

# Globally, no increase seen in suicides in early COVID-19 pandemic

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In high-income and upper-middle-income countries, suicide numbers

remained unchanged or declined in the early months of the pandemic versus the prepandemic period, according to a study published online April 13 in *The Lancet Psychiatry*.

Jane Pirkis, Ph.D., from the University of Melbourne in Australia, and colleagues assessed the early effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on [suicide rates](#) around the world (16 high-income and five upper-middle-income countries). Official websites of countries' ministries of health, police agencies, and government-run statistics agencies or other public sources were searched for "suicide" and "cause of death." Monthly data were collected for Jan. 1, 2019, to July 31, 2020.

The researchers found no evidence of a significant increase in the risk for suicide since the pandemic began in any country or area. In 12 countries or areas, there was a statistical decrease in suicide compared with the expected number: New South Wales, Australia (rate ratio, 0.81); Alberta, Canada (0.80); British Columbia, Canada (0.76); Chile (0.85); Leipzig, Germany (0.49); Japan (0.94); New Zealand (0.79); South Korea (0.94); California (0.90); Cook County, Illinois (0.79); four counties in Texas (0.82); and Ecuador (0.74).

"We need to remain vigilant and be poised to respond if the situation changes as the longer-term [mental health](#) and economic effects of the pandemic unfold," the authors write.

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