Clinician bereavement study: survey examining the effects of patient suicide on clinicians

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

You are being invited to take part in an online survey to examine the effects of patient suicide on clinicians. The study is being conducted by the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health (NCISH). NCISH is part of the Centre for Mental Health and Safety at the University of Manchester.

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear to you, or if you have any questions, please contact jane.graney@manchester.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

About the research

➢ Who will conduct the research?

The research will be conducted by Dr Cathryn Rodway (Joint Chief Investigator), Dr Isabelle Hunt (Joint Chief Investigator), Jane Graney (Research Nurse), Pauline Rivart (Research Assistant), Professor Sir Louis Appleby (NCISH Director), Professor Nav Kapur (NCISH Director), and Dr Pauline Turnbull (NCISH Programme Manager), who are researchers at the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health, based within the Centre for Mental Health and Safety, School of Health Sciences, University of Manchester.

➢ What is the purpose of the research?

Mental health professionals can expect to experience the death of a patient by suicide at least once but as many as four times in their professional career. Each death can have a profound effect. To further understand these experiences this study will (i) examine the impact of patient suicide on the emotional well-being and clinical practice of clinicians, (ii) determine what support and resources were available and accessed (and wanted) by clinicians before and after the suicide of a patient, (iii) determine whether preparatory training in patient suicide was provided for clinicians, and (iv) make recommendations on how to develop support services locally and nationally for clinicians. Conclusions may inform the development of local and national support resources.

You have been invited to participate in this study as you have been identified by NCISH as having experienced the tragic death by suicide of a patient that you worked with in a clinical context. This patient:

- Had been in contact with secondary mental health services in the 12 months prior to their death;
- Was treated by secondary mental health services in England, Wales or Scotland;

- Died between 1st January 2020 and 31st December 2024.

Completion of this questionnaire will increase the currently scant evidence on how healthcare staff can navigate the emotional challenge of a patient's death by suicide. It will also inform local suicide prevention plans around preparatory training and help develop impactful postvention strategies within healthcare organisations to help support staff following a patient suicide.

➢ Who has reviewed the research project?

The study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee (UREC) on 11/06/2024 (reference: 2024-19639-33633).

We have also obtained approval to use existing NCISH recruitment processes to identify eligible clinicians for this research project from:

- NHS Research Ethics Committee (reference ERP/96/136).

➢ Who is funding the research project?

This study has been funded by The MPS Foundation.

What would my involvement be?

➢ What would I be asked to do if I took part?

We are asking you to complete an anonymous online questionnaire hosted on a University of Manchester-approved survey hosting platform. In this questionnaire, we will ask you questions about your gender and age, medical background, training, and speciality. We will also ask you to consider the impact the patient's death had on your emotional well-being and clinical practice. We will ask what training you received to prepare for a patient's death by suicide and about the support that was available and that you may have accessed at the time of the patient's death. Finally, we will ask you for your views on what support would be helpful for clinicians affected by the death of a patient in the future. These questions are designed to help us understand the impact of a patient death by suicide on your health, well-being, and clinical practice. We estimate that completing the questionnaire will take no more than 15-20 minutes.

You may be asked to participate in this study on more than one occasion. This will be because we will have identified more than one patient that you worked with in a clinical context who tragically died by suicide in the study period and whose death you may have been impacted by. If this is the case, we will ask that you complete a questionnaire about the impact of each death. This is because we aim to explore whether the impact of patient suicide on emotional wellbeing and clinical practice varied depending on certain patient characteristics, such as age, gender, duration of illness and recency of service contact.

We ask you not to provide any information that might identify you (or someone else) or the service for which you work when competing the questionnaire. For example, please do not write your name, or the name of the patient whose care you were providing, or the name of any ward or hospital, particularly in the additional information free text response. If any information that might identify you or someone else, or any specific mental health service is disclosed in the questionnaire, we will either anonymise this information or remove it. The questionnaire will not collect your IP address.

The clinician bereavement team will not have access to any identifiable data from the NCISH dataset and will not be able to identify the person who died or you as a participating clinician. To enable us to explore emotional wellbeing in relation to patient characteristics the NCISH team will provide us with a non-identifiable extract from the NCISH dataset for this study.

➢ Will I be compensated for taking part?

Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary and will be unpaid. There will be no burden on your time in terms of follow up or further contact.

➢ What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

We recognise that losing a patient is a traumatic experience and that discussing suicide is a sensitive topic and may cause distress. We are also aware of the pressures on your time.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. After reading this information sheet you will be asked to consent to continue. If you decide not to proceed with the questionnaire, there will be the option to select "no" to continuing and you will be directed to an "end of survey" message. You do not need to do anything further. If you do decide to participate you will be asked to click 'yes' to confirm consent. You will then be directed to the questionnaire. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. Once you have started the questionnaire you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself by closing your web browser. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once you have submitted your responses as they are collected anonymously, and we will not be able to identify your specific data. If you wish to withdraw from being contacted about the study completely, please contact the research team. This does not affect your data protection rights.

Please read "Data Protection, Confidentiality and Further Details" below for further information about how we plan to use and store the information that you share with us.

Upsetting issues

We hope that you do not find taking part in the questionnaire harmful or distressing. However, should you become upset during or after completing the questionnaire, we urge you to seek support. You may find the following support resources and information helpful if answering any of our questions does upset you or cause you distress.

- Help is at Hand: support after someone may have died by suicide (Support After Suicide Partnership)
- If a patient dies by suicide: a resource for psychiatrists (Royal College of Psychiatrists)
- If a patient dies by suicide: a resource for mental health professionals (Royal College of Psychiatrists)
- AtaLoss.org (Bereavement signposting and information site)
- Finding the words: how to support someone who has been bereaved and affected by suicide (Support After Suicide Partnership)

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the study or are experiencing any technical difficulties in accessing the questionnaire then please contact Jane Graney (Research Nurse, NCISH) on 0161 275 0700, or by emailing jane.graney@manchester.ac.uk.

Data Protection, Confidentiality and Further Details information

➢ **Will my participation in the study be confidential?**

We ask you not to provide any information that might identify you (or someone else) or the service for which you work when competing the questionnaire. For example, please do not write your name, or the name of the patient whose care you were providing, or the name of any ward or hospital, particularly in the additional information free text response. If any information that might identify you or someone else, or any specific mental health service is disclosed in the questionnaire, we will either anonymise this information or remove it. The questionnaire will also not collect your IP address. In accordance with UK data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following ways:

- All information gathered for this questionnaire will remain anonymous and individual responses will be treated as confidential;

- The questionnaire will be hosted on a University of Manchester-approved survey hosting platform and responses will be downloaded to an isolated server that hosts an isolated network (i.e. the server is not connected to any other network or to the internet);
- Only authorised members of the research team directly involved with this research project will have access to the information you provide;
- The standard retention period for anonymous research data is five years, after which it will be securely destroyed.

We must also have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is "a public interest task" and "a process necessary for research purposes".

You also have a number of rights under UK data protection law regarding your personal information. For example, you have the right to ask for personal information you believe we may hold about you. If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult the University of Manchester Privacy Notice for Research Participants.

➢ Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Findings will be reported in an academic paper for submission to a leading international peer-reviewed medical or social science journal. The paper will provide qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of patient suicide on the well-being and clinical practice of clinicians, whether support was accessed, and views on support needs in the future. We will submit to open access journals to ensure the outputs are publicly available and promote visibility with national and international readers. We will inform the Medical Directors of all Trusts/Health Boards providing secondary mental health services of the study findings and ask them to disseminate to clinical colleagues, as appropriate. Additional outputs may include infographics, short, animated videos of the key findings, and presentation at academic and professional conferences and meetings. Key findings will also be disseminated via the NCISH X account - @NCISH_UK. Only aggregate data will be published.

➢ Will my information be shared with others?

Data will not be shared with any other organisation.

➢ Will my information be put into an archive?

Data will not be archived in a repository.

➢ Auditing and monitoring

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

What if I have a complaint?

➢ Contact details for complaints

If you have a concern about any aspect of this questionnaire or a complaint that you wish to direct to a member of the research team, please contact: **Jane Graney** (Research Nurse, NCISH) on **0161 275 0700**, or by emailing jane.graney@manchester.ac.uk

If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance then please contact: The Research Ethics Manager on **0161 306 8089** or by emailing research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email: dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk. You also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information by telephoning **0303 123 1113**.

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Thank you for reading the participant information sheet. Please click one of the options below to either complete the questionnaire or end your participation.

- ○ Yes, I have read the participant information sheet and I wish to continue to the questionnaire *[link to the questionnaire]*
- ○ No, I do not wish to continue *[link to debrief sheet and confirmation that participation has ended]*