

# Frailty tied to higher risk for suicide attempts in older veterans

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Frailty is associated with an increased risk for suicide attempts among

older veterans, according to a study published online Feb. 22 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Randall L. Kuffel, from San Francisco VA Health Care System in California, and colleagues assessed whether frailty is a factor associated with the risk for suicide attempts. The analysis included 2.8 million U.S. veterans (aged 65 years and older) who received care at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers (from Oct. 1, 2011, to Sept. 30, 2013).

The researchers found that 8,955 participants (0.3 percent) attempted suicide during the six-year study period. The risk for suicide attempt was uniformly higher among patients with any level of frailty (prefrailty: adjusted hazard ratio [aHR], 1.34; mild frailty: aHR, 1.44; moderate frailty: aHR, 1.48; severe frailty: aHR, 1.42) compared with patients without frailty. A greater risk for lethal suicide attempt was seen for lower levels of frailty (aHR, 1.20 for prefrail veterans). There were also independent associations observed between an increased risk for [suicide attempt](#) for veterans and [bipolar disorder](#) (aHR, 2.69), depression (aHR, 1.78), anxiety (aHR, 1.36), [chronic pain](#) (aHR, 1.22), use of durable medical equipment (aHR, 1.14), and lung disease (aHR, 1.11).

"Screening and involvement of supportive services across the spectrum of frailty appear to be needed to help reduce risk of [suicide attempts](#)," the authors write.

**More information:** Randall L. Kuffel et al, Association of Frailty With Risk of Suicide Attempt in a National Cohort of US Veterans Aged 65 Years or Older, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.5144](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.5144)

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