

Study Shows Suicide Rates Significantly Higher Among Veterinarians

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Veterinarians in Australia have one of the highest expected suicide rates among other professions. A study in the Australian Veterinary Journal published by Wiley-Blackwell finds that vets are four times more likely to commit suicide as compared to the general adult population— thus highlighting the need for a thorough investigation into the rate of suicide and its contributing factors.

The study entitled "Suicide in Australian Veterinarians" is the first published study to report on actual suicide rates for this professional group. The researchers examined official records for the causes of death when ascertaining actual suicide numbers and behavioral patterns among vets.

Lead author Dr. Helen Jones-Fairnie of Curtin University in Perth, Australia says, "While doctors and dentists are among professional groups that have been cited to have high suicide rates in Australia, there are currently no published studies reporting the actual suicide rates among Australian vets, and no official comparison of these rates against other professional groups."

"In view of the apparently high suicide rate among veterinarians, further research using the total Australian population should be undertaken. In addition, accurate data on which statistics are based on are also needed to allow informed judgments and appropriate response to be made", said Dr. Jones-Fairnie.

She added, "A more representative sample is needed to determine if the suicide rate is as high as indicated and if stress and depression play a contributing role to suicide. In the meantime, the dissemination of information about distress and suicide should be balanced with advice on how to alleviate distress among veterinarians and where to obtain the most appropriate support and mentoring."

Source: Wiley

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