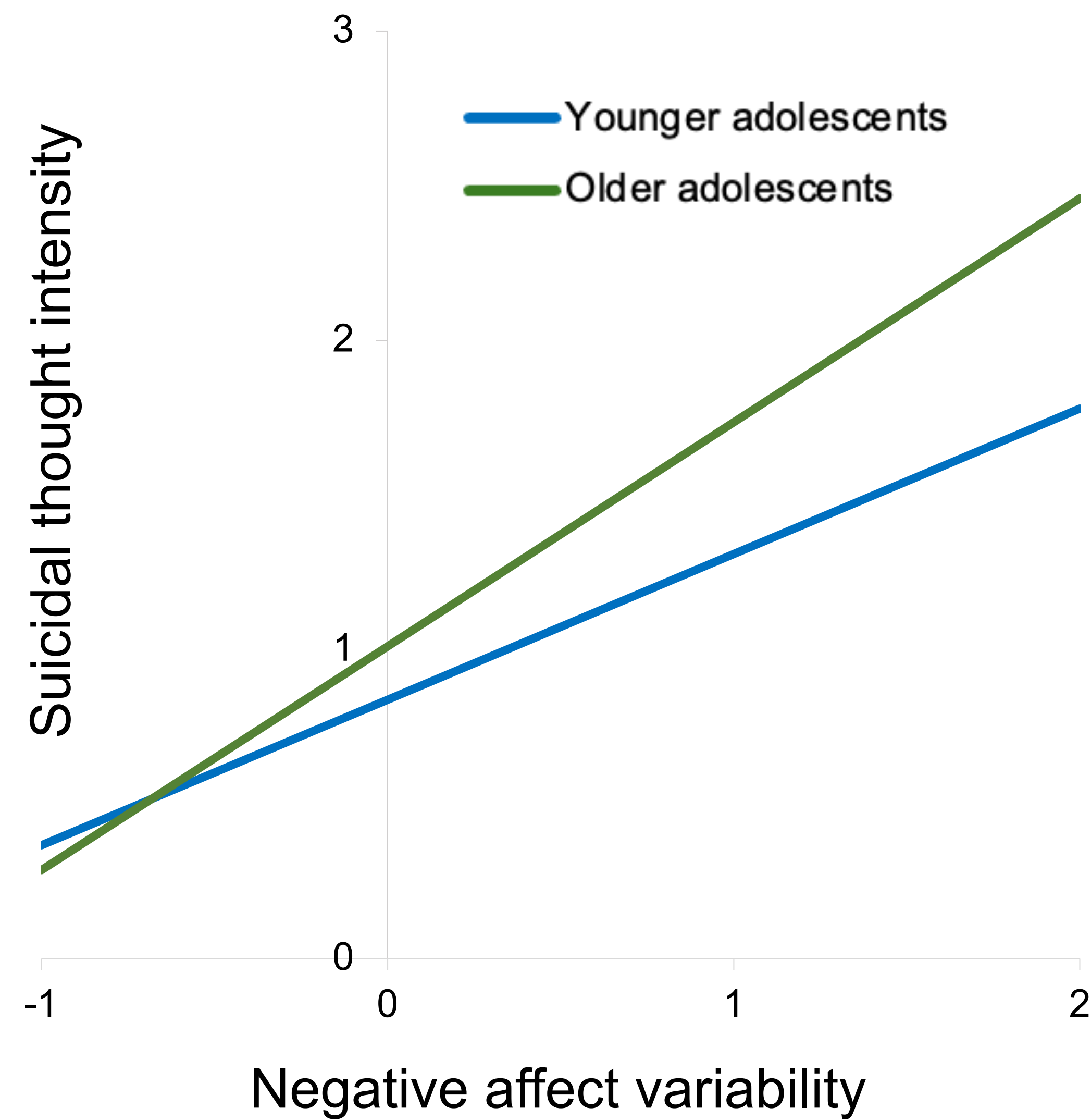


Analyses

- Multilevel modeling was used to examine age as a continuous person-level moderator of the day-level within-person associations between negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts

Results

- Age significantly moderated the association between negative emotion intensity and suicidal thoughts ($p<.001$), and negative emotion variability and suicidal thoughts ($p<.001$)
- Short-term association between negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts is stronger among older adolescents



Discussion

- Novel insights about the age-related proximal associations between negative emotion dynamics and suicidal thoughts among high-risk adolescents
- Developmental risk trajectories for suicidal thoughts among older adolescents may help inform when targeted interventions may be indicated to reduce risk

