



## Substance Use Disorders and Suicide Risk

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Substance use disorders were associated with increased risk of suicide death in a study of health care system patients. Those who had multiple alcohol, drug, and tobacco use disorders were at particularly high risk of suicide.

Researchers used 2000 to 2013 data from health care systems participating in the Mental Health Research Network. Participants included 2,674 patients who died by suicide and 267,400 matched controls. The researchers looked at demographics, physical health status, and mental health and substance use disorder diagnoses, including single and multiple alcohol, drug, and tobacco use disorders.

All categories of substance use disorders were significantly associated with suicide death after adjusting for demographics, physical health status, and mental health conditions. Substance use disorders had different levels of suicide risk, with tobacco use disorder having the lowest risk and combined alcohol, drug, and tobacco use disorders having the highest risk. The connection between relative suicide risk and substance use disorder was more pronounced for women than men.

Suicide risk screening and other prevention efforts should be implemented in health systems to help prevent suicide among those experiencing multiple substance use disorders.

Lynch, F. L., Peterson, E. L., Lu, C. Y., Hu, Y., Rossom, R. C., Waitzfelder, B. E., Owen-Smith, A. A., Hubley, S., Prabhakar, D., Williams, L. K., Beck, A., Simon, G. E., & Ahmedani, B. K. (2020). Substance use disorders and risk of suicide in a general U.S. population: A case control study. *Addiction Science & Clinical Practice*, 15(1), 14.

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