

Impact of Patient Suicide on Psychiatrist and Trainees

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Introduction: Global studies show that patient suicides among psychiatrists, including trainees, range from 33% to 80%.

Objectives: To our knowledge, there is no such data in the USA following a single study in 1988 regarding psychiatrists' or resident trainees' emotional response to patient suicide. The objective of our study was to assess the emotional impact of patient suicide and identify their coping strategies and support system.

Methodology: Data was collected by sending an online version of the survey to randomly selected private psychiatrists and program directors to share with their residents and fellows in training. Participants' stress was assessed by the the impact of event scale–revised version (IES-R).

Results: Our study shows 324 (63.6 %) of the participants experienced patient suicide, which included 292 psychiatrists (76.1%) and 31 trainees (27.2%). Among the respondents, 3.8% of the psychiatrists and 9.7% of the trainees had clinically significant stress & trauma-related disorders.

Discussion: Compared to other studies, a higher number of psychiatrists deal with patient suicide in the United States, but it was lower among the trainees.

Conclusions: Presence of higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depression compared to medical or surgical colleagues depicts the need for training programs, formal and informal support, workshops, or curricular changes to address this almost inevitable issue in a psychiatrist's career.

Biography

Dr. Barman is an attending psychiatrist, medical director & chair in inpatient behavioral health at Genesis Health System, Davenport, Iowa, United States. He completed his medical school from Calcutta Medical College, Kolkata, India, Psychiatry residency from Virginia-Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Roanoke, Virginia, US; Geriatric Psychiatry fellowship from Cambridge Health Alliance, Harvard Medical School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, US. After completion of training in adult and geriatric psychiatry, he joined Berkeley Medical Center, West Virginia University Medicine as an assistant professor and served as clerkship director for the medical students. He has special interest and research experience on Late onset PTSD and its correlation with cognitive decline, Trauma & stress related disorders following patient suicide, inappropriate antibiotic use in older adults and currently researching on late onset stress symptomatology.