

# Physician depressive symptoms tied to higher risk for medical errors

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(HealthDay)—Physicians showing depressive symptoms are at higher

risk for medical errors, according to a review published Nov. 27 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Karina Pereira-Lima, Ph.D., from the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature search to identify studies that reported on a valid measure of physician [depressive symptoms](#) associated with perceived or observed [medical errors](#).

Eleven studies involving 21,517 physicians were identified. Although the studies showed high heterogeneity, the researchers found that overall risk for medical errors was higher among physicians with a positive screening for depression (relative risk, 1.95). Most heterogeneity was explained by [study design](#), with lower relative risk estimates in [longitudinal studies](#) (relative risk, 1.62) and higher relative risk estimates in cross-sectional studies (relative risk, 2.51). In a meta-analysis of four longitudinal studies (4,462 individuals), medical errors were associated with subsequent depressive symptoms (relative risk, 1.67), suggesting that the association between physician depressive symptoms and medical errors is bidirectional.

"Further research is needed to evaluate whether interventions to reduce physician depressive symptoms could play a role in mitigating medical errors and thus improving physician well-being and patient care," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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