

## JNNP Patient Choice

**Lay summary for:**

**Suicide among Danes with multiple sclerosis**

H Brønnum-Hansen, E Stenager, E Nylev Stenager, and N Koch-Henriksen  
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People living with multiple sclerosis (MS) are almost twice as likely to commit suicide as the general population, finds a Danish study. Worryingly, it's a statistic that has changed little for around half a century, the figures show.

The research team tracked the deaths of people on the Danish Multiple Sclerosis Registry from 1953 to the end of 1998. In all, just over 10,000 people, 4,000 of whom were men, were placed on the register between 1953 and 1996.

Their investigation revealed that 115 people had taken their own lives, 63 of whom were men. But when set against the expected number of suicides in the general population, the figures showed that rates were twice as high among those with MS.

Expected deaths by suicide among the general population numbered 54.2–29.1 for men and 25.1 for women—over this period. Suicide risk peaked during the first year after diagnosis and remained high for 20 years afterwards. Those who were under 40 when first diagnosed were at greater risk of taking their own lives than those who were older.