

Most ED docs, nurses doubtful about suicide preventability

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(HealthDay)—Less than half of emergency department (ED) physicians and nurses believe that most or all suicides are preventable, and most do not assess suicidal patients for firearm access unless the patient has a suicide plan involving a firearm, according to a study published online March 14 in *Depression and Anxiety*.

Marian E. Betz, M.D., M.P.H., from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver, and colleagues surveyed 631 physicians and nurses at eight EDs regarding beliefs and behaviors relating to preventing suicide by reducing access to lethal methods (means restrictions).

The researchers found that fewer than half of the [respondents](#) thought that most or all suicides could be prevented. Significantly more nurses than physicians thought that, if firearms were unavailable, most or all firearm decedents would have died by another method (67 versus 44 percent). Across five patient scenarios, there was variation in the proportion of providers who reported that they almost always asked suicidal patients about access to firearms, ranging from 64 percent for those who were suicidal with a firearm [suicide](#) plan to 9 percent for those who had overdosed but were no longer suicidal. Across all five scenarios, physicians were more likely than nurses to almost always or often ask about access to firearms, as were older providers, and those providers who felt that their provider type was responsible for assessing access to firearms.

"These findings suggest the need for targeted staff education concerning means restriction for [suicide prevention](#)," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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