Treatment for opioid dependence has an important role in suicide prevention
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Council-funded Clinical Research Fellow, Population Health Sciences at the University of Bristol and lead author of the study, said: “The findings of this study emphasize that people with opioid dependence are much more likely to die by suicide compared with the general population. Opioid agonist treatment is often stigmatized and has been under-funded. This research strengthens the case for valuing initiatives that improve engagement with treatment and provide psychological support, particularly at the point at which treatment ends or is stopped.”

Professor Matt Hickman, senior author, from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Protection Research Unit in Behavioural Science and Evaluation at University of Bristol, said: "The UK has one of the highest rates of drug-related deaths in Europe, and these deaths most commonly involve opiates such as heroin. However, suicide prevention in people dependent on opiates is a neglected area, which is important for reducing drug-related harm, suicides, and premature death. The first few weeks after treatment cessation is critical a period to re-engage people so as to prevent overdose and also, as this study shows, suicide."


