

# Nurses think about suicide more than other workers

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Mayo Clinic researchers report that nurses in the U.S. experience suicidal ideation in greater numbers than other general workers and those who do are less likely to tell anyone about it. The findings appear in the

*American Journal of Nursing.*

More than 7,000 nurses responded to a [national survey](#) on well-being, with questions ranging from burnout to depression. More than 400 nurses reported having suicidal ideation within the past year. That's 5½% of the respondents, which is nearly 1% higher than the general workforce sample at 4.3%.

Those who reported suicidal ideation also said they were less likely than other respondents to seek professional help for their emotional issues. More than one-third of the nurses had at least one symptom of burnout and 40% screened positive for symptoms of depression.

The researchers say their findings indicate that the situation needs urgent attention, and systems- and practice-based interventions need to be developed and implemented to address burnout and [suicidal ideation](#).

It's important to note that this survey was conducted, beginning in late 2017, with [data collection](#) in 2018, before any of these nurses were confronted with effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While the findings of our study are serious enough, we recognize the impact of the current pandemic has dramatically compounded the situation," says Liselotte Dyrbye, M.D., a Mayo Clinic internist and the senior author. "The need for system-level interventions to improve the work lives of nurses and other members of the health care team is greater than ever before."

The questionnaire was sent in November 2017 to 86,858 nurses and a sample of 5,198 general workforce members.

**More information:** Elizabeth A. Kelsey et al, Original Research: Suicidal Ideation and Attitudes Toward Help Seeking in U.S. Nurses

Relative to the General Working Population, *AJN, American Journal of Nursing* (2021). [DOI: 10.1097/01.NAJ.0000798056.73563.f8](https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NAJ.0000798056.73563.f8)

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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