

RESULTS

The systematic review found that people bereaved by suicide were at increased risk for a number of adverse physical health conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD). They also experienced more physical health complaints, physical illnesses and physical pain.

The qualitative study found that participants also experienced adverse psychosomatic health experiences including feelings of nausea, vomiting, chest pains, palpitations, physical pain, abdominal pains, and breathlessness. Sometimes, these symptoms continued in the months after the death and were associated with diagnoses such as hypertension, diverticulitis and type 1 diabetes.

Due to these health difficulties, adequate formal and informal support was crucial for family members. Participants endorsed informal support as being equally important as formal support. Participants spoke of difficulties accessing formal support services due to grief reactions, being unsure where to access such support and not having the financial means to pay for such support.

RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

The findings indicate that family members bereaved by suicide are a particularly vulnerable group, and efforts are required to prevent and ameliorate such physical and psychological harm after suicide.

- Greater awareness amongst health professionals of the elevated levels of psychological and physical ill-health is required. Health professionals, coroners and any other professional in contact with those bereaved by suicide should pro-actively facilitate support for those bereaved by suicide.
- Better availability of formal support services is crucial, where accessing such support is not dependent on financial status.
- More longitudinal and controlled studies are required, to fully understand how family members' health is impacted following the death.

Links to full-text of [systematic review](#) and [qualitative study](#)

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Suicide Support and Information: <http://suicidesupportandinformation.ie/>
- Samaritans: 116 123 (free phone); text message (standard text rates apply: 087 2609090); email: jo@samaritans.ie
- Aware: www.aware.ie; 1800 804848 (free phone); email: supportmail@aware.ie

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was funded by the National Suicide Research Foundation and was conducted as part of the SPHeRE Programme under grant number SPHeRE/2013/1. The National Suicide Research Foundation is in receipt of funding from the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention and the Health Research Board Ireland. The researchers would like to thank the family members bereaved by suicide who took part in this research.

