

Transgender people face much higher risk of suicide, landmark study shows

June 29 2023, by Cara Murez



New research has found that people who are transgender are far more

prone to suicide than their peers.

The new study, using Denmark's centralized data repository, found that transgender people had 7.7 times the rate of [suicide attempts](#) compared to others, the study found. They also had 3.5 times the rate of suicide deaths.

Suicide rates in all groups did decrease over time, the study noted.

Still, transgender people died at younger ages than others, whether by suicide or from other causes, researchers said.

"This is beyond doubt a huge problem that needs to be looked at," study co-author [Dr. Morten Frisch](#), a sexual health epidemiologist at Statens Serum Institute in Copenhagen, told the *New York Times*.

To study the issue, his team identified nearly 3,800 transgender people in Denmark through hospital records and applications for legal gender changes. The study found 92 suicide attempts and 12 suicide deaths in the transgender group between 1980 and 2021.

The U.S. and Denmark have similar [suicide rates](#), so the findings may also apply in America, the researchers noted.

Yet it's also possible the data don't capture all suicides among transgender people or contain information on all transgender people, the *Times* noted.

"These surveys tend to include much broader spectrums of trans individuals, and we cannot be as certain that our results are as problematic in the broader group," Frisch said.

The findings could suggest an even higher risk of suicide by LGBTQ

people in other places, such as the United States, where transgender people and others have been targeted by laws restricting bathroom use for transgender people, gender-related medical care and drag performances.

"This offers a stark rebuttal to some of those political arguments suggesting suicide risk in these groups are exaggerated," [Ann Haas](#), an emeritus professor at the City University of New York who has studied [suicide](#) risk among LGBTQ people for two decades, told the *Times*.

The Danish study found that among people who were transgender, 43% had a psychiatric diagnosis compared to 7% of the non-transgender group.

"Trans people face widespread poverty, widespread discrimination, they're more likely to experience homelessness, they're overrepresented in our nation's prison system, our nation's foster care system," [Gillian Branstetter](#), a communications strategist at the American Civil Liberties Union who focuses on [transgender rights](#), told the *Times*. "That material lack has very real consequences on their lives, up to and including early deaths."

The researchers cautioned against drawing broad conclusions and noted that the raw number of suicides and attempts among [transgender people](#) was still small.

The findings were published June 27 in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#).

More information: The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers [help](#) to people experiencing suicidal thoughts and mental health crises and can be reached by dialing 988.

Annette Erlangsen et al, Transgender Identity and Suicide Attempts and Mortality in Denmark, *JAMA* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2023.8627](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.8627)

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