

# National Suicide Prevention Month: Researchers Continue to Find that Suicide is a Real Risk of Antidepressants

*Consumers need to know about the increased risk of suicide from antidepressants so they can make fully informed decisions for themselves and their children.*

WASHINGTON, DC, US, September 22, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- National Suicide Prevention Month is a good time to raise the awareness that antidepressants increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior in children and adults, according to the findings of a growing number of research studies.

Recently, researchers led by Michael P. Hengartner, PhD, senior researcher in the Department of Applied Psychology, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, conducted a systematic review of studies reporting a risk of suicide or suicide attempt for adult patients using new-generation antidepressants and concluded the drugs increased the risk of suicide. Though no increased risk was found in this study specifically for selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants, the researchers advised that publication bias (non-publication of unfavorable trial results) and financial conflicts of interest (due to pharmaceutical industry funding of drug trials) likely skewed the suicide rates lower in the studies used in this systematic review than would have been found otherwise.

“Exposure to new-generation antidepressants is associated with higher suicide risk in adult routine-care patients with depression and other treatment indications. Publication bias and [financial conflicts of interest] likely contribute to systematic underestimation of risk in the published literature,” they wrote in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. [1]

A 2019 study by Hengartner and Martin Plöderl did find an increased risk of suicide from SSRI



Research has found antidepressants double the risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior.

antidepressants. The researchers re-analyzed data submitted to the FDA after approval of antidepressant drugs and concluded the drugs more than doubled the risk of suicidal behavior in adults. "In this re-analysis of the FDA safety summaries, we found evidence that the rate of (attempted) suicide was about 2.5 times higher in antidepressant [users] relative to placebo," they wrote in *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*. [2]

Those results were similar to the 2016 findings by researchers from the Nordic Cochrane Centre in Copenhagen, led by Andreas Bielefeldt, who conducted a systematic review of clinical trials in which SSRI and SNRI

(serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor) antidepressants were given to healthy adult volunteers with no signs of depression. Their conclusion, published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, was that "antidepressants double the risk of suicidality and violence." [3]

“

Exposure to new-generation antidepressants is associated with higher suicide risk in adult routine-care patients with depression.”

*Michael P Hengartner, PhD,  
Zurich University of Applied  
Sciences*

A black box warning label on antidepressants was first required by the FDA in 2004 to warn of the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior for children and adolescents. The action came after drug trials found that children and teens taking antidepressants were almost twice as likely to have suicidal thoughts or to attempt suicide than children receiving placebos. The warning was expanded in 2007 to include young adults through age 24.

In response to critics' complaints that more suicides were caused by youngsters not treated with antidepressants because of the warning, researchers led by Glen Spielmanns, PhD, professor of psychology at Metro State University in Minneapolis, recently re-analyzed data from clinical trials and concluded the warning of increased risk of suicidal thoughts and actions in children and young adults is clearly justified.

"Clinical trials...demonstrated increased risk of suicidality adverse events among youth taking antidepressants," the researchers wrote in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* in 2020. They further added, "More recent data suggest that increasing antidepressant prescriptions are related to more



The FDA has required a warning on antidepressants about the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior in children and young adults through age 24.

youth suicide attempts and more completed suicides among American children and adolescents.” [4]

Antidepressant use has risen significantly over the past 15 years – and so have suicides. In 2020, some 45 million Americans, or roughly one in seven, were taking antidepressants, up from 34 million in 2006. This 32% increase in users parallels the 35% increase in suicides in the U.S. over the same period.

The rapid rise in antidepressant prescriptions is even more dramatic in children and young adults. Over the past 15 years, the number of children on antidepressants grew from 3.3 million in 2006 to 5.6 million in 2020, an increase of more than 70%, right along with the alarming rise in youth suicides.

Consumers have a right to know about the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior from taking antidepressants. Without this vital information, they cannot make fully informed decisions about mental health treatment for themselves or their children.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) has long recommended that individuals experiencing depression should ask their physician for a complete physical examination with lab tests and allergy screening to discover any underlying physical conditions that could be causing their mental symptoms.

**WARNING:** Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of an antidepressant or other behavioral drug is cautioned to do so only under the supervision of a physician because of potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.



Consumers have a right to know that antidepressants increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior so they can make fully informed decisions about the drugs for themselves or their children.



The Citizens Commission on Human Rights was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and the late psychiatrist and humanitarian Thomas Szasz, M.D., recognized by many academics as modern psychiatry's most authoritative critic, to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights and protections at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured 441 major cities worldwide and educated over 800,000 people on the history to the present day of abusive and racist psychiatric practices, has been displayed at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and at other locations.

[1] <https://jech.bmj.com/content/75/6/523>

[2] <https://www.karger.com/Article/FullText/501215>

[3] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27729596>

[4] <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00018/full>

Anne Goedeke

Citizens Commission on Human Rights, National Affairs Office

+1 202-349-9267

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/592137472>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.