

# Physical illness hospitalization found to increase suicide risk

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Ping Qin, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Aarhus in Denmark, and colleagues conducted a nested case-control study using data from 27,262 suicide cases in Denmark and 468,007 matched control subjects to evaluate whether suicide risk is associated with hospitalization for illnesses or specific illness or comorbidities.

The researchers found that hospitalization for physical illness was reported in 63.5 percent of suicide cases, compared with 44.5 percent of comparison controls. Physical illness was associated with a more than doubling of the risk of subsequent suicide, particularly in women. The risk of suicide was higher for those who had been hospitalized more frequently and/or recently and for those with more than one involved organ or system. Overall, physical illness accounted for

24.4, 21.0, and 32.3 percent of the population-attributable [suicide risk](#) in the total, male, and female populations, respectively.

"The results from this population study indicate the need to integrate [suicide prevention](#) within hospital treatment as well as within general medical practice," the authors write. "Patients hospitalized for physical illness not only form a well-defined [population group](#) at high risk of suicide, but also maintain frequent contact with their general practitioner after hospital discharge. This provides opportunities for both risk assessment and prevention."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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