

# Screening for suicidal thoughts and behaviors declines with patient age

September 6 2016

---

In a recent analysis of patient charts from eight different emergency departments, documented screening for self-harm, suicide ideation, or suicide attempts declined with age, from approximately 81 percent in younger age groups to a low of 68 percent among those aged greater than or equal to 85 years.

The prevalence of patients identified as having [suicidal thoughts](#) and behaviors through these screens also declined with age, with a peak among young and middle-aged adults (9.0 percent) and a low among patients aged greater than or equal to 75 years (1.2 percent).

"It is unclear whether our findings are from a bias in care or from [older patients](#) being less able to answer questions because of conditions like dementia," said Dr. Marian Betz, lead author of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study. "Additional research and program development could hopefully help providers better identify older adults at risk of suicide."

**More information:** Marian E. Betz et al, Screening for Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Older Adults in the Emergency Department, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.14529](#)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Screening for suicidal thoughts and behaviors declines with patient age (2016, September 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-screening-suicidal-thoughts-behaviors-declines.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.