



Trinity Health

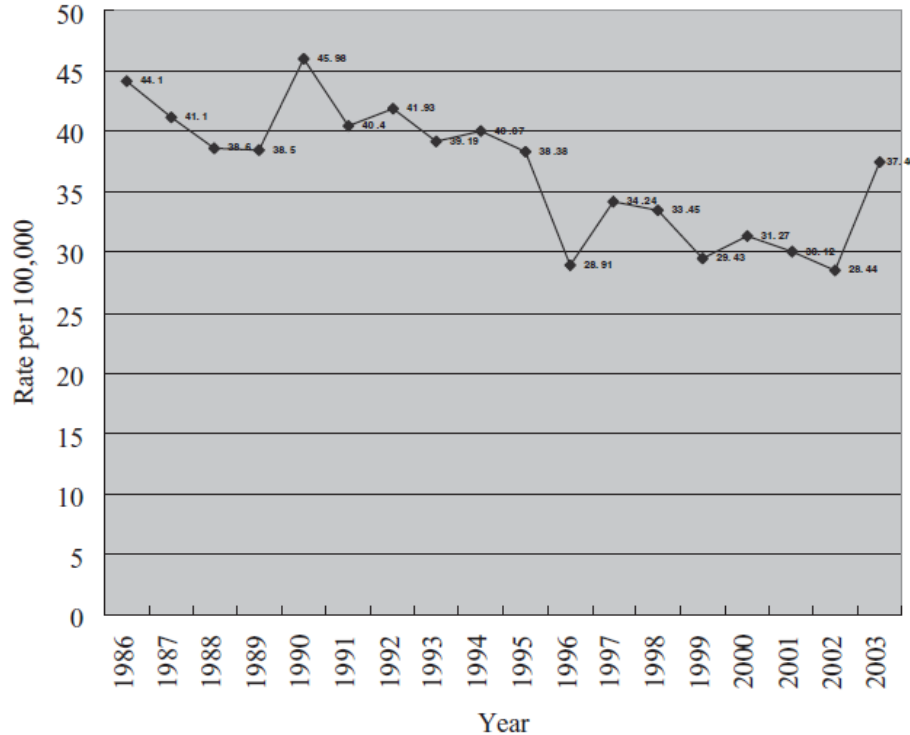
Physician Suicide Prevention and Awareness

September is National Suicide Prevention Month
September 17 is National Physician Suicide Awareness Day

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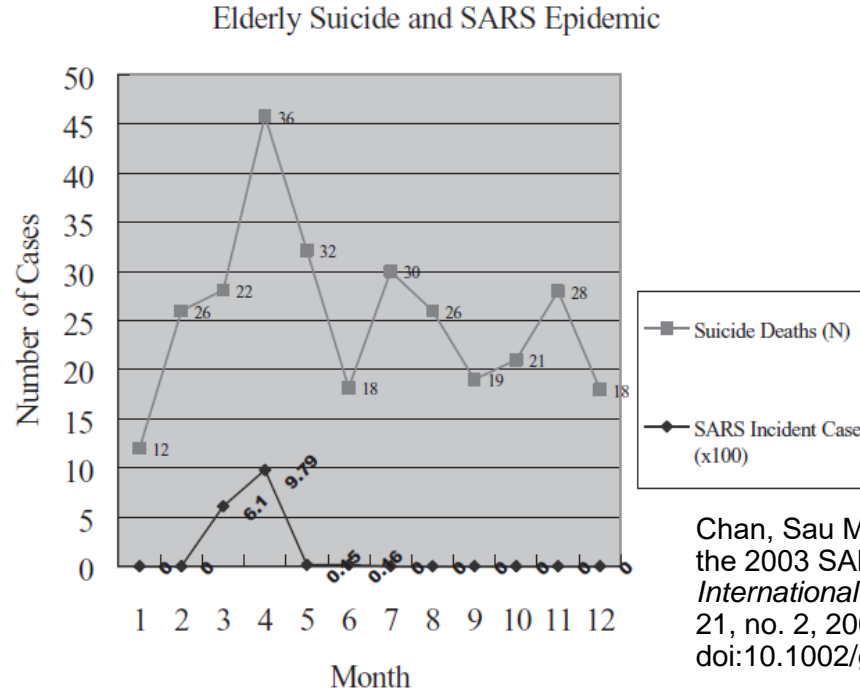
Epidemics and Suicide

Suicide Trend in Elders (65 & above) in Hong Kong (1986-2003)



Chan, Sau Man Sandra, et al. "Elderly Suicide and the 2003 SARS Epidemic in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2006, pp. 113–118., doi:10.1002/gps.1432.

Epidemics and Suicide



Chan, Sau Man Sandra, et al. "Elderly Suicide and the 2003 SARS Epidemic in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2006, pp. 113–118., doi:10.1002/gps.1432.

Suicide and Race/Age/Gender

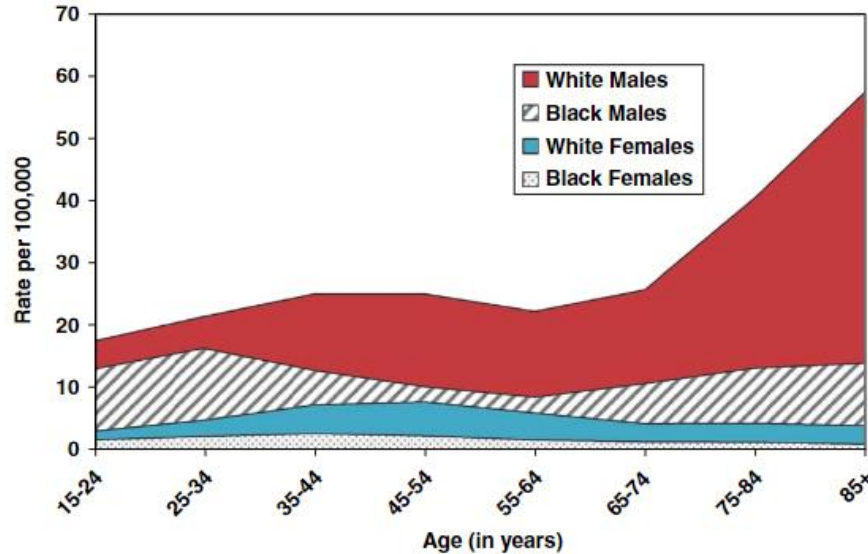


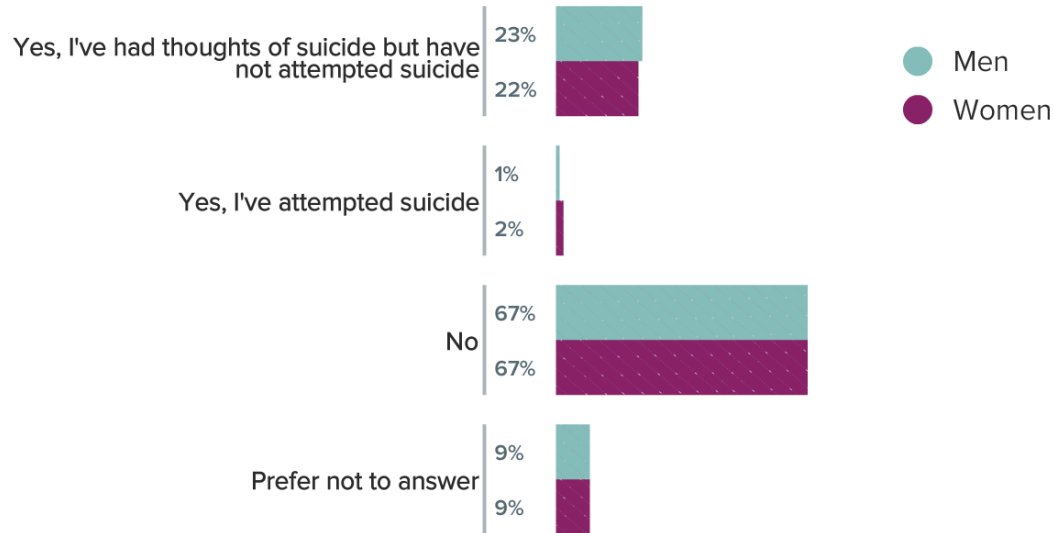
Fig. 1. Suicide rates by age, sex, and race: United States, 1999–2002.

Rockett, Ian R.h., et al. "The Black–White Suicide Paradox: Possible Effects of Misclassification." *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 63, no. 8, 2006, pp. 2165–2175., doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.05.017.

Physician suicide is a national concern

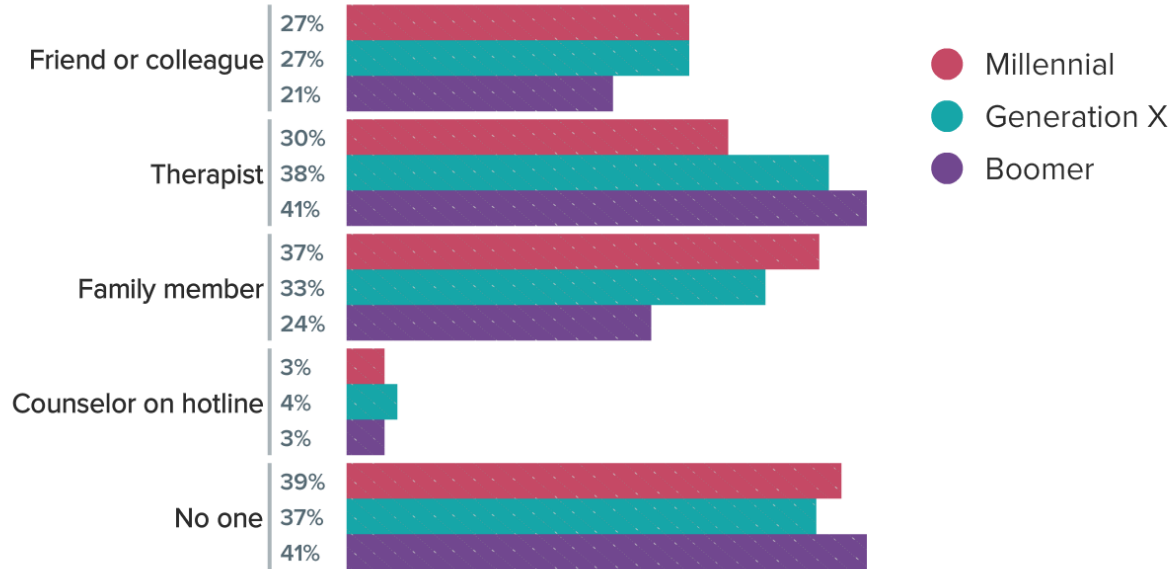
- Physicians are twice as likely as those in other professions to take their own lives.
- Physicians have a higher suicide completion rate than the general public.
- In medicine female physicians death by suicide rates are equal to men, this does not exist in any other field.
- The 2020 Medscape survey of 15,000 doctors from 29 specialties showed:
 - 23% admitted suicidal ideation with another 9% declined to answer and 1% attempting. That means more than 1 in 5 docs have thought about suicide.
 - 37% never told anyone
 - 61% have not sought help in the past and do not plan to in the future
- 2020 Medscape National Physician Depression, Burnout and Suicide Report
 - <https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2020-lifestyle-burnout-6012460>

Have you ever felt suicidal?



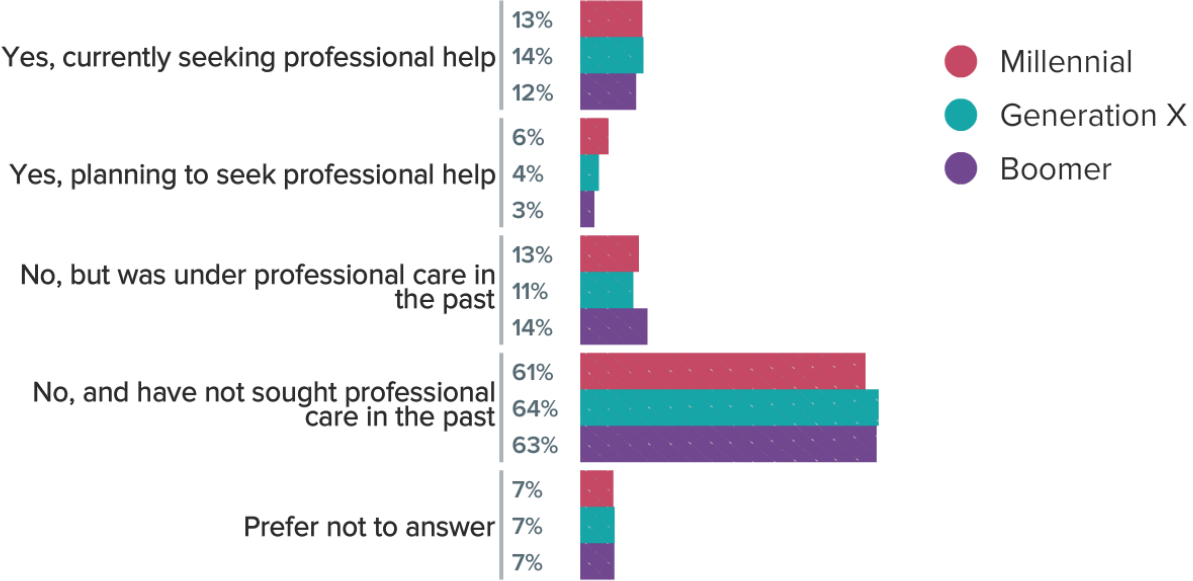
Medscape, 2020

To whom have you mentioned thoughts of suicide?



Medscape
2020

Do you plan to seek help for burnout or depression?



Medscape 2020

Physicians are less likely to reach out for help

- Physicians have high rates of distress due to:
 - Culture of silence surrounding mental health
 - Self-perceived weakness resulting in hiding of symptoms
 - Stressful experiences at work
 - Burnout
 - Pressure
- Barriers to accessing mental health care include:
 - Confidentiality concerns
 - Time constraints
 - Perception of negative ramifications to reputation, licensure or hospital privileges
 - Self-medication

Learn the signs of suicide

- Signs of suicide in physicians mirror the general public, but physicians are often better at covering up signs:
 - Hopelessness
 - Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
 - Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
 - Feeling trapped
 - Increased drug or alcohol use
 - Withdrawing from friends, family and society
 - Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
 - Dramatic mood changes

Do your part as a friend, family member, caregiver or colleague

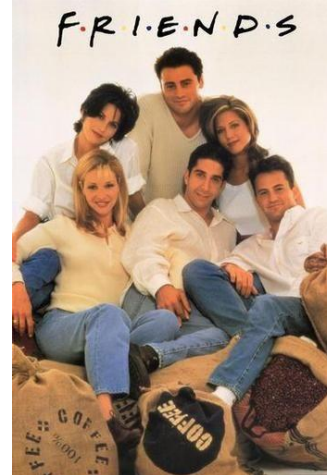
- Ask and Listen
 - "How do you hurt?" "How can I help?" "Are you thinking about suicide?"
 - Do not promise to keep their thoughts of suicide a secret.
- Keep others safe
 - Have they already done anything to try to kill themselves before talking with you? Do they have a specific plan?
- Be there for those at risk
- Help them connect
 - To the National Suicide Lifeline: 1-800 273-TALK (8255)
 - To Carebridge (if employed by the health system)
- Follow up

Find out more at: [bethe1to.com](https://www.bethe1to.com)

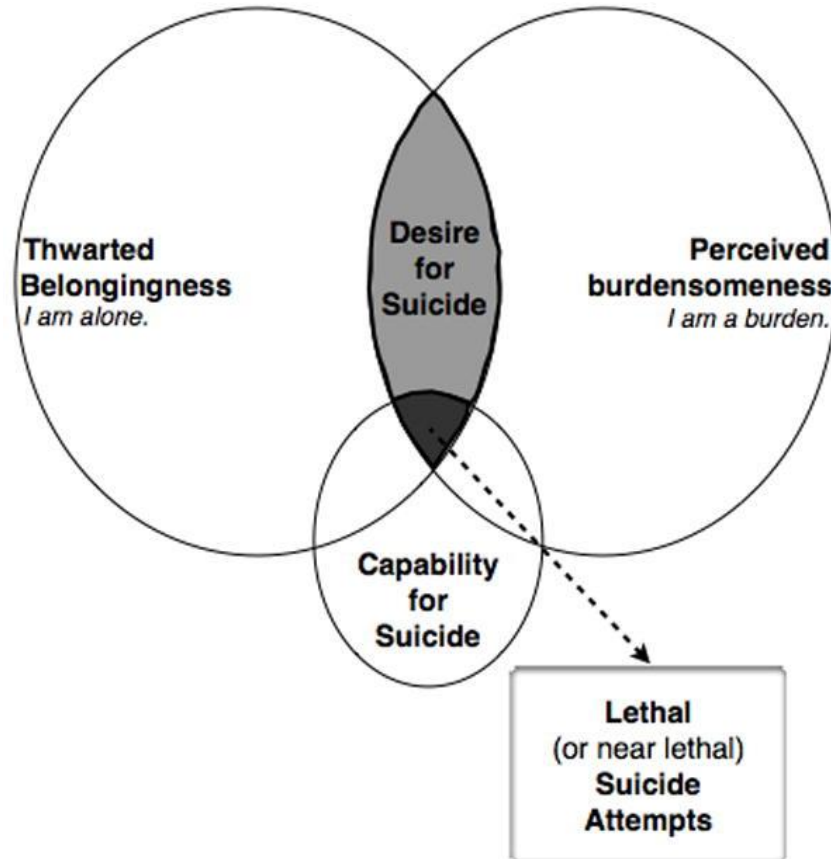
Created by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration & administered by Vibrant Emotional Health

Practice self-care and make it a priority

- Practice good emotional hygiene
 - Address emotional pain
 - Maintain your self-esteem
 - Avoid repetitive negative thoughts
- Make time for friends and family
- Make time for yourself
- Nourish your body with healthy food
- Get enough sleep
- Move your body
- Help others
- Manage your stress
- Manage other medical and physical problems
- Ask for help



Joiner's Theory



Orden, Kimberly A. Van, et al. "The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide." *Psychological Review*, vol. 117, no. 2, 2010, pp. 575–600., doi:10.1037/a0018697

A Three Step Personal Suicidal Safety Plan

1. Thwarted Belongingness– This is a sense of isolation. Develop strategies to remind oneself of those that are important and strengthen connections.

- a) Identify three people to call when you feel down and alone.
- b) Have an album of pictures on your phone to remind you that you are not alone.
- c) Keep voice mails/messages from people you love and are important to you on your phone.

2. Perceived Burdensomeness– This is a sense of failure. Develop reminders of past successes and futures dreams.

- a) Make a list of successes.
- b) Make a positive personal mantra.
- c) At a good time write a letter to yourself about why you wanted to be a doctor.
- d) Make a personal list/archive of cases where you made a difference.
- e) Make a list of your strengths.

3. Capability of Suicide- Decrease access to means. For example:

- a) If one has guns in the house, make it more difficult for impulsive decision. Have lock box. Put the ammunition further away from the gun. Place a reminder on or by the gun to call someone.
- b) Remove as much medication from the house as possible.
- c) If one has a propensity towards jumping, avoid higher levels of building (or avoid facing windows if one must go there) and attempt to avoid bridges while driving. Park on lower levels of parking garages.

5 Rules to Live By

1. Sleep at least 8 hours in a consecutive block before making any permanent decisions.
2. Do not make a suicidal decision while intoxicated with any substance.
3. One doesn't have to pursue a suicidal line of thinking whenever a suicidal thought enters one's mind.
4. Give it 3 days. Big decisions- especially ones that may be irrevocable- deserve time.
5. Call someone. If you think that they can talk you out of suicide then there likely is a part of you that wants to live and deserves to be heard.

Reach out and know where to turn if you or someone you know needs help

- National Suicide Lifeline:

- **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for physicians employed by Trinity Health:
 - Contact Carebridge 24 hours a day, seven days per week at **(800) 437-0911** or visit **www.myliferesource.com** to access online resources.
 - Enter the Trinity Health access code: **BKKR5** to create a personal account on your first visit to www.myliferesource.com.
- Independent physician practices may have an EAP benefit. Contact your Human Resources department.
- You can also call the number on the back of your medical insurance card for assistance identifying an in-network behavioral health physician.