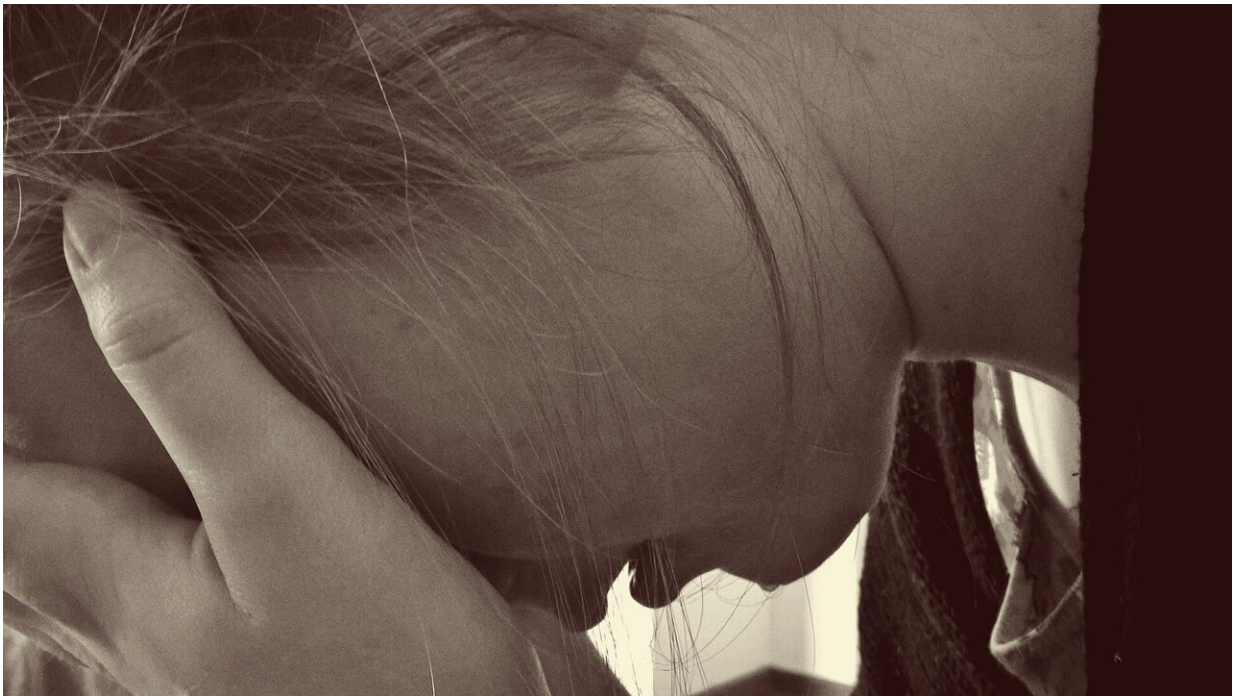


Review highlights significant gaps in suicide prevention technology

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Researchers have found users need to be included more in the development of suicide prevention technology, following a review with Charles Darwin University (CDU).

The research by CDU and the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom examined the extent codesign and experts-by-experience were

used in the development of suicide prevention technology.

["Codesign of Digital Health Tools for Suicide Prevention: A Scoping Review"](#) was published in the *Journal of Biomedical Engineering and Medical Imaging* on World Suicide Prevention Day.

Codesign is defined as a collaboration between researchers and [end users](#) from the beginning of development. Experts-by-experience is defined as people who have recent personal experience of using and caring for someone who uses health, [mental health](#) and/or social care services.

The review examined 61 articles and records on suicide prevention technology, published between November 2022 and March 2023.

Lead author and CDU Associate Professor of Social Work Dianne Wepa said the review found a disconnect between developers, researchers, and experts-by-experience.

The findings also revealed codesign was not included as a methodology in the development of suicide prevention technology.

"Given the exponential rise of digital solutions for suicide prevention, there appears however to be a disconnect between bringing the technology to market and involving experts-by-experience or service users as codesigners," Associate Professor Wepa said.

With a rapidly evolving technological environment, understanding the place and space of experts-by-experience in suicide prevention requires urgent attention.

"Authentic involvement requires experts-by-experience as co-authors and end-to-end partners from design, implementation and evaluation of digital health tools for suicide prevention."

The review also found the digital divide—the unequal access to technology—could worsen in the future and hinder access to [suicide prevention](#) technology.

"The [digital divide](#) is noteworthy as a future concern as countries such as the United Kingdom are phasing out 2G and 3G networks in 2023 to make room for faster 5G networks," Associate Professor Wepa said.

"The implications for those on low incomes and experiencing mental distress may not be visible to the public as access to [digital platforms](#) in the future will require uninterrupted connectivity through smartphones and internet access."

The review is part of a three-phase study into codesign of digital health tools. Associate Professor Wepa said results from the scoping review would inform phase three of the study.

More information: Wepa, D et al, Codesign of Digital Health Tools for Suicide Prevention: A Scoping Review, *Journal of Biomedical Engineering and Medical Imaging* (2023). [DOI: 10.14738/bjhmr.105.15365](#)

Provided by Charles Darwin University

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