

# Five things to know about physician suicide

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Physician suicide is an urgent problem with rates higher than suicide rates in the general public, with potential for extensive impact on health care systems.

A "Five things to know about ..." practice article in *CMAJ* (*Canadian*

*Medical Association Journal*) provides an overview of this serious issue.

Five things about physician suicide:

- As the only means of death more common in physicians than nonphysicians, suicide is an occupational hazard for physicians.
- Firearms, overdose and blunt force trauma are the most common means, with benzodiazepines, barbiturates and antipsychotics being the most commonly used drugs.
- Increased [suicidal ideation](#) begins as early as in [medical school](#), with nearly 1 in 4 students surveyed reporting suicidal ideation within the last 12 months.
- Complaints to regulatory bodies are associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation.
- Suicidal physicians face unique barriers to care, including concerns regarding confidentiality, and fears of stigmatization and discrimination from peers, employers and licensing bodies.

**More information:** *CMAJ* (2019).

[www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.181687](http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.181687)

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