Restricting Suicidal Patients' Access to Drugs with High Case Fatality Rates Vital to Suicide Prevention

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New research suggests limiting access to certain types of drugs may help prevent suicide among those at risk. Researchers used data on intentional drug poisonings in 11 states between 2011 and 2012. They found that an overdose was more likely to be fatal if it involved opioids or barbiturates. Previous research on intentional poisonings has lumped different types of drugs together. According to the study authors, examining the risk of suicide death by drug class can help inform prevention efforts. “Becoming suicidal is not a death sentence,” wrote Catherine Barber of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center in a related editorial. “In their roles as prescribers, healers, and advisors, physicians can help to reduce both the likelihood of an attempt and, with the help of research like that by Miller et al., the risk that an attempt will prove fatal.”

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