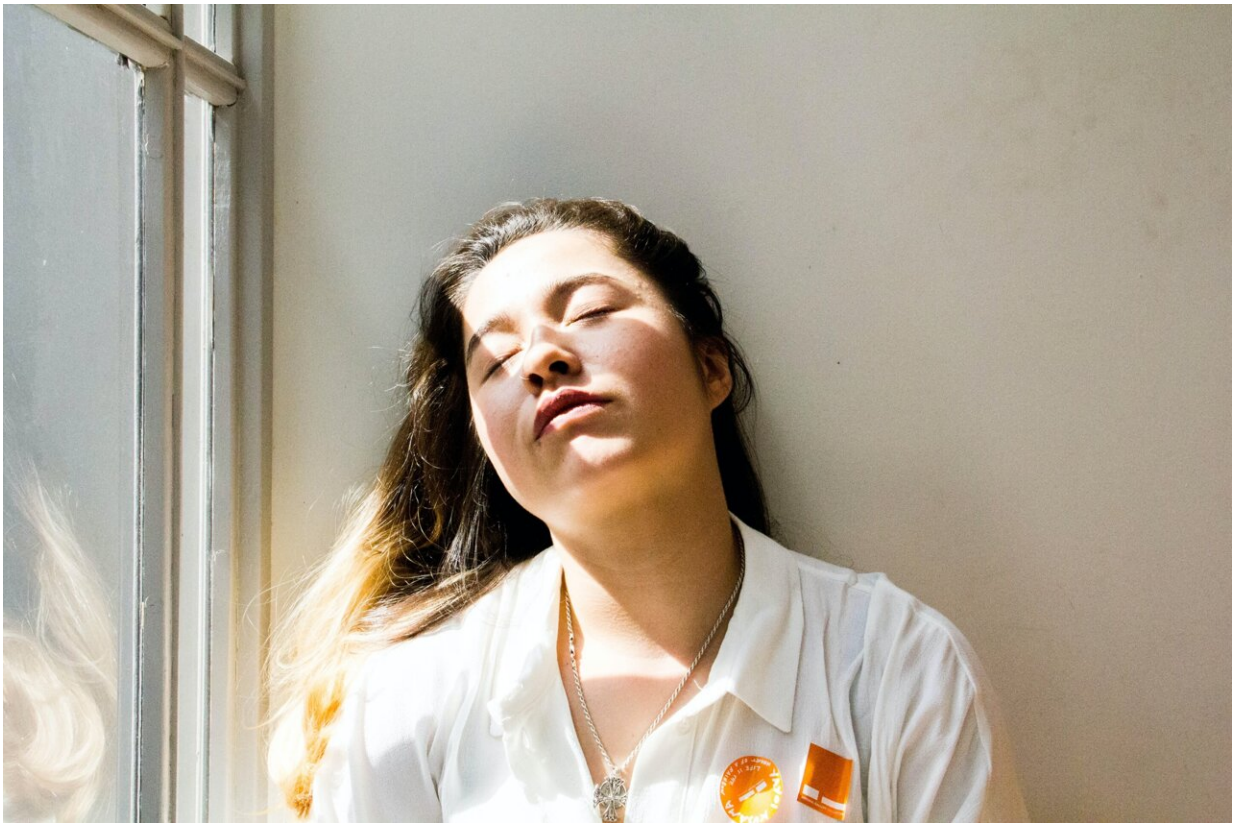


# Research team studies homicides of health professionals

September 26 2023, by Alex Smith

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Published in the [Journal of Clinical Psychology](#), University of Minnesota Medical School researchers have examined homicide rates of health professionals in the United States to inform prevention interventions and

strategies.

The research team used the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) to collect data on the number of homicides among ten types of [health professionals](#), including doctors, psychologists, nurses, social workers and pharmacists.

The study found rates of homicides of health professionals are lower than the general population. Few of these homicides were related to professionals' work. Most often, it's related to other facets of their life, such as [domestic violence](#) and societal trends like gun violence.

Specifically, their research found:

- 944 homicides of these professionals were reported to the NVDRS between 2003 and 2020.
- In 2020 alone, 126 health professional homicide victims were reported.
- Nearly 80% of these homicide victims were women.
- 56% of these homicides involved a gun.

"Violence in health care is a well-recognized problem. Tragically, some health professionals are murdered each year in the United States," said William Robiner, Ph.D., professor at the U of M Medical School and psychologist with M Health Fairview. "The loss of each health professional affects their loved ones, colleagues, patients and communities, and compounds health care access issues and workforce shortages."

Overall, the number of homicides within these professions correlated highly with the size of professions' workforces. For example, the health profession with the highest number of victims was nursing, which reflects that nursing is the largest health care profession. Further

research is suggested to provide greater insights into emerging trends, which will inform strategies to mitigate homicide risk in health professionals. Prevention must also go beyond health care settings and address societal roots of violence.

**More information:** William N. Robiner et al, Homicides of psychologists, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and other health professionals: National Violent Death Reporting System data 2003–2020, *Journal of Clinical Psychology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/jclp.23589](https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23589)

Provided by University of Minnesota Medical School

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