Insomnia and Suicide Attempts

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Recent research indicates that middle-aged and older adults (aged 44 to 87) with depression who also report suicidal ideation and insomnia are at higher risk for suicide attempts than their peers with depression and suicidal thoughts who do not have insomnia. The authors recommend that clinicians working with depressed middle-aged and older adults can reduce their suicide risk by assessing and treating them for sleep disturbances.

The study found that insomnia was more severe among people with depression who had attempted suicide than among people with depression and suicidal ideation who had not made an attempt, and people with depression who had not made an attempt or experienced suicidal ideation. There was no difference in insomnia severity between people with depression and suicidal ideation, and people with depression but no history of suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

These relationships held after adjusting for demographics, cognitive ability, alcohol dependence, severity of depression, anxiety, physical health, interpersonal difficulties, executive functioning, posttraumatic stress disorder, and use of benzodiazepines.


Populations: Adults, Adults Ages 26 to 55 Years, Older Adults
About Suicide: Risk and Protective Factors
Strategies: Effective Care/Treatment